

Gifts and the Gospel



“When was the last time you got to open a new gift?” Arturo asked a boy who came to our Christmas outreach. The boy replied, “Last year when you came.” For so many of the kids, the gift they get from Spectrum is the only Christmas gift they receive. We keep that close to our heart as we bring gifts and the gospel to the poor communities we serve in Tijuana. We are overjoyed to reach so many!

January 2024



Christmas has been a wonderful season of ministry. It amazes me to think that thousands of Tijuana’s poor attended the Spectrum outreach activities last month. When we wrapped up in early January, we had given over 2000 gifts, thousands of meals, hundreds of blankets and tarps, and a whole lot of Christmas cheer. It is really exciting when you get to see individual kids respond to their gifts. The joyful expressions and big smiles really show how much joy a Christmas gift can bring to a child. So many of the families we serve are struggling to make ends meet and can’t afford gifts for their own families, and they are very grateful for the help they receive. We also had our “tech table” again this year where we provided batteries for the toys that needed them and helped with the “some assembly required” toys. Some of the younger kids can’t wait and they open the gifts on the spot, while others save the gifts for a celebration in their home. We are very happy to reach so many!



But the best gift we can offer these kids and their families is the gospel. Many of the families are familiar with Christianity, and they may have a Bible in their home or walk by a church often. But a Bible won’t do any good unless it is opened, a church building will be of little use unless we walk in, and knowledge of God is just knowledge until we surrender our lives to Him. We had the great privilege of inviting the crowds to turn to Him. We also shared the gospel with all of the kids. Before they chose their gift, we brought the children in groups to our Christmas tree which had a pile of small





Part of the crowd in Pueblos Magicos

wrapped gifts underneath its boughs. Then we shared a brief message about how Christ is God's gift to the world that was given because of His great love for each of us. The children then got to pick a small gift from under the tree before they went on to choose their bigger (unwrapped) gift. It was a fun gospel-teaching object lesson presented in an understandable way for the children. All tied to a fun extra gift! We are excited that all of the kids got to hear the gospel.



This year we also wanted to have a Christmas blessing and encouragement for the people who serve in the ministries around us. This includes orphanages, the seniors' home, the youth rehab, and, for the first time, the guards and office workers at the youth jail. We brought nice gifts for the staff in all of these places, and in the youth jail we hosted a Christmas celebration with food and several prizes to raffle off for staff. They told us they had never had someone do that for them. Carlos shared the gospel with the group, and of the over 30 police guards and office staff in attendance, 16 gave their life to Christ! Praise God!

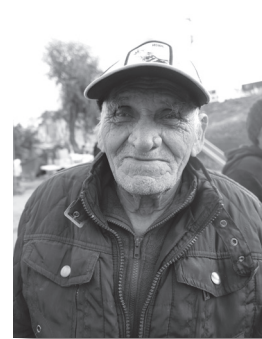


In the midst of this celebration, we continue to help families with needs. Maria is a lady who was suffering intense pain, which we now know was due to cancer, and was hitting a brick wall with her limited options to seek help. She would go to a hospital to get a shot to dull the pain knowing that it would only last for hours and the intense pain would return. We helped her get the studies and care she needs. She is just over 30 years old.

We will continue to help her in this next chapter which will involve chemo. Another family asked for help for a young mother who has fallen into drugs and has turned to prostitution. The family fears for the safety of the woman's 6-year-old daughter and 3-year-old boy. People fall into dark holes in this city. Jesus is the answer. Pray for us, and specifically our staff member Lily as she deals with so many difficult situations.



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Thank you for your support. You equip us to be able to do what we do and to respond to the many needs of the families that we serve. We are looking forward to a great new year of ministry. God bless!

For all of us at Spectrum Ministries,

Paul Alvarado
Director

Psalm 5:11 "But let all who take refuge in you rejoice; let them ever sing for joy, and spread your protection over them, that those who love your name may exult in you."



Juan Guillen pointing out a leaky roof at the church building- a potential project for us



Pastor Juan Guillen