

History Highlights



“Forty Years, Three Directors, One Mission”

Spectrum has had only three directors during its forty years. In today’s world of constantly changing employment, that is remarkable. What is more remarkable is that the main thrust of the ministry – helping the poor as Jesus would have – continues unchanged.

Our founder Pastor Von was a trailblazer and a maverick. Many remember his outrageous pranks with the youth and his willingness to challenge the status quo while remaining rock-solid on the things which really mattered. He never asked for more than he gave himself, but even in his later years he worked with the energy of someone half his age. However, everyone knew that at some point Von would be unable to lead Spectrum. Would Spectrum survive without his strong personality?

In 2002 Aaron Passmore joined the staff and in 2004 he became the director. Spectrum was in Aaron’s DNA - his dad was one of Von’s youth and his parents took him to Mexico during the early days of Spectrum. Like Von, Aaron had a heart for discipleship, but he was also fluent in Spanish. He used these gifts to pour into the Mexican staff and to foster a team approach to ministry. He challenged the team to put God first, and he showed them how to have personal devotions. Family was his second priority, and he encouraged the staff to spend time with their families and

gave them the flexibility to do so, especially at important times. Aaron also developed the idea of using a theme for each annual boys' camp, enlarged the staff for camp so the boys could have more interaction with leaders, and expanded the recreational activities. After ten years Aaron heard God calling him to a position in Ecuador, and the search was on for a new director.

Matt Kooi came to us from Michigan. He was an experienced leader who had been bringing his youth group to work with Spectrum for years. Matt's passion is to continue working with the poor and to build connections with the local churches and strengthen them. He appreciated the impact Spectrum was having through its kids' clubs and outreach days, but he realized that the Spectrum staff scattered to their homes at the end of the day, while a local church would be there for continued discipleship. Additionally, Matt sees community development programs, such as the haircutting training we offered a few years ago, to be an essential part of a holistic approach to ministry. Matt desires to meet immediate spiritual and physical needs while empowering people to eventually meet those needs on their own through spiritual maturity and job skills. He is following in Von and Aaron's footsteps in serving the least of these.

