

The Hollenbeck's New Letter

Please send all Correspondence and support To:

The Hollenbeck's
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April was our last newsletter!! Wow, we have some catching up to do. Life got very busy for us starting in May which included trips to visit Horizon Community church, Valley Community Church, and Co-Driver time with the Desert Dingos at the Yerington 300! Then, we welcomed in our summer interns, had prep time for the Baja 500 events, and finalized house projects and the VBS program.

Every summer we know the Lord has a plan and he waits for us to grab on to the opportunities he presents to us, and at times the truth comes to us in ways we did not expect. Our summer gives way to a time to learn lessons and sometimes you jump for excitement at what you learn, or you end up licking your wounds. Either way we are confident in the over all purpose behind our summers and I must say that this summer I learned a very big lesson from someone I did not expect to.

I hope you will take time to sit down and reflect on our summer and those that came to us not only bless the families we built homes for, but how they also blessed us.

OUR SUMMER INTERNS

Every summer we are blessed with a special blessing as College aged students make their way here to come and help us with the home building projects. This year we had a big time, FIRST! For the first time we had two interns from the same church, Horizon Community Church, of Galt, CA.

Sam Grinrod is a long time visitor with his church, Horizon Community, and he was only 12 years old when he made his first trip to RLM. He is a Business graduate from Vanguard University. He was able to get a 3 month leave from his employer Synectic Technologies. Robert Partida also hails from Galt and he was returning to the place where his Christian walk started, as Robert was saved and baptized on a youth trip here with RLM. It was a blessing to know that this was a long time dream to come and give back something and to help make a difference in someone's life.

Our other big "First time" was having a family member here as an intern. Our niece, Lorene Ford is from Chicago and this was her first trip to Mexico. She just graduated with her degree in Architecture, which is actually her second degree. Lorene appeared to have a little bit of free time, but also some curiosity as far as to what we do. Lorene also came with some questions and was searching for answers. There was little doubt that God would be able to answer her many questions in the time she was here, but it's amazing what the Lord can do when he fills your hands with simple tools, and surrounds you with those that care, and yes, questions were answered and spirits were renewed.

Sam, Robert, and Lorene will always hold a special place in our hearts and in the lives they came in contact with. Their shoes now hang in our palm tress and they will forever be etched in the memories of our lives as well.

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The Baja 500

This year going to see the Baja took on a different meaning as we also had all of the kids from Casa Esperanza with us! It was a great time to see their excitement for this event and to see how excited they were for our Race Team, H12:One. The weekend was filled with special times, such as,,, a special time with Sales and Marketing director, Joe Bowman with **Slime**. Slime made the kids and the team custom T-shirts with our team logo and he gave the kids a special demonstration of their product. Baja Race shirt shopping also took place thanks to our good friend and race teammate Lori Gallagher. Lori provided the funds for their shopping surprise. We had teammates come from the states to help in crowd control, prepare meals, and keep an eye out for the kids on race day. A big thanks to Mario and Nick Sandez, Fernando Huerta, Craig Takata and to Cherie Boegeman who was here with her husband Steve and son Khalid. I'd say for all of us it was a glimpse of things to come and just a small taste of Racing excitement, but next year the kids from Casa Esperanza will point to the river bed as they watch a little VW Class II bug race by as Team H12:One run the race of Perseverance for them.



Joe's giving the kids at the Casa a demonstration of **SLIME**

**NEXT
YEAR
WE
RACE!**



We're going RACING,,,and who's coming with us?

The Building of Homes

16 years, that is how long we have been involved in the Home building ministry of Real Life Ministries. We so often see conditions that are so very sad, and just when you think you've seen a bad situation you always seem to come across a worse situation. This last Spring I knew we had a large group coming from Horizon Community Church and I had not yet had projects that geographically would work out well for two projects in one week. The very day I was sitting and going over the summer build schedule two pastors came by to introduce me to two families. A day and time was scheduled and we eventually traveled out to meet the families and look at their situation. As we drove up to the site all you could see is a small shack built of pallets, sticks, and lined with plastic. This was the home of Luz and Fransisco and their two children. The second home was just about the same size and the baby slept in a hammock that was stretched across the house, this house belonged to Beatrice and her husband Alisedro. Both of this homes were very small and it's wonder how they managed to live in them as long as they had. Alisedro talked of how it had been two long years and how bad it would get during the rains, and then there were the cold winter nights. But now they could only imagine how the coming project was going to change their lives.

A house made of scrap wood, a garage door and a plastic tarp roof. A small bed inside, and a hammock for the baby.



Luz's home, and her kitchen as it was when we arrived. The tortillas were GREAT!



A Family's story

Meeting Luz actually brought me back down to earth and yet she brought a bit of humor to our first meeting because she reminded me of my own wife, as her biggest concern was the condition of her house. She was worried about the clutter and how we caught her in the middle of making tortillas. I had to laugh with her and share how I appreciated the pride she took in her small home. I went about the usual talk and explained how the project would go, size of the rooms, the materials we used, and how we recommend they position the house. She was amazed at how much more room they would have and the tears were already starting to well up in her eyes. As I started to leave I turned and said "Don't worry Sister Luz, soon you will have plenty of room and a bigger kitchen to clean up before I come to visit" She laughed, and then begun to cry at the thought of someday having a "Kitchen". As it turns out this family had a very interesting story to share. They come from the mainland of Mexico and their journey has been filled with fear, trust, love and devotion. Francisco was actually born into a family that is involved with the drug cartel, while Luz was born into a family that had a true faith in Christ Jesus. Francisco would fall in love with Luz, but he would also laugh and mock the faith she believed in. One day however at a revival meeting he started to feel something happen on the inside, and it was not a the burning passion of love for Luz,,it was the passion of love the Lord knocking on his heart. A battle would soon begin and as he would walk forward something would turn him around,,as he said "Literally" turn him around. This battle took place and Luz was there to encourage him and to help him move forward with the fire that was burning inside of him. Eventually the power and saving grace of Jesus took over and he feel and accepted his love and forgiveness, and walked into the water to be baptized. Soon after they were married and a great and new life was ahead of them, but for Francisco he would now be a marked man by his family as a trader for leaving the family, a family involved in the Cartel. They knew they would have to go far as to literally hide from his family, so it was off to Ensenada. Even after being here, there was a fear of who was watching them and they had to live life by constantly look over their shoulder and watching after their children in a way that most of us probably don't understand. In many ways the Lord has given them hope, he has been faithful to their love for each other, and most of all their faith in Him. As with all our projects, we will be back, we will continue to build to help establish that hope, the hope for a brighter tomorrow.



Los Chicos!

Earlier we told you our interns that come from the States to work with us over the summer, and yes they are a very important part of our summer, but they only make up part of our team. Year after year we have had a small group of faithful workers that do more than just help us work. They help us with day to day routine task, they drop in for dinner, they house sit for us, and they'll sit down and play Xbox with me (or is it the other way around). We have known most of them since they were about 15 years old, and now they all seemed to be plugged into College, and now one has just started studying at the Calvary Chapel Bible College here in Ensenada.

Cesar Sandoval has been working with us for 5 years and is a student at the University studying business administration. This past summer Cesar dedicated his time and hard work to us, but inside dealt with many hardships as his family suffered the lose of 3 family members. He carried a heavy burdened. Although in school, Cesar will be a big part of H12: One race team building, and he will be helping us refine our RLM Family Interview process.

Fernando Gonzales has been with us for at least 6 years now, and he also is a student at the University studying languages and communications. Fernando also had to come to the realization that it was time to move out, and this was not an easy decision for him. He came to us for help and advice and he is currently fitting into the roll as "Caretaker" at the ministry site. Fernando will also be helping us revamp, and soon we'll be starting on some new projects at the LTP dorm site, which will include a small office.

We are proud to say that **Sergio Lopez** is an official student at the Calvary Bible School. We have known Sergio for almost our entire time here in Mexico, and he started to work with us when he was 15. Sergio has become a big part of this ministry, but we are very sad to announce that Sergio will be moving on and most likely will not be with us next year. This is painful yes, but we can only hope that this will be another tool used to help him mature and see where the Lord is leading him. We can only hope and pray that eventually one day our paths some how will come together again.

We truly love these boys as if they were our own, and we are blessed to know that they use our open door policy often. Debbie and I realize their importance to this ministry, but we also realize that they will eventually move on, get married, establish full-time employment, and have children. For now we cherish their hard work, friendships, love, and most of all--knowing our door is always open to them.



Some Personal thoughts and Highlights

First, sorry for the long newsletter, but during the summer I have to admit that it's just a bit much to try to fit it in when you are kicking off your boots at 8:00 pm. This is always a weird time for us as we close the doors to another summer and realize people went home changed forever, and some are still trying to figure out what their trip to Mexico was all about. The ministry site is quiet, and the house is still. Our lives changed as well and each summer brings new lessons, and new questions. As I share our thoughts about our summer and what happened please realize that we are also presenting prayer request.

This summer we had the opportunity to have our youngest staff member, Gabby. Gabby is 13 and she is being cared for at Casa Esperanza. We have known Gabby for a couple years and she used to live at the Casa with her mother. She was in a very sad situation at the home and the Local Social Services had to remove her from what was becoming a very dangerous situation. It was agreed that working with us could be a very good thing for Gabby. She did a great job and now she wants to come back and spend the whole summer with us. Gabby has more or less taken us in as her "Adopted Grandparents". She has become a very important person in our lives and we enjoy the time we get to have with her. We simply ask for prayer as we grow to understand our position in this delicate life and as we work along side Casa Esperanza to make sure this Young Life stays within the arms of the Lord.

It's amazing what people see when they observe the hard work and deep love they have for the Lord. There were two individuals this summer that made decisions for Christ more from what they saw than what they heard. One saw hard work, dedication, and unselfish giving. This eventually lead Jamie to make a decision for Christ and he was baptized as well. Another saw a calming and faithful love at a campfire worship. Jasmine saw people worshipping something they did not see and new it had to be a very sincere deep love. It was so strong that she decided that she wanted it as well, and she accepted this forgiving love. So we ask that you pray for Jamie and Jasmine as they grow to understand the decision they made.

We all go about life, and our actions do speak louder than words, and this summer we ended up with a little phrase thanks to the visual reminder from one of our groups (and yes, we still love them dearly) "Don't become a Broken Window". What impression do we leave on people? Isn't it funny or I guess you can say "sad" how we can do everything just perfect, but then mess up one thing, and for the most part everyone remembers the "one bad thing", or, they remember the "Broken Window," a visual reminder. This would also fit into probably the biggest and one of the Best Lesson's I've ever learned (and thank you Robert) "Do not let the Actions or Words of another person Justify your Anger". So you see, yes, we are real and we deal with many of the same struggles as you deal with, so we ask for prayer in dealing with so many personalities and situations.

So we thank all of you that faithfully support us, and we ask for prayer as we consider doing some fund raising. We've never had to fund raise, but it is something we might need to consider. A couple items to also keep in your prayers that we are dealing with:

- Many house repairs needed
- A leaky fridge,, worn hinges, bad seal---a new one is needed
- Travel time needed to the Mid-west
- Improvements at the LTP site
- Guidance in decisions as our ministry goes through changes
- Time to dedicate toward projects at Casa Esperanza
- Legal transfer of the property our house sits on, about a \$1000.00 fee
- H12: One Racing and our vision of ministry outreach through racing
- And,,,For Gabby, please pray for this young life and where it's all leading us



Thank you all for your support, your prayers, and for helping us plant memories and change lives forever. Dennis and Debbie Hollenbeck