

## A Note From Deaconess Sonja About the Mexico Mission

**WARNING: TRANSPARENCY ALERT!** I usually travel down to Imuris and Benjamin Hill twice a year. I have never questioned whether or not the time away from my family or the stress of traveling into Mexico and back is worth it. I have, however, been fervently in prayer lately wondering if the Lord wants me to continue with this mission work. After working with Arturo and Lilia for over 8 years and the struggles with getting the orphanage in Benjamin Hill up and running, I wasn't sure if our presence was helping. Then we traveled down with a mission team in October!

We did exactly what we always do when we go down to Imuris. We shopped for and delivered food baskets, provided and served meals, worked on a number of projects, took almost 50 kids and staff out for pizza. I led a women's Bible study and had lots of time with the kids. What was so different? What happened that made me walk away more committed to this mission than ever before?

The last two evenings we were in Imuris, Pastor Mark, I, and a couple other team members sat down with Arturo and Lilia to "talk business." There are always things to consider as we continue to work alongside them. The topic on our hearts these two nights was Benjamin Hill and its future with the Lutheran Synod of Mexico. There is still hope that we will have a permanent Lutheran presence there for the children and community. But that wasn't the best part.



Lilia started talking about a few encounters she had recently. The first one she told us about was a young man that had started coming down to Kids' Kingdom with Northwest Christian Academy (Phoenix) as a young boy. He has now graduated from high school and came down for one more trip. He sought out Lilia and was so proud to tell her that because of the impact they had had on him over the years, he was now committing to a year-long mission endeavor to share the love and Gospel of Jesus Christ. The second encounter was with another young man that had lived in the neighborhood growing up and was impacted by the activities that Arturo and Lilia provided the kids. Think mini VBS-type activities sharing the love of Christ. Out of nowhere this young man, who works with a local financial company that chooses one organization a year to gift a monetary donation, shows up at Kids' Kingdom with a fellow co-worker. He proceeds to tell them that because of the impact they had on him, he had suggested they get the donation this year. He was proud to tell Lilia and Arturo that the company chose them!

Then it hit me. Our support of Arturo and Lilia allows them to keep caring for the children and sharing the Gospel. It allows for the lives of young and old alike to be impacted by the power of God's Word. Their witness and work as the hands and feet of Christ makes a difference, and *we all* help make that happen! Thank you for your support of this mission and of the teams that travel down there. I know now, and will remember next time I am in doubt, that mission work takes patience and wisdom. Years and years of patience and wisdom. Thanks be to God that He never stops providing and caring for His children.

—Deaconess Sonja