

A New Perspective

January 2022



Our family on the day we moved from Michigan in 2013, and below a more recent shot.

Eight years ago when our family loaded up the Uhaul with all our earthly belongings and moved to Mexico, my four kids were still pretty young. Thirteen, eleven, nine and eight. As each of them grew, at different times, they made the move back to the States for their last year or so of high school to re-acclimate to life in the US and gain at least a small taste of a “normal” American high school experience. What struck me and what I am eternally grateful to God for is that each seemed to go back with a different perspective on life. They had been changed by their time in Mexico in ways that allowed them to appreciate their opportunity and realize that God is way bigger than the “first world” problems and challenges they faced.

It’s why I brought groups of students for nine years as a youth pastor, prior to our move. The goal was for them to see the sights, hear the sounds, and smell the smells of life in the Tijuana dump. Or roll up their sleeves, hammer nails and sometimes their thumbs, to help a family realize their dream of

having a house to raise their family. Or to play so hard with kids at an orphanage that they’re sweaty and worn out by the end of the day. I wanted them to experience a different language, see the broken down and half built structures painted with brightly colored paint, and be enveloped by the warm hospitableness of Mexican culture. I wanted them to see the hard things, but also the beautiful things of the culture, put there by God to bring Him glory. Why? So that they could understand that God is not a small “local God”, only at work in their particular youth group or in their current concerns whatever they may be. He’s way bigger than that! He’s at work all around the world, moving in hearts and drawing people to Him. And they can be a part of it, in the States or wherever God leads them. My pastor used to tell me when we would return from one of our trips, it’s like the things they were learning in our youth ministry were traveling from their heads down into their hearts during their week of serving in Mexico.

Obviously with the Pandemic, many groups have had to put their trips with us on hold. But I’m happy to say that as we begin 2022, the schedule is beginning to fill. And we’re getting ready. Currently we are working on a curriculum which our staff will be sharing with teams all about



Recent group from LA down building a house for a family just before Christmas!



Through your prayers and gifts, Spectrum has continued to reach people in need. This young girl represents one of the almost fifteen hundred kids that received a Christmas present this year. Thank you!!

how God uses regular people just like you and me, to reach the world with His love and salvation. Because of your faithful prayers and giving, our dorm in Tijuana is ready to house groups and our team is in place. Having been enabled by the same gifts and prayers, our ministry continued throughout the pandemic. In fact, through God's leading and provision, it actually grew. We're grateful now that we have many new faces as well as the old that He has given us to work with!

God has faithfully used Spectrum throughout the years to bring a different perspective about who He is and how He works to countless people, young and old. Some have gone back transformed and ready to serve in their local churches and communities. Others have followed God's call to be a part of what He's doing in other, more remote parts of the world. The question is, what does God have in store for you and your church? Maybe it's to commit to praying for the work here at Spectrum so that lives will be touched on both sides of the border. Or maybe to plan a trip to come down and serve. I know as Becky and I make our move back to Michigan, as soon as I can, I plan to bring a group from our

church and introduce them to Spectrum and the powerful ministry God is doing here. Is it because I want to spend time with the Spectrum staff who Becky and I consider our family? Or is it because Spectrum is now a part of us and will always be dear to our hearts? The answer for both questions is of course, yes. But it's also because we want people from all over the country to continue to gain a new perspective on who God is, how much He loves the world, and how He wants to use each of us to let the world know!

From all of us at Spectrum,

Matt Kooi
Director of Spectrum Ministries



Serving at the dump always brings a new perspective to those who are willing to go.



Spectrum has always been a place where believers come and serve those society has forgotten.

"Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is - His good, pleasing and perfect will." - Romans 12:2