

SNAP-SHOTS

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Greetings,

The world in which we work down here can be lean and mean and at times a little dangerous. This past week as Hortencia and the team were venturing into neighborhoods gathering more names, numbers and info for our Christmas food and toy give-out operation, I went along for a ride and thought it would be great if it were possible for you to come along for the ride also. So, I took lots of photos. The following are a few of them...



Arriving in a barrio Pastor Von named (jestingly), 'Gardenia'.

Diego (our driver) prepares to back into place. No way to turn around once we get in and we need to keep an eye on our vehicle.



Gardenia has a reputation. Not many outsiders venture in...

(Poncho)

Loud music booms from one of the nearby shacks as 'our family' emerges from their shack.



Pizza and drinks ensures a warm welcome, (especially from the kids!)



Enjoying pizza!

Hortencia and Diego talk with the kids.



Paty gets busy adding names to the list.



After chatting with moms, it's onto the next family...

Diego



Ready for Christmas... (a home we pass by).

Santas on the door!



Mom and kids are waiting for us.

Noé



Christmas stocking.

We're invited in.



Poncho joins the kids with coloring books and crayons we brought, while Paty & Hortencia talk with mom Estele.

Dad is out collecting glass, metal and plastic to sell.



Excited smiles. Jorge 8

Estrella 3

'Gardenia' is typical of some the areas we work in. As in most societies, the working poor and the desperate are vulnerable to recruitment into illegal activity and trade. Kids are exposed and targeted at a young age.

A short drive later we are in barrio Lagunitas checking in on Belisario and Prisca, grandparents raising 3 grandchildren, Charlene 14, Daniel 12, and Ian 14 months. Their mom Sarai (Belisario and Prisca's daughter), died from COVID last year. Her picture sits on a mantel, surrounded by flowers and small ornaments. She was 29. Ian was delivered by caesarean just a few days before she passed. Sarai's husband works away from home to support the family. Raising the kids has become a full-time job for Prisca, as well as taking care of Belisario, who was incapacitated by a stroke 10 years ago. He has fallen from his bed onto the hard floor the night before we visit. He's in pain but still manages a smile and to sing a few words of a favorite gospel song with Hortencia. He and Prisca are grateful for the groceries we bring. THANK YOU for enabling us to do so.



Hortencia talks with Belisario.



Belisario and Hortencia singing. Charlene, Daniel, Prisca and neighbors in background.



Prisca with Nicole and Ian.

In the same neighborhood lives little Nicole from last month's newsletter, (shown with her mom, in background of center pic above). Nicole is doing well so far after her heart surgery. This week she has an appointment in Mexicali to check that all is well and her pacemaker is working as it should be. A neighbor has offered to drive Perla and Nicole to the appointment, (about 6 hrs. round trip). V&O will help with \$ for gas and tolls along the road. Perla sends sincere thanks for the help and prayers.



Paty filling bags with gifts/toys for each family.

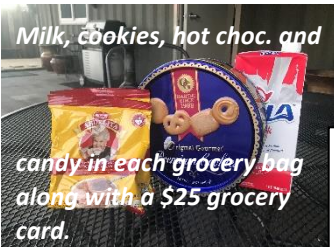


Bags ready for delivery.

Lagunitas



Above: The kids at Esperanza & Casa De Mi Familia Orphanages have been decorating the grocery bags for us.



Milk, cookies, hot choc. and candy in each grocery bag along with a \$25 grocery card.

Late next week (thru Jan 6), we'll begin delivering Christmas food parcels, toys, and gifts to each of these families and many more like them, (over 700 kids, including two orphanages and at least one church). Some will meet us at central points to receive their packages and others will be delivered personally to their homes. Although this way of doing our Christmas outreach takes extra preparation and effort on our part, we believe the relationships built in the process are well worth the effort. We're proud to be welcome in our communities. "Welcome" here is a relationship you earn. With each family's Christmas package, a special letter will be included written on your and our behalf (Von & On Ministries), sharing the 'Good News' that Christmas is the joyful celebration of a redemption none of us deserved. Thanks to Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior, Christmas came to be... God's greatest gift to us all!

May we be much encouraged by this hope, love, peace, and joy as we enter the Christmas Season. Thank you for partnering with us in it! God bless you all, **HAPPY THANKSGIVING and MERRY CHRISTMAS!** Joyce on behalf of us all at Von & On.

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.!" Luke 2:14