

A New Year Lies Ahead

January 2023



One child stepped off the Spectrum bus with a gleaming smile on his face as he hugged his new toy. Another hopped up and down in excitement. Other kids held on to little dolls or raced their remote control cars around the sidewalk. I love Christmas. It is a time of great joy! We have spent this last month surrounded by Christmas music, toys, and grateful families who have had a chance to hear the gospel, receive some food, receive medical or other emergency care, receive a tarp, a blanket, or other aid. All of this is part of how we share Jesus' love with the communities we serve here in Tijuana.

We have seen very large turnouts in each neighborhood. In Ejido Lazaro Cardenas alone we saw over 500 people attend our outreach day. We were grateful to have had enough toys for each child who came. That is just one of seven neighborhoods we will have reached with gifts this season. We are on pace to surpass our goal of giving 1,800 gifts by the time our gift distributions come to a close the first week of January. Thank you for your generous support! It is what makes what we do here possible. I have heard many people in the neighborhoods express their heartfelt gratitude, so I pass their thanks on to you. Muchas Gracias!



Lift up your eyes around and see_ they all gather, they come to you.- Isaiah 49-18

What makes this gift distribution extra special is when we take into account the people who receive our ministry along with the gifts. Tijuana is a tough city, and some families fall through the cracks. "Martin" is a nine-year-old boy we have known for many years. The last six months have been particularly devastating for his family. Both his mom and dad struggle with drug addiction and this is part of what chains his family to poverty. Five months ago Martin's mother fell out of favor with the gang that controls drug distribution in her neighborhood. This led to the gang killing Martin's older sister. They sent his mother a video of the act. Three months ago, ridden with guilt and despair, Martin's mom tried to take her own life. She survived and was sent to a rehab center where she got cleaned up. Martin's mom came to our outreach early last month and we were able to help her get some of the



paperwork she needs to apply for a job and try to get up on her feet. But the road ahead is difficult. Martin's life is an unthinkable storm, and challenges abound. He is one of the kids we minister to. He is one of the children that we reach with a Christmas gift. He is one that we take to camp and to the church at the top of the hill to the kids club. Even in this crazy dark storm that rages in his life, God can set him on a different path. The darkness is thick, but God's light has overcome the darkness.

For a moment, we get to take Martin a gift. We get to remember him at Christmas. For a moment, he gets to smile, and just be a child. Oh, he has a big beaming smile! And the work lies ahead. Coming alongside families in their times of need gives us an opportunity to minister to the families in the communities we serve. It is like a small opening, a shot, a chance to bring the gospel, to show someone a different path. The needs are great. At times, the darkness can seem overwhelming. But we serve a great and mighty God! As the Christmas season comes to a close, a new year lies ahead. And there is much work to be done. Thank you for standing by us as we reach out to some of the dark and forgotten corners of the city.

John 1:5 "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it."

For all of us at Spectrum Ministries,

Paul Alvarado
Spectrum Ministries Director



Happy with her new scooter!



A kiss for her new baby



Picking a toy is a lot of fun



Sharing the good news