

Food for the Hungry

June 2020



Not surprisingly, when we're out delivering food to homes we often draw a crowd. We try to be quick and not bring people together but when you're running low on food, that takes the priority.

My friend Marvin heads up a division of CRU (formerly Campus Crusade) that serves as the mission arm for the ministry. He's always traveling to various countries around the world and does much to spread the Gospel and help with humanitarian relief. Marvin thinks big. He deals in pallets, shipping containers and semi trucks to move food and supplies to regions in need. Marvin has been able to send us items in the past, but often we have issues with getting larger quantities of supplies across the border. Currently Efren and I, and on occasion several others bring down small amounts of the donations that come in, making many trips to bring in what the Mexican border patrol allows. And believe me, I have story after story of writing letters, connecting with officials and getting permission from the higher ups to help us cross our needed items in greater quantities. In the end it never seems to work and the border guards get what they want. Money. They creatively come up with reasons to tax our donated items in spite of our letters of authorization. In one case, they told us they didn't receive the letter of approval, then later explained the reason was that they were out of fax paper!

So when it became apparent that Covid restrictions were going to negatively impact peoples' income, we were concerned about the folks in our neighborhoods who struggle to put food on their table when times are good. We began to look for ways to increase the amount of food we give. Regularly we buy fresh vegetables from the market to give at our outreach days so of course those would remain constant. As gracious donors have increased their giving for food, we were able to add pasta and beans. Efren even made a small recipe sheet for a soup our recipients can make with the food that comes in their bags! Many people in San Diego have dropped off bags of beans and flour that we've been able to bring across and give away. I am so grateful for these people who stood in line during Covid restrictions to help us provide!

Of course rice is a big part of the Mexican diet, so I reached out to Marvin to see if he knew of a source for nutritional rice packets. He's sent some to us in the past and they were a big hit with our people. Each packet contains enough for a meal for six people. It consists of rice and is chocked full of vitamins and other nutritional elements to help people where hunger is an issue. He started looking, but with pandemic going on, these packets were really hard to find. Finally he messaged me, there was a warehouse in Arizona that had two pal-



We aim to put together a healthy bag of groceries for each family we serve



Armando (Spectrum staff) preparing bags to go out into the neighborhood

lets they could ship us. We were thrilled and started planning to receive the shipment! The next day however he informed me there were actually seven pallets we could have. Thirty minutes later the number changed again to eight, and a church from Michigan would cover the shipping! Some quick math tells us that eight pallets constitutes 10,368 packets. Marvin always does things big!

Now the only thing left to do was to figure out how to get all of these nourishing bags through the border and to our dorm in Tijuana for delivery. God was not done yet. He had plans for this as well. Paul Alvarado on our Spectrum staff had recently discovered that the pastor of his church had ties with the Israeli ambassador to Tijuana. Paul talked to his pastor and within days, contacts were being made to help us. It turns out, ambassadors are really good at moving things across the border as we were granted permission to bring in a truck with fifty-five cases of rice! God's orchestration of all of the required elements was active even before we had the need!

In a world that seems upside down and chaotic, the people we work with are immensely blessed by these bags of groceries. Every dollar given, every bag of food dropped off and rice pack that goes out is vital to the health and well being of each family. But it speaks more than just of nutritional value. It gives them a constant that they can rely on. The Christian missionaries who make up our staff aren't going anywhere. We're here and we love them. In an even greater way, God reveals His great love through these bags. He's present in spite of the chaos. They can turn to Him and count on Him. Fear and fatigue subside as hope pushes to the forefront. Our people need this hope. Our people need to see that God is still at work and He cares deeply about what they're going through. No matter what they've done, or what monstrous things they face, God is there, offering forgiveness, help and peace. These three are food for the weary soul. Thank you to every one of you who plays such an important part in our ministry!

From all of us at Spectrum,

Matt Kooi
Director of Spectrum Ministries



Grocery bag assembly line! Our staff preparing to go out and make deliveries.



With so many out of work, people are grateful for the much needed help with food for their families!



Two packs of rice go in every bag of groceries

"He upholds the cause of the oppressed and gives food to the hungry..." - Psalm 146:7a