From Candy Swick
Cuba reflections:

The First Pres Cuban peanut gallery of 13 was assigned many tasks. The tasks were great adventures. Task number one was to pray for our sisters and brothers. Next, we were to educate the congregation on the many needs of our Cuban sisters and brothers. Soap, detergent, toothpaste, toothbrushes, legal drugs such as OTC (over the counter) drugs, paper, pens, pencils, crayons, shampoo, deodorant, combs, hairbrushes, feminine products, blood pressure cuffs AND A TYPICAL AMERICAN FOOD. The next assignment was to evenly stuff all 1,300 pounds of necessities into 26 donated suitcases, a maximum of 50 pounds per suitcase, and then to keep track of them in the airport! Superman Graham Hart tasked super-organizer Carole Papa with tying a bright green and white polka-dotted ribbon to every suitcase. No suitcase left behind was the motto. And just for safekeeping, the decision was made to have two ribbons on every suitcase.

Such fun herding a bunch of cool-cat volunteers! Now to come up with the perfect typical American food…key lime pie, not practical, cookies too many crumbs, ice cream (how would we transport dry ice?), hamburgers, NOT practical, strawberry pie impossible…NO PROBLEM; how about just good ole brownies? Off to Costco went the super little red hen. (Remember the childhood story about the little red hen who made the loaves of bread?) Linda Hart went to purchase 5 humongous boxes of brownie mix. EASY, ONE WOULD THINK—until you get to Cuba! She needed a dozen eggs (oops, too late to learn that eggs are rationed; only 4 per month are allowed). Oh goodness, we also needed a liter of olive oil. Oops, we also needed a large, deep baking pan and an oven. The seminary we visited let us borrow two large baking pans. If I remember correctly, the Juan G. Hall was a monastery at one time—I think that is why there were several rooms filled with bunk beds and community bathrooms. Pastor Alison and his wife, Sarah, live up three flights of stairs to the third floor of the church. They graciously let us use their teeny, tiny oven; barely big enough for the large pan of brownies. Big oops, forgot to mention that the oven was in Celsius and not Fahrenheit. The oven wasn't exactly calibrated, so the cooking time, which should have been 45 minutes, took one hour and 25 minutes. It took almost 8 hours to bake 200 brownies! Linda Hart and Candy Swick looked more like Lucy Ricardo and Ethel Mertz in an “I Love Lucy show.” We had great fun with just a few burned fingers, a few drips, and messes here and there. The brownies were a tremendous hit with the congregation. Some timidly asked if there was a possibility of getting a second one. We were thrilled that they were edible. The 13-member peanut gallery of First Pres was very surprised that the brownies were edible.

Remember, we are blessed so that we may share our blessings with all God's children. Thank you, First Pres, for helping us spread all of your blessings to our sisters and brothers in Cuba.