

SNAP-SHOTS

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I will always remember the first time I met Marisol. She stood out from the other kids as she arrived late at a ministry event that day. Her hair was unkempt, as it often was, she was poorly dressed and tripping in the shoes she was wearing, a pair of worn out, bright yellow heels, (probably her mother's). She was 12 years old.

Marisol was the oldest of 3 daughters. Her father collected scrap metal and dismantled old appliances to sell parts. He died not long after I met Marisol. (He couldn't afford the meds and surgery he needed for a treatable condition). After his death, Marisol and her sisters were often left at home on their own while their mother worked a cleaning job. It wasn't long though before another man came into her mother's life, promising to help and provide for the family. Unfortunately, this man's motives became clearer as time went on and explained why Marisol had begun rebelling against her mother, who was failing to protect her and her sisters. Sometimes she was made to sleep outside for trying to expose the abuse that was occurring.

Eventually Marisol ended up in an orphanage where she seemed happier, for a time at least. Always looking older than her age, Marisol was a likeable tomboy with a warmth and kindness about her; she would often take the younger kids under her wing.

A couple of years later, after several moves, Marisol went to live in a government institution for troubled teenage girls. When she aged out, one of the directors, a strong Christian woman, invited her to stay in her home and during that time became a mentor to her. However, the pull

from Marisol's friends and life back in the barrios was strong, and after a year or so, she decided to go back and try to make it on her own. She returned to the neighborhood she was born in and lived there until her recent tragic death.



Marisol (right) at the orphanage in 2014.



Marisol taking care of a baby.

Two weeks ago, Hortencia and some of our team attended Marisol's burial. She was just 22 years old. It was a sad, pitiful event, attended by her two sisters and just a handful of others. (Her mother was absent).

On Dec 30th, 2022, Marisol's almost lifeless body was found lying under a bridge. Close by was the body of another young woman also. Both had been abducted and violently assaulted.

According to all accounts, Marisol had very unwisely befriended the wrong person. The young woman had overstepped the boundaries of a local cartel by dealing drugs in their territory. She had been warned, and unfortunately Marisol had recently been seen with her.

We can only imagine what went through Marisol's mind that night as she lay on the ground, dying alone. We do know that she was able to say her name when she was found, and that she died soon after arriving at the hospital. We also know that Marisol had heard the gospel many times in her short life and that during the time she had spent

living with the director of the orphanage she had confessed her faith in Christ and was growing in it. We're very thankful for that. Those of us who knew Marisol loved her, and to us she is representative of many of the young girls we see and work with in the barrios. The odds are often stacked against them and for us it reinforces all the more, the urgency to reach them for Christ, while there is still time. We find great comfort in trusting that despite her troubled life here on earth, Marisol finally made it home safe into the magnificence and glory of heaven, and into the unconditionally loving arms of her Lord, Creator and Savior, Jesus Christ. We thank all of you who partner with us for your part in helping to make that eternal difference in Marisol's life and the lives of others like her.



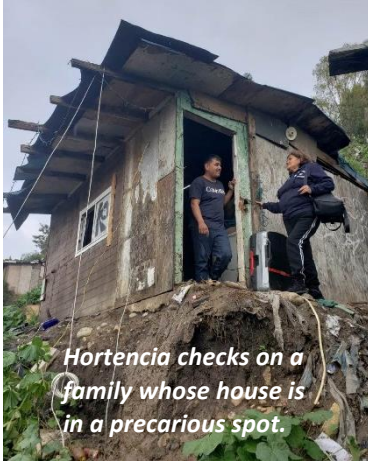
Hortencia and I with Marisol in 2017.

But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body. Phil. 3:20-21

WINTER CHALLENGES

It was a rough start to the New Year for many in our neighborhoods. Record rain lasting for several weeks took a toll on roads, homes, and sadly lives too. Two young girls died in a landslide when a tire wall collapsed, crushing them in their beds while they slept. (We had only just delivered Christmas gifts to the family a few days beforehand). Their parents and younger sibling are still recovering from injuries. Please remember them in your prayers.

Electricity and water services have been sporadic in many areas since the rain, and repairs may be slow in coming to the poor areas, making everyday tasks, like cooking and cleaning difficult. Although the rain was much needed, most were thankful that it finally stopped last week. Looks like there may be another heavy downpour coming next week though, so we are trying to stock up again on tarps, which is proving to be a challenge as many stores are now sold out...



Hortencia checks on a family whose house is in a precarious spot.



Hortencia and Paty deliver food on foot to families in need.



Tragic scene where 2 little sisters (ages 7 & 14), lost their lives.



Inside a home badly in need of a new roof.



Securing a tarp before the next downpour.



...please keep us in your prayers for that.

Left: Hermana, (Sister) Paty prays with a family whose house was flooded.



LAST CHRISTMAS 2022 DELIVERIES...

Most years our Christmas deliveries extend well into January. This year was no exception! These kids were a few of the last, (but certainly not least!) to receive their gifts. As a special treat for their patience, they also received treats of pizza and dessert as well!



On behalf of us all here, thank you for your love and prayers for us and the people we are serving together. Until next month, God's blessings to you!

Joyce, Philip, Hortencia & the Team.

