

SNAP-SHOTS

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Well, here we are in 2021, a challenging year behind us as we look hopefully to the new year ahead! More challenges to come, no doubt, however, we are grateful for the security of knowing God is in control and has plans for each of us. As He promises in Psalm. 32:8 "I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my loving eye on you."

The following story comes to mind as an encouragement.

Valeria was just 11 months old when she was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes. Because her condition was serious, (fatal if left untreated), she grew up often feeling unwell and making visits with her Mom to the doctor and hospital. Although it was a real struggle for her parents to afford the cost of transport, medications, consultations etc., somehow God always provided a way, (often through Pastor Von's ministry), for Valeria to receive the treatment she needed. During her childhood, Valeria determined that when she grew up, she would become a nurse, so that she would be able to help others like her and her family.

Today Valeria is 18 years old. Since graduating from high school she has been pursuing her goal to become a nurse. She is currently studying in the Red Cross Nursing Program, (for low-income students). Although most of her studies are online, she also regularly takes a trip on 3 buses across the city for her practical training and to sit exams. Her parents support her with costs of the program, study materials and transport. Since the pandemic, work has been scarce. Her Mom Karina, (past V&O sewing graduate), sews clothing etc. at home and had been selling at the local market the last few years until COVID hit. Valeria's Dad is a construction worker. His work has also been slow. Recently we learned of their struggles. Other family members had been chipping in to help. We wanted to help too. A used laptop appeared at our storage facility. It needed a little work and configuration for use in Mexico, but with some help from "tech wizz" Geovanny, we were able to present it to Valeria, along with equipment needed for her practical training. She was very grateful.

Valeria has 2 years to complete before becoming a Registered Nurse and says she wants to continue her studies another 4 years, to become a Surgical Nurse, (assisting surgeons). We're encouraged to see Valeria focused and working hard to use her God given abilities, talents, experiences and challenges to make a difference and "give back" to her family and community.



Proud Mom & Dad with daughter Valeria, at her High School graduation.



Valeria receives her laptop. THANK YOU! to whoever donated it.



Studying into the night.



GRACIAS!



Karina at our bodega last week...

helping us make hoodies from donated material, for kids in our neighborhoods.

Thank you for your part in helping Valeria and her family. Please keep them in your prayers!

A LATE WINTER... So far winter down here has been mild with little rain, (less than 1- ½ inches total). After a long, hot, dry summer water restrictions are in place across TJ. Some of our V&O team have had water shut offs for up to one week! (I've been trying to imagine how that might go down with us here on this side of the border!) Anyway, we're hoping for much needed relief this week, as rain and colder temps are forecast. In preparation we've been busy distributing tarps and blankets. With COVID still widespread, both here and in MX, we know loss of jobs, income and lives are still seriously affecting many. No government relief assistance in MX makes it more challenging. Staying warm and dry when the need arises is not 'a given' in these barrios.

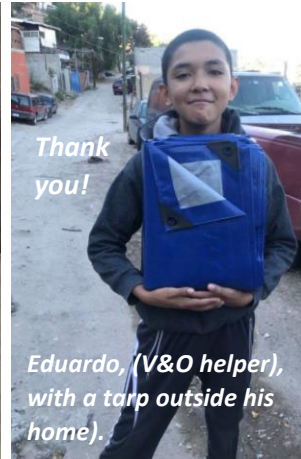


GRACIAS!

It can get bitterly cold in the hills of Ejido.



Happy with his hat! We only had women's hats left... "I don't care," he said, "I like it!"



Thank you!

Eduardo, (V&O helper, with a tarp outside his home).



Gracias!

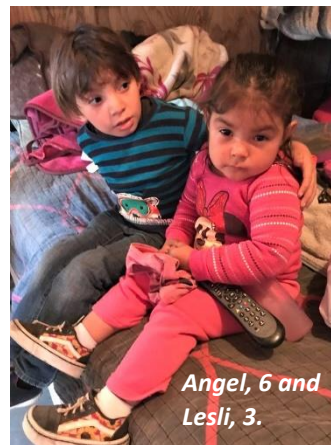
Blanket made by V&O sewers.

PRAVERS NEEDED

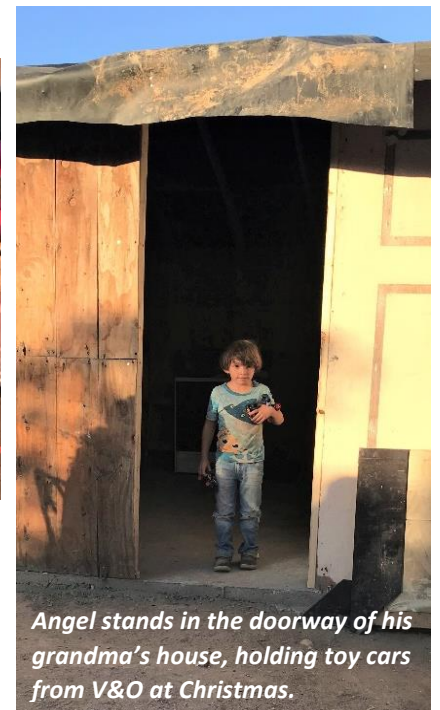
Some of the situations we encounter leave us feeling very inadequate. Such was the case with this family we received a call from a few weeks ago...

While in his own home, a father was shot execution style, midday, by 2 hooded intruders. He was killed while shielding his young son. At 6 years old, the boy was the only witness and shows obvious signs of trauma. Little sister cries all the time missing her Papi. The reason for his killing is unknown. He worked at a local convenience store. Mom is very young and needs to find work. They are scared and have abandoned their home to live with Grandma. After our visit we went home heavy hearted.

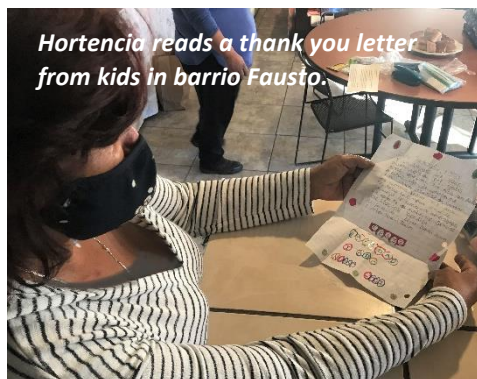
Although doing what we can to help with physical needs, Xmas toys etc., we suspect the psychological and emotional damage done here will affect these kids for many years to come. Much prayer is needed. Please pray for God's Holy Spirit to surround, protect, comfort and strengthen this family, bringing healing and salvation through the knowledge of His great love for them.



Angel, 6 and Lesli, 3.



Angel stands in the doorway of his grandma's house, holding toy cars from V&O at Christmas.



Hortencia reads a thank you letter from kids in barrio Fausto.

ON A LIGHTER NOTE...

Although our Christmas gift giveaways this year were different from previous years, we had a great response of gratitude from Moms and kids, handwritten notes, and phone calls. Several moms called Hortencia from the grocery store telling her what they were buying with their grocery cards, (one especially excited to be able to buy laundry soap!) We finished most of the toy deliveries on 3 Kings Day, (Jan 6). Again, you made it possible. Together we brought a little joy, happiness, and warmth to those in need and were given another opportunity to show and share the love of Jesus Christ. Thank you for your partnership with us in this. May God bless you abundantly this new year! *Joyce, Philip & Hortencia.*