

Breaking Beyond Poverty

July 2023



We teach the value of an education

Years ago I was dropping off some youth after a Bible study. The teens lived in an area of town where we had been told not to go because the gang members would break our windows. The local boys looked rather tough, but I made an effort to get to know them, and friendships were made as they enjoyed the sodas and chips I brought them. As I dropped off some youth around 10 that night I saw the girls getting ready for a night of hanging out and watching some friends race cars. The whole street was coming alive. These kids were poor, struggling, and had little knowledge of the disciplines that could help them later in life. I was eager to share Jesus, and to work with them. I looked over at a fellow minister and said, "I love serving here." He turned to me and replied, "Then

you love all of Tijuana, because it's like this everywhere."

Most of the kids on that street that night never broke out of the clutches of poverty. Poverty is often generational. There is a culture in the slums that pulls people like a strong current to decisions that limit future options. It is not enough to convince a youth to stay in school. You also have to convince the family and others who are influential in that youth's life. There are always pressing needs, and having a young teen get a job, even a low-paying one, can really help a poor family get by. On the other hand, schooling can look like a waste of time and resources, although it is probably the clearest way out of poverty for most. For families that do choose education, there are many costs. Uniforms, school supplies, and transportation can strangle a family's small budget. I remember asking a young man why he and his sister were not in school like their younger brother. "Mom could only afford to send one of us," he replied. Can you imagine having to choose which of your children gets to go to school?



I'm excited about our school supply distribution this month. Our goal is to provide 600 kids throughout our neighbor-

Education is important



It's a joy to support young students!

hoods with school supply packets. The packets will include Crayola colored pencils, Elmer's glue, 5 composition notebooks, pencils, sharpeners, highlighters, rulers, erasers, and more! We want to bless the kids with high-quality supplies from the list the school gives them. We don't want them to struggle with broken pencil tips. For some, this packet of supplies will be a great help. For others, it may help the parents dare to send one more of their kids to school.

The really neat thing is that getting an education can have generational effects on a family. When a child becomes the first kid to go to college, we often see younger siblings follow and continue their education as well. How much of an impact does helping a kid not drop out of school have? It has the potential to change the course of generations.

This is also why we support families' individual schooling needs throughout the year. That may mean buying school uniform shoes or helping students with good grades cover transportation costs. Recently we helped a family get a tablet so a young man could download digital test books. Sometimes we help adults like the mom who will finish nursing school in August, or two sisters who are in college. I recently met with a young girl who is a straight-A student. We helped her through high school, and now she is planning to study law next year. Each of these are people who approached us to ask for help. It is truly a joy to connect determined youth with support that can mean the difference between following their dreams or dropping out of school. And in all of this we see the door open wide to the gospel! Love opens doors.

My heart is full of joy as we receive reports from a young girl who was recently released from the youth jail. We were able to help her get settled down in a Christian home for girls a few hours south. We see God's grace in her life! We are overjoyed to see her smile. A smile may seem like a small thing, but it is a complete change from her demeanor when she first came to the youth jail. This came about through years of ministry. God is bringing fruit to the work Carlos and Robin are doing in the youth jail. How mighty are His works!

Thanks for your prayer and support!

For all of us at Spectrum Ministries,


Paul Alvarado,
Director



When we share with the needy we are often met with a smile



Psalms 92:4 "For you, O LORD, have made me glad by your work; at the works of your hands I sing for joy."