

SNAP-SHOTS

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A DAY IN THE BARRIOS

As many of you know, a large part of our ministry involves making home visits. A typical visiting day can mean anywhere from 1-6 planned stops, depending on situations and needs. However, it pays to be flexible, never in a hurry, and always prepared for the unexpected! The following is a re-cap of a typical day for Hortencia and the team as they do the rounds.

It had been over a month since we had visited in Las Carretas, (near Ben's Kitchen and the dump). Unfortunately, the last time had not been too pleasant. A drug cartel raid was in progress and the place was swarming with armed police searching houses. Our initial plan had to be abandoned *that* day! Since then, Hortencia continued meeting families outside the boundaries of the neighborhood, as the locals deemed the area still "hot" for several weeks afterwards. ("Hot" is a term used for a lot of criminal activity going on). Only just recently it seems things have settled down, and we were given the "OK" to come back in. It was advised we come early though and leave before the afternoon, when the "activities" typically start, to be on the safe side.

First stop was to Jessica, a mom of three and one of our sewing class graduates. We were picking up an order of hair scrunchies, which along with other items she now makes to sell.

Paty handed out cool jello desserts to the kids, which we buy regularly from another mom, also in a cottage industry and now self-supportive, (and also started through the help of V&O).

Jessica was busy when we arrived, doing laundry, a lot of laundry, by foot! The used washing machine she had recently bought had turned out to be a



Washing laundry by foot.

lemon. Some words of encouragement, a bag of groceries, jellos and payment for the scrunchies brought grateful smiles from her and the kids, and since this visit, a kind MX man also donated a working washing machine for the family!

Next stop, a few houses down... Chelo, a caregiver to her grandkids while their parents work, and a cook at Ben's Kitchen, has a herniated disk in her back. It's been causing a lot of pain for months. The surgery is expensive, way beyond what she can afford, but thankfully it turned out she is eligible for help at a military hospital down south, through her son's medical benefits. Just two weeks before the scheduled surgery date however, another problem arose, requiring a lesser but nonetheless urgent surgery, (which she had at the local General Hospital). She has just arrived home and is hurting *all over* now! She wonders how she will be able to make the 2-day bus trip down south, let alone have another surgery so soon. Hortencia and Paty spend time encouraging and praying for her while Cristian, (Hortencia's grandson), and driver Josúe wait outside. Chelo manages a smile as we leave. She knows everything is in God's hands and He is faithful! (And yes, she did make the bus trip and the surgery was delayed one month. Please pray it will be successful!)



Hortencia talks to Chelo in her home.



Paty and driver Josúe pass out jellos to the kids.



GRACIAS! (Passer by kids get jellos too).



Jessica counting hair scrunchies which we will use for our Back-to-School program.



Cristian and Paty leaving Chelo's house.

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I know that the Lord secures justice for the poor and upholds the cause of the needy. Psalm 140:12

Visit # 3 is to Chelita's house. Chelita is elderly and has a mentally disabled adult son. Ricardo, 44 sustained permanent brain damage as a one-year-old, after being accidentally dropped on his head by a relative who was playing with him at the time. Ricardo is always at Chelita's side wherever she goes. They are not home and Hortencia is a little concerned. After making a few phone calls she finds out they are at the hospital. Chelita had a fall, bumping her head and needed stitches. Thankfully though, she is going to be ok. We continue on...



Outside Chelita's house. Paty talks to Jessica as Hortencia, (on stairs), makes some calls.



Chelita last month with her sewing machine after graduating from sewing class.

Driving out of Las Carretas we see an older man and three kids working on the side of the road. It's Terezo and his grandchildren whom he and his wife are raising. (The kid's parents have been caught up in drug addiction for some years now). Today Terezo has been employed by a local to clean up an area outside his entrance. He and the kids have been working hard and whatever they are



Terezo and the kids working on the roadside.



Terezo takes a break to chat with Hortencia while the kids get some jellos from Poty.

shoveling doesn't smell too good either. Things have been tough for them lately. Hortencia leaves Terezo with a few food items and a grocery card to buy more at a local store. She promises a home visit next week.



At Karla's house.

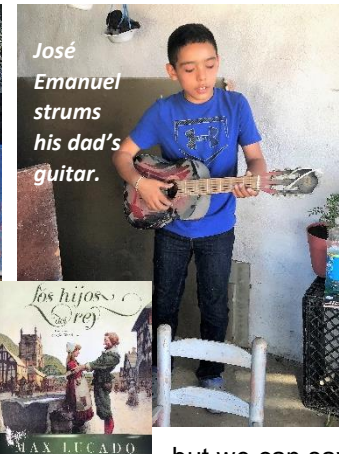


Karla busy preparing food while we visit.

We head on out to Ejido Lazaro Cardenas on the outskirts of the city, arriving about 30 minutes later at the home of Karla and her late husband Pepé. It's been just over 6 months since Pepé was murdered by extortionists, leaving Karla as a young widow with three kids to support and raise on her own. Since Pepe's



José Emanuel takes care of his father's goats.



José Emanuel strums his dad's guitar.

death she has kept very busy cooking food which she sells on weekends. She walks the kids several miles to school each day and has also been attending a course to become a licensed manicurist.

We bring food, gifts, and a special book for the kids which we all sign. José Emanuel 11 is now "man of the house" looking out for his mom and two sisters. While we are there, he sings a ranchera song for us in his strong clear voice. It's a song he used to sing with his father. It reminds him of his father's guitar, which he brings out for the first time since his death. (We all get lumps in our throats).

On our way home we had one more stop to make... Unfortunately, not much space left to write about it,

but we can say it ended on a hopeful note. A young mom seeking

answers for her life is beginning to look in the right places and asked us to drop her off at a local church meeting. Please pray for Yuridia. **THANKS ONCE AGAIN** to each of you for making it possible for us to minister to the marginalized and needy in the barrios of Tijuana! *On behalf of us at all at V&O, God bless!! Joyce, Philip & Hortencia.*

Right: Children of the King book, by Max Lucado, which we gifted to the family, on behalf of V&O.

