

SNAP-SHOTS

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SEASONS GREETINGS!

The following letter was written on behalf of us all, by our Youth Pastor Erik, and given (along with Christmas food packs and gifts), to the families we serve in the barrios of Tijuana...

Von & On Ministries wishes you, your family and loved ones a Merry Christmas and Prosperous New Year! Firstly we give thanks to God, for without Him none of this would be possible! Likewise we are also grateful to Him for your lives, for the times we spend with you as "family" and for your trust.

If we go back a few years to our childhoods many of us can recall how we believed that if we behaved well and did not do bad things for the whole year, we would eventually receive a gift.

Through this letter we want to share with you two pieces of news... one of them is bad, and the other super good...

The "BAD NEWS" is ... We are all sinners and we all do bad/evil things. (Genesis 6:5)

The "GOOD NEWS" is ... Despite our sins, God has given us the best, in fact the VERY BEST gift that could ever be given. He has given us His Son, so that through Him we can have forgiveness, salvation and eternal life. (John 3:16)

JESUS is the most valuable gift we can ever receive! Material possessions fade/rust/wear out, food spoils and toys break, but peace, love and the grace of God lasts forever.

The meaning of Christmas is "birth." This Christmas we invite you to open the door of your heart to allow Jesus to be born within it, and entrust your life to Him.

Are you willing to receive the gift of His Son that He is offering to you this Christmas?

But what does it say? "The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart," that is the message concerning faith that we proclaim: if you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the the dead, you will be saved. Rom. 10:8-9



Earlier this month, we began Christmas celebrations at a small church just down the street from our bodega at Pastora Maria's house. The church has been meeting since mid 2023. Each Sunday evening, services are led by Pastor Erik and/or Pastora Maria. On occasion and by invitation, other local pastors also come to help. Most of the people who attend here have been assisted by V&O in some way in the last year or so. It's been neat to see this

gathering grow and become a welcoming place for those we serve to hear the gospel and testimonies from those who have accepted God's gift of His Son, Jesus Christ. On Dec.10 we celebrated Jesus' birth with music, singing, a meal, toys for the kids and Christmas food packs for each family. It was a small but special and lively event!



Omar 11, thanks God for all the blessings in his life.



THANK YOU for your part in making it possible. Please pray that the seeds being planted in lives through this work, would grow to maturity in the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, the **VERY BEST** gift that could ever be given!



Santa Paty handed out the gifts.



THANK YOU!



GRACIAS!

CHRISTMAS AT THE REHAB



Far left & center: Young and old listening, as Erik shares a Christmas message. Left & Below: Patty serves a special meal.



About a year ago, our team paid a visit to a young father, who after some persuasion admitted himself into a drug rehab center. He's since completed his stay there, now lives with his family again and is back at work. Our initial visit though, opened up ministry opportunities to others at the rehab which has been growing since. A pastor and several other christian men now visit regularly to teach, encourage and pray with them. We at V&O continues to support this with monthly visits, bibles and meals. There are about 200 residents at the rehab, most are recovering from addictions, others suffer from mental illness. The ages range from early teens to mid 60s. Please continue to pray for this work. **Thank you!**

"IT TAKES A VILLAGE"

This year we've once again received help from numerous people in our communities who often go the extra mile to assist the people we serve. While it's impossible to name and show them all, these pictures represent a few of the many for whose help we're extremely grateful!



Dr Santos (3rd left), & his team, with Hortencia & Erik,

with a new cauterizing machine, they were recently able to buy with a generous donation from a V&O donor.



Dr Toledo, (Eye Specialist) with Alicia, (who is under her care) receives a thank you gift from V&O.



Above: Cesar Gonzales, (Board member), Scott & Adriana Hasser and Jay & Mary Massello (who all assist in various ways), enjoy a V&O volunteers appreciation dinner with the team in Tijuana.



Paúl our Pharmacist.



Each of the doctors & medical staff received a gift bag of healthy Christmas food treats from V&O last week.



Pastor Carlos

Photo center right: Local Pastor Carlos helps whenever needs arise. Last week he used his own vehicle to help us out with Christmas deliveries. He's also donated dozens of T shirts for our ministry, which he prints himself. (Young model on right wearing one, it reads "Enjoy Jesus Christ, thou shalt never thirst.")



CHRISTMAS DELIVERIES

The logistics involved in delivering food and gifts to over 300 families can create some headaches, but our team and extra helpers have been doing a sterling job over the last few weeks! Weather permitting, we'll continue into January until the 6th ... 3 Kings Day in Mexico.



Erik, Antonio, & young helper Kevin, loading vehicles at our bodega.



Maya the guard dog, oversees operations.

GRATEFUL RESPONSES

Smiles, thanks, phone calls and notes have followed deliveries. For some kids these gifts may be the only ones they receive this year. One mom (whose husband left the family of 5 earlier this year), let the kids to play with their toys for a bit and then re-wrapped them so they would be able to have the excitement of opening them again on Christmas Day. Practical gifts like blankets, warm clothes jackets, shoes and socks have also been much appreciated.



GRACIAS!



BEHIND THE SCENES...

Much preparation goes on in the months of Nov & Dec requiring all hands on deck and extra helpers!



Yamile 7, Leslie 15, & Zaori 14, filling Xmas candy bags for kids.



Hortencia & helper putting Christmas letters into envelopes.



Marisol helps with cleaning & cooking!

SPECIAL THANKS from special families...



For some families 2023 has been a tough year. We keep this in mind as we do the rounds, stopping in to make special home visits to those who could use extra prayers and encouragement.

ESTEFANI



For one family, Christmas is especially tough this year. You may remember Estefani 16, from previous newsletters. Her thumb was amputated due to a cancerous lump which appeared mid last year. She had been receiving treatment throughout this year, but unfortunately a few months ago, things took a turn for the worse, with further lumps appearing on her body. The cancer was very aggressive and sadly, Estefani died just a couple of weeks ago.



She was being raised by her maternal grandma (her mother died 3 years ago), and leaves behind a younger brother and sister who are being raised by their paternal grandparents.

Estefani's grandma thanks you all for the prayers and help you've sent for her and her family this past year.

We all take comfort in knowing Estefani is now safe home with Jesus.

"Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted." Matthew 5:4

IN CLOSING

As we close out this year, we look back with amazement and gratitude for all the lives that have been touched and changed through God's Holy Spirit working in the hearts of His people in Mexico, the USA and beyond in so many different ways. Each one using their gifts, talents, skills, finances and resources to make eternal differences in precious lives. "Invest in people," Pastor Von often used to tell us while he was here. We thank you for your trust and the privilege of partnering together, enabling us to all continue doing just that!



On behalf of the V&O Team and the communities we serve, we wish you all a happy, healthy, and prosperous New Year! Joyce & Philip