

SNAP-SHOTS

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Well, little by little we're inching toward Spring, although for the next couple of weeks at least, it looks like more rainstorms and cold temps ahead for San Diego and Tijuana. Unusual for these parts! The exceptionally wet and cold winter this year has not made it an easy time for many of the people in our barrios.

We believe in going to the need rather than asking the need to come to us, so in this regard we've certainly been kept busy again this month. Deliveries of tarps, blankets, warm clothes, shoes, food, and medicines have been ongoing by our team. Navigating around the flooding, mud, rocks, potholes, slips, and detours going in and out of the barrios and canyons often make for some challenging driving though, so your prayers for safety are always appreciated!

During one of the breaks in the weather this month, we were able to bring some Valentine's Day cheer to moms and kids in Lagunitas and Ejido. It was a fun time and a welcome respite, both for them and our team!



Kids in Ejido enjoyed a Bible lesson from Hortencia, followed by...

craft activities...



...and some special treats! Yay!



A finished craft.



This month's bible activity booklet...

"God is love." 1 Jn. 4:8



Kids being fitted for shoes.



Thank you for our new shoes!



From kids in Lagunitas.

As Spring approaches, we hope to resume more of our outdoor activities/events with the kids in our communities. The opportunities to show and share God's love for them in word and in practical actions make them so worthwhile.

As you can see from the photos the gratitude is evident! We tell them the gifts are from God, (the *ultimate* Valentine!!), whose love moves in the hearts of people like yourselves that send them. Thanks so much once again, for making this help to our kids and neighbors across the border possible!

Jesus replied, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." This is the greatest commandment. And the second is like it: "Love your neighbor as yourself." Matthew 22:37-39

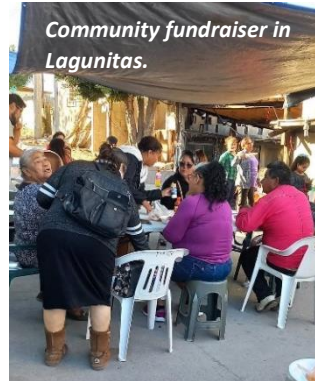
PLEASE PRAY FOR ESTEFANI



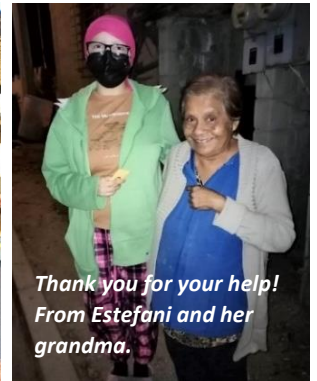
Estefani is 16 years old. Mid last year she noticed a small, unusual lump near her right thumb. After a few months as it continued to grow, her grandma (who is raising her), became concerned and took her to the doctor. A biopsy revealed the lump was indeed cancerous, a rare but aggressive type, which required the amputation of her thumb, followed by chemotherapy treatments since. Estefani is at present under the care of a specialist in Guadalajara, which means she and her grandma have to travel there every 2 months for appointments. Estefani's mom died almost 3 years ago from COVID and her father works away from home so their community in Lagunitas rallies together each month cooking and selling food in order to raise funds to pay for their airfares and accommodation costs. V&O funds the difference. So far things are going in the right direction with Estefani's treatments and she has been able to resume her schoolwork, however she is not "out of the woods yet" and will be having ongoing treatment this year, so please keep her in your prayers. **Thank you!**



Estefani showing her thumb amputation.



Community fundraiser in Lagunitas.



Thank you for your help! From Estefani and her grandma.

A TRIBUTE TO "ARTURITO"

Some of you may remember Arturo from past newsletters. We would often check in on him and his father, (who raised and cared for him), before his father died a few years ago. Arturo was both mentally and physically impaired from an incident that happened when he was a young child. When his father's health began to decline due to diabetes, V&O helped them both with doctor visits, medications, food, etc.

Last year we noticed Arturo's health beginning to decline. His legal guardian/care giver, (an older brother), had become addicted to drugs, and Arturo was suffering effects of neglect. Then late last year after a bungled surgery at a public hospital, Arturo's condition started to deteriorate more rapidly. We began checking on him daily. Dr Santos determined that Arturo's condition was very serious. He was suffering a lot of pain due to major problems with his bowel and urinary system and needed urgent surgery. After receiving the pre-op test results however, it was clear that due to the poor condition of his health, (including failing kidneys and anemia), surgery wasn't going to be an option. So instead, Hortencia and the team reluctantly made arrangements to take Arturo to a hospice where he would at least receive the proper palliative care he needed in his last days. However,... God had other plans for Arturo. In the early hours of the morning just before Hortencia and the team arrived to pick him up, God took him home to Heaven.

Losing Arturo hit us all quite hard at V&O. "Arturito" as we affectionately used to call him, had become very special to us. We so miss his beautiful smile, infectious laugh, childlike innocence and joy for the simple things, as well as his incredible example of patient longsuffering. Arturito loved Jesus and in his last days he never lost his faith. We've been sad, but we also rejoice knowing he is now with his Lord, Savior, and Creator, surrounded by the magnificence of Heaven, and glorified in his new body. We give thanks to God for bringing Arturo into our lives and for the lessons he taught us during his short, humble, and unknowingly, impactful, 27 years of life.



Arturo & nephew Papos, so happy with their Xmas gifts from V&O in Dec 2022.



At one of our sewing classes a few years ago.



Arturo with his dad, Don Ponciano, in 2017.



Laughing at some teasing from Hortencia.



Last month... after a medical appointment, V&O Driver Josue carrying Arturo to his house.

Thank you for caring, giving, and praying for the work of this ministry to the poor and disadvantaged in the barrios and colonias of Tijuana. God bless you! Joyce, Philip & Hortencia, on behalf of the V&O Team.

Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, & everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Jn. 11:25...