

History of TCMI



The Teen Challenge Ministry Institute concept was established by David Wilkerson at Tyler, Texas, where the Twin Oaks Leadership Academy trained hundreds of young men and women for Teen Challenge type ministries. David Wilkerson recognized God was calling a significant number of redeemed and fired-up Teen Challenge program graduates to the ministry. And he also realized that with training they could have an amazing impact on those from similar backgrounds and those living in needy drug and gang-infested communities.

When that school closed in 1980, David Wilkerson and his staff approved the creation of the Teen Challenge Ministry Institute to succeed the Twin Oaks Leadership Academy. The school was developed, back then, with the thought of training and preparing graduates of the Teen Challenge Programs to work in Teen Challenge centers in the United States and all over the world. Our graduates undertake Entry level positions as well as Ministry entry level positions with churches and other ministries.

Teen Challenge Ministry Institute was then moved to Riverside, California in 1981 and then moved to South Gate, California in 1986 into a church, Bible Assembly, which was in dire need of revitalization. Part of the church was dilapidated, hardly any people attended the church, and TCMI students and staff co-labored with the pastor of Bible Assembly to help bring life back into that church through neighborhood evangelism and church outreaches. TCMI's classrooms, kitchen and offices were on a campus shared with what became a very active church in its community.

After 18 years of sharing facilities, God opened up an opportunity to acquire our own campus less than a mile from our previous location. The buildings provide 23,000 sq.ft. of space that includes a beautiful church, classrooms, offices, kitchen, auditorium, dormitories and a large parking lot. These buildings sit on 1.6 acres of land. With the help of many dedicated churches and friends, we were able to purchase this property in August 2004! Since acquiring the new campus, there has been a tremendous increase in the number of TCMI students and ministries. TCMI students have played a vital role in serving the local churches in the urban inner city areas. TCMI is one of 4 staff training schools in the United States and prepares graduates to enter into full time ministry across the nation. Over 90% of Southern California staff members are graduates of Teen Challenge Ministry Institute in South Gate, CA.