

SNAP-SHOTS

E-mail: vonandon@mail.com Snail Mail: PO Box 19787, San Diego, CA 92159

Web: www.vonandon.com

From time to time we're asked why we do the kind of ministry we do. We work in the rough areas of Tijuana, a city considered to be among the top 5 most dangerous in the world. Much of our work deals with the ugly, the angry, the sick, the dying, the marginalized, the broken and the hopeless, groups often considered "worthless" in society. We sometimes go into places where others would perhaps not, and find ourselves dealing with complicated, messy and frustrating situations which can be exhausting and disheartening. In the trying times, we too sometimes question, "Why do we care?" Pondering this recently, we reminded ourselves once again, that the answer in very basic terms is, **"because God cares!"** We were also reminded of these words, written by Pastor Von a few years ago...



MX National Guard constantly patrol streets in TJ.

WHY I AM HERE

I have a rather simple philosophy as to this life. I see my time on earth as very brief and radically different from my future forever life with God. Because of this, I have come to a rather logical conclusion. I'm here on earth to do things for God that I can never do for Him in Heaven and I only have a short time left to do them. Here is some of what I can only do on earth that I'll never be able to do in Heaven. This seems both pleasing to God and fulfilling to me.

I can share the Gospel with those who have never heard.

I can teach those who don't know.

I can light the darkness and give hope to the hopeless.

I can encourage the discouraged and faint hearted.

I can dry the tears of a crying child.

I can love the unlovely, unloved, and unlovable.

I can give someone who is thirsty a cup of cold water.

I can feed those who are hungry, help heal those who are sick, give shelter to those who have none and give a blanket to those who are cold.

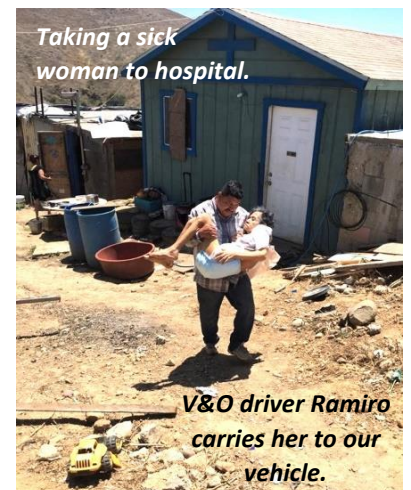
I can even love my enemies and forgive those who violate me.

In Heaven there will be no sin or darkness, no sickness, no hunger, no want or pain, no enemies of any kind just eternal joy, thanksgiving, praise and worship of almighty God forever. It makes sense to me to do what I can for God while I'm here on earth so my time in eternity will be more of a joy for myself and others.

In Heaven there will be no clocks or calendars, we won't be wearing watches; there will be no time as we know it. On the other hand, here on earth, we only have a few precious moments to accomplish our unique and divine calling. Please excuse me to do the urgent, that which can only be done here and now.



A typical street in one of our barrios.



Taking a sick woman to hospital.

V&O driver Ramiro carries her to our vehicle.

As another month of ministry draws to a close we look back on some of the situations and lives touched by the work we've been involved in these past few weeks. Yes, some of it has certainly been messy and frustrating! However, the results for our team who've patiently persevered in some of those situations, have also brought us the most blessings, joy, and fulfillment this month.

We hope you'll be encouraged by a few of the stories (next page), knowing that your prayers, gifts, encouragement, and support all play a huge part in making them possible.

"...But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous." Luke 14:13-14.



Places we work.



Hortencia, Irma & Joyce

IRMA

Irma grew up poor with many disadvantages in a tough neighborhood. As a young woman, the emotional pain she carried inside caused her to develop a tough exterior. It was not uncommon for Irma to intimidate and bully other young mothers in her neighborhood and Hortencia, who was one of them at the time, seemed to be the one she picked on most.

A few years ago, Hortencia heard that Irma (who'd been living in another distant neighborhood for some time by then), needed help. Over the years she'd suffered several family tragedies, the disappearance of a son, a daughter killed in a car accident and the loss of her husband. She was struggling to support herself as she was dealing with health issues as well as being limited by not being able to read or write. Hortencia decided to pay her a visit.

What followed in their interactions after that developed into a beautiful friendship and example of the power of love and forgiveness. With help from Paty (our sewing teacher), Irma became one of our V&O sewers helping to make clothing items in her home for our ministry. V&O was also able to help her with medical needs, special food etc.

A few weeks ago, Irma died from Cushing Syndrome, a condition she'd been suffering from for several years. In the last few though, we were blessed to see her make peace with and receive forgiveness from God, herself, and others. The above photo was taken a few months ago on one of our regular visits to her. She always looked forward to them and just before the photo, had expressed through heartfelt tears how thankful she was for the unconditional love of God.

REHAB/STREET MINISTRY



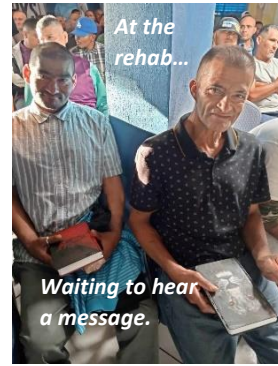
A street ministry campaign in downtown T.J.



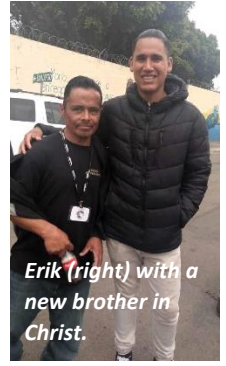
Leslie and Omar (V&O team) serving drinks.



Hortencia & David talk with a troubled young man.



Waiting to hear a message.



Erik (right) with a new brother in Christ.

Combining our efforts with others more experienced in this work continue to be fruitful, with another 8 men this month admitting themselves into the Christian Rehab Center we work with. We help to support the Director who operates the Center on a shoestring budget, by bringing clothes, toiletries, bibles etc. for the new arrivals, We also provide a meal and message from God's Word once a month for the 200 residents. Seeing the gratitude and transformation of these men's lives as they experience God's hope, healing and a place they can call home, continues to be very encouraging and eternally rewarding.

KIDS!



Paty with some of the kids at Las Memorias Hospice/Orphanage.



In barrio Lagunitas...

kids greet Hortencia and David.



Kids in Ejido...

...wearing hoodies made by V&O sewers.



A big welcome hug for Paty.



New socks and treats for kids on Childrens Day.



Fernando with a special treat for himself & his family.

Kids are certainly the most fun part of our ministry. With kids there is energy, laughter, hope and potential. We serve hundreds of kids both in orphanages and barrios. We consider it a joy and a privilege and THANK YOU for your part in enabling us to be the conduits of God's love to them through your love and partnership with us. GRACIAS once again, and God bless you! On behalf of us all working here across the border, Joyce, Philip & Hortencia.