

Wed Dec. 20, 2017

People are generally good. People are actually very amazing and generous! So far this year there have been little miracle after miracle of kind friends and family who were willing to contribute time, goods, or money to someone they don't know and will likely never meet. It's humbling to see how much people really do care and are willing to share. I'm so blessed to witness this kind of love. Donations of items and money were still coming in up until the time we left, and even then some while we were gone. Amazing. Much of this year's report will come through the eyes of the service team members that participate with us.

After driving through the first major snow storm of the winter for 7.5 hours we finally made it to St. George. The weather cleared up and could relax a little.



Thurs. Dec. 21, 2017. The texts started rolling in as people arrived in San Diego safely. The service team was larger this year than ever. Roberts family, Duane, Caleb, Rebecca, Graves family and Lousia, Edwards family, Reid and Karen Heiss, Christensen family, Slichta family, Hunt Family. 47 people. Wow, here we go.

Friday Dec. 22

Bright and early, we met up in the hotel parking lot, said a prayer and we were off.



Border Crossing! Even though we have never really had a serious problem at the border, we are always cautious and want to be ready to answer any questions they may have. Here are some funny comments from the Christensen family, about crossing the border -

“Getting across the border was intense. For some reason they wanted to X-ray our car. I'm not sure why. The good news is they did not find the bodies in the back we were trying to smuggle into Mexico ;), the entire group was x-rayed and searched, and... we got through! They told us no pictures but some of the kids were taking them, then Marcia came out of the x-ray machine driving and taking pictures of all of us standing on the side of the road. Gringos :)”

Our usual ‘no stopping in Tijuana’ rule was broken, as we pulled to a side street to pick up our last traveler, Caleb and all the donations of clothes and toys he had gathered that filled a suburban! He was a missionary serving in San Quintin 4 years ago when we first visited there. We love it that he was willing to drive from AZ to meet us, and spend Christmas with us!

Reid and Karen were the first to reach the hotel, and a surprise awaited them. Reid explains it well -

“As I was unpacking the car, a small group of boys walked past the hotel and they all waved at me. Because I am now at the destination, I could take the time to wave back at no cost to the schedule. So I waved back. The boys walked on and I thought nothing of it. Now, keep in mind, the hotel is about 2-3 miles from town and off the beaten path. You really don't accidentally walk past this hotel.

A few seconds after the boys passed, they came back to get a better look at me. By this time, Karen was with me at the car. All of a sudden this group of boys ran towards the car. I alerted Karen, as she could speak to these boys rushing towards us and I could not, and in an instant she walked towards the group and gave one boy a big hug.

It was Armando! (Armando was a boy that they had met last year). He explained they recognized me from last year soon after they waved and they were hoping Karen was with me.”

Armando was living with their uncle, just down the street from the hotel. Hugs and laughs, and I happen to know she gave them M&M’s too. What are the chances these boys whose families were investigating the church last year would be right there, right then. Coincidence? I think not. Here’s Armando.



The LDS branch in San Quintin was holding the Christmas party, so everyone needed to get settled in the hotel and campground, and hustle over to the church. The primary was doing a darling nativity, with music and singing. e



Karen was nice enough to play the piano for the Christmas whole program, with only a few minutes notice. She has amazing talent.

The young women did a dance that was choreographed by a mia maid for her personal progress project. They had even sewn their own Christmas skirts for the dance. (and roped a few of the young men into the dance)



The Relief Society even got together and did a choreographed dance... IN COSTUME. !
It was a hoot.



It was nice to see friends, even the little girls Aracely and Rosita who ran to Cami and Megan. At the end of the party, dancing broke out in fine style. Those folks in Mexico can dance! Marinn shared something remarkable that she noticed. As she and Kale were dancing and laughing with the kids, it felt like family, even with the language barrier.



Saturday Dec. 23

We picked up our “rental car” from Juan. (He doesn’t really rent cars, he sells a few used cars and allows us to rent one from him for a week). He shared that he is still sober since Ramon and Randy challenged him to stop drinking 2 years ago. We wondered how he could be introduced to the missionaries or even a branch member. Ah ha, we were going to have the missionaries come to the BBQ on Christmas Day, so we invited Juan too. Hee hee.

Off to the church for the sorting and wrapping day. Santa’s workshop is always so much fun. 3 eagle scouts had gathered enough gifts from home to provide Christmas delight to 62 families!



Everyone had been given items to donate as well, so there was plenty of extras to add to the gift piles, and provide for a few who had been left off the list. Any extras that were left were gathered for the young women to sell at a later time, to raise money for a temple trip.



There was music playing, and so many hands doing so much work, it was a sight to see. Missionaries joined us too. The Inda family was there helping, and one of their girls, Nancy, told Chari Graves, that her parents had said that if any of the kids took any of the toys while we were wrapping, they would be grounded for 4 months! HA.





The gifting program was a different this year, as we wanted to expand and do a little missionary work with it. Last September each branch member was asked to choose a non-member or less active family to fellowship and provide a Sub-for Santa Christmas for them. The 62 families included all the branch members and the fellowship families.

When all was wrapped and labeled, we divided into 5 groups and conquered. Each group took a branch member/missionaries so they knew where to go, and their bags of gifts to deliver. Each group did as many deliveries as they could before dark, and we would all finish up the next day after church. I love doing the gifts, because it gives us an excuse to go to the homes of the members, and hug them and share with them that they are loved by us and by our Savior. They are always so grateful. Many were so excited to go with us to their fellowshiping families, to deliver gifts and share that love with their friends and neighbors. The branch members really stepped up. The fellowship families they choose were some of the most in need we've seen, and the branch got to feel the joy of giving and caring for these families as we prepared and delivered items to them.

The Christensens described it this way - "Something I really, really loved about this year is being with the missionaries and the way they handled things. They invited each of us to testify of Christ while in their homes. Because the branch members had chosen friends, my children were able to stand next to the missionaries and testify of Christ to people who were not members of the church. It was so, so real, the spirit was strong and such a sweet experience. The spirit was strong"



The Serapio family was one such family. They were friends of Karina Inda (branch member). Karina took us to their humble home, which had a kitchen room/fire area with a mattress for one wall, and sticks tied together for another wall. A separate detached room served as a living and sleeping space, all with dirt floors, no heat or running water. We learned that the grandparents were raising 14 children, as the parents had abandoned them. We walked in, carrying present after present, and the astonishment and smiles were almost overwhelming. Karina handed them a picture of Christ and explained to them that we were her friends from her church, and that all of us wanted to share with them the love we felt at this time of year from Jesus. The grandmother was emotional, and the grandfather said that he knew God watched over them and kept the wolves away. He thanked us over and over again and asked God to bless us. The grandmother said she didn't know that Karina went to church, and wanted to know which one would teach her to be so kind. She wanted to know more. Their poverty was as stunning as was their happiness. My dad was with us, and couldn't believe that when asked, the grandma responded that she didn't know where her daughter/parents of the children were, but said it without any anger or malice. He mentioned how shocking and rewarding and painful it was to witness what we had just seen and heard. The pictures below are of their family/sleeping area and the 2nd is in the doorway of their "kitchen area".



Another group went to go visit and take gifts to the branch member Irma. Irma was thankful for the gifts and carefully set them aside, and immediately wanted to take them to see her neighbor. They had the gifts ready for the neighbor, and marched right over there. Irma's friend was surprised and delighted to see her at her door. They shared a message about Jesus and Megan felt prompted a few times to share her thoughts. She got the opportunity and told the friend that their hope was that she would take this kindness and find someone in her life to bless. They left feeling the spirit.

The Heiss family wrote, "the last home we delivered to that night had the biggest impact on all of us. The missionaries asked the members who referred this family to show us where they lived. This last home was in the poorest area of the town – the area where there was no electricity and no running water. Last year, we saw several homes in this area that were beyond any standard of poverty we had ever seen. But this humble home was far worse than those.

The gate to the property was barely connected to the post. There were several structures in the yard resembling chicken coops but the chickens had long since abandoned as they were in such poor repair. The house was a small rectangular building about as large as a pickup truck. It was so dark when we arrived that we were sure no one could be home. In fact, we hoped no one really lived in a shack that was so decrepit.



In Mexico, you do not walk up and knock on the door. Instead you stand out by the fence and yell: "Buenas tardes!" hoping that someone inside will hear you and let you in. The missionaries yelled "Buenas tardes" several times and no one came. We were about to leave when a young woman poked her head out of the door.

The missionaries explained we had gifts for her and her family and that she was referred to us by her friends. This shy young woman came out of her home to let us through her gate. We had about 12-15 people in our group. Why she would open her humble house to us still surprises me. But she did.

When we entered the home, our hearts melted. There were only two twin beds in the house. The wooden walls were so filled with holes that we could see outside light pouring in. There was a small box used to store what little food she had. The box was also used for a nightstand.

This wonderful, trusting young woman had a small two-year-old daughter. Both were sick with a cold. It was so dark in the house that some of our group used their cell phones for flashlights. We could barely fit everyone into her home. But we did. We sang some Christmas carols to her, gave her the large bag of gifts, and shared with her our feelings about Christ.

She was such a gracious host to so many Americans. I wonder what really went through her mind. Why would a bunch of Americans, most of whom could not speak Spanish, come to see her and then give her a large bag of wrapped presents?

When we left her house, the group was silent. We had never seen someone live in such horrible circumstances yet be so trusting. Everyone decided that we would return to this home as part of the food drive we would do on Tuesday. We all wanted to give as much as possible to this poor family. This is one of the main purposes of why we serve and an example of how true Christian service blesses both the giver and the receiver.”



With 5 groups delivering gifts, there were many done on Saturday night, but not all of them, so there would still be plenty to do Sunday afternoon. Tired and hungry, we stopped at one of our favorite taco shops. Most of our groups were already there too!



Sunday, Christmas Eve

We arrived at church about 5 minutes early. The branch president came up and asked Ramon if we would mind taking care of the whole sacrament meeting program. Yep, 5 minutes notice. Ok here we go. We stood at the door, and as the rest of the families from our group arrived, we asked each family to do something. After the shock wore off, they were all willing, and boy did we have some talented people! That that short of notice, we did 2 solos, 1 duet, 1 quartet, 1 song with American and Mexican youth and 1 group number. 4 people bore sweet Christmas testimonies. We noticed tears from the branch president and many of the branch members, along with our group.





Fish tacos for lunch, and a quick clothes change so we could finish delivering gifts. Our 5 groups set out again, and this time we had the Zamora family with us to show us around.

The Hunt and Slichta families took a walker that had been donated to Elena, an older lady in the



branch who has diabetes and rheumatoid arthritis. Even though she was probably in pain most of the time, she is a tough cookie. She shared her conversion story and her love for family history. She saves her pesos and tries to make a trip to the Tijuana temple each month. This tender lady inspired Jayna because of her spirit, her drive and her determination in things that matter eternally.

The Edwards family ended up at a fellowshipping family that was the uncle of Armando and Jesus! Those darling boys that made friends with us last year, asked for Josh by name. Someone in the branch was mindful of them and had submitted their names. Come to find out there were 3 families living there.

I asked the Graves family about one of their memorable deliveries. Mitch said that one of the branch members that received gifts had put his brother as his fellowship family. When the Graves family went to deliver, the brother and sister-in-law happen to be there. They asked the Graves if they would consider singing a song for them. (They must have been paying attention in church, the Graves have got some pipes!) The branch member also asked that they bear their testimonies of families and temples, for his brother's family. In hushed tones, many of them spoke of their love for their family and bore witness of the Plan of Salvation. The peace of the spirit filled the room and Danielle could feel what was being communicated, even in the different language.

Fortino, the self taught YSA pianist, only member in his family, and convert at 16 was so excited when a group of us came to visit with his gifts. He took them to his room, a quiet place to visit, and they saw his piano and a stack of music knee high. The piano was not a full width keyboard, was missing many of the exterior panels and was terribly out of tune, but he played skillfully and beautifully. He played for them, and they became better friends as they sang Christmas songs together.

The missionaries were with a group and as they visited a fellowship family, the family asked questions about the church. They gave a Book of Mormon and asked if they could come back and share more. They made an appointment to return.

The gifts for a larger branch family fit in 2 bags, not one. The delivering family forgot this, and only took in one of the bags. They exchanged hugs and plenty of 'feliz navidad's' and went back to the car and saw the other bag. They went back to the door, and found the family already opening the gifts. As they brought in the 2nd bag, they were invited to sit with the family as they finished opening the presents. The little girl opened a doll, and embraced it quickly before all the wrapping was off. She kept it close to her heart with one hand as she kept trying frantically to gather the wrapping around it with the other hand, all the while saying, "gracias" over and over again with her darling lisp.

As were leaving our last house, we got to our rental car to see the very flat tire. Hmmmm. Ramon called Juan, who we rented it from, I called our other groups to see who was close. The Zamora family decided to stay with us until we were safely on our way, even though it was Christmas Eve. Caleb and Lee came, and so did the Graves. Juan showed up to assess the situation. The rest of us went back to the campground, and Lindsey and Ramon stayed with Juan and the Zamoras and the car. Bro Zamora and Juan went to his shop, to get another tire that fit. Come to find out, Juan's ex-wife's mother lived near Zamoras. He had met them before and they made the connection again. Bingo! Juan now had a friend in the branch, and Bro Zamora now knew where Juan's shop was located. Funny how Heavenly Father allows delays to create connections. When tire was fixed, Juan followed Ramon back to the campground, so we could give him the gifts we had brought for his family. He was surprised and very grateful.



We all loaded up and took the Zamora family to dinner, since now it was late, and she didn't have time to prepare any food for their family Christmas Eve dinner. They were a blessing to us as they stayed with us while tire was fixed. 6 yr old Rosita challenged Ramon to a race to see who could finish their soup first. That turned into a hot sauce eating contest, she won both times! However, once the salsa heat set in, she chugged an entire red fanta soda to cool it down. Of course this compounded the problem and the red fanta all came back up. She cried for a minute but then smiled and proudly held up the prize... Ramon's 20 pesos that she had won!



Monday, Christmas Day

Santa somehow found us in the motorhome and filled stockings for everyone! He even brought Christmas and Star Wars PJ's.



The group spent Christmas day at the beach. 47 silly people laughing, eating watermelon, playing volleyball and swimming in the chilly Pacific Ocean. The few Mexicans that were walking on the beach in their winter coats looked at us like we were completely insane. It was about 75 degrees and felt wonderful.



Ramon, Lee, Reid and Karen went shopping for the group BBQ we would have that evening. While Ramon was finding items needed, he ran into Lalo, one of our friends from the branch. Lalo is recently married and now has a newborn baby. We made sure there were some solar lanterns, and a solar panel that fed a battery and LED bulb, in his bag of gifts that were delivered the day before. When they saw each other at the market, they embraced and Lalo paused for a minute. He thanked Ramon for the lights, and asked, "How did you know I needed light?" Ramon said, "we asked and were told you didn't have power in your home, so we wanted you to have more light." Lalo replied, "It's a better gift than I could ever ask for, it gives me 4+ more hours every day. We need light and you brought it to us." His genuine gratitude was apparent in his eyes.

BBQ with the whole group, complete with tres leches cake... that was a sight to see. And just as we had hoped, Juan the car rental guy came. He laughed at us as we did our crazy white elephant gift exchange. Not going to lie, the white elephant gift exchange was hilarious. Who brought the dog bone anyway?

Group games till late, so much fun!!!



Tuesday Dec. 26



Part of our group loaded up the school supplies that Jake Hunt had gathered for his eagle project, and they were off to visit the preschool/daycare that was receiving the love. They were blessed to have had many books, crayons, coloring books, glues sticks, etc donated and were able to hand deliver these things to the school. This school used to be an orphanage, but now helps mostly to care for kids free of charge, while most parents are working in the fields all day. In the past, if the parents couldn't take care of them, they would often give them up and drop them off at an orphanage. This provides a way for families to stay together, and children to get basic meals and education. It is run by a church and they are loving, bright, sweet Christlike people. Marcia said of this visit -

“Because we went at nap time, half of the children were asleep. The teachers were so happy to see us and wanted us to not miss

out on seeing the sleeping children. They led a few of us at a time into the next classroom where the lights were off and we saw children curled up in a corner on the floor. They didn't have any blankets or pillows or soft mats to sleep on, but they looked so peaceful and precious snuggled up to each other. They had their shoes and coats on to help them stay warm while they were sleeping. We all covered our mouths to keep us from squealing when we saw 2 adorable tiny girls holding hands with each other while they were napping.

We went back to join the several children that were awake. We asked them to sing some songs for us. They did. We sang some Christmas songs for them too. We went outside to a grassy area and shared some cookies and juice with them. They were so happy to eat those treats. The children wanted to run around and play tag or skip around with our kids. It was so cute to see



the bonding that magically happens even though we only knew a few words to say to them in Spanish. They were grateful for our visit and the things we brought to them. The other part of our group headed to the market in town and started the enjoyable spectacle that is shopping for the food drive. Imagine 20+ people purchasing enough food and staples to last 2 months for 47 families. The carts were so full! What a blast! Danielle, Louisa and Lindsey got to talking to an employee, Carlos, at the market about what we were doing, and the conversation turned to the gospel. He was called away but before we left the store, they had him paged so they could talk to him again. There must have been 2 men named Carlos working, because a different guy came to talk to them. They bore their testimonies of the Book of Mormon, and this Carlos said that he could use this in his life, so they gave him info to get in touch with missionaries.

After all the shopping was done, the cashier couldn't believe what was happening, and was working so hard to keep up. The gal that was helping to box everything up was tireless in her efforts to help. Tips were given to the cashier and the locals who had helped so much to box and load everything.





Back at the campground, sorting the food and supplies. Each chair represented the food for one family. Work never seemed like so much fun!



Reid explained the food drive - "Once the food was sorted, packaged, labeled, and loaded into the cars, we broke up into the same groups that were used to deliver the presents. Only this time Thad no idea who the recipients would be. Instead, we drive out to the poorest parts of town and wait for someone in the group to feel inspired to stop and give food.

The food drive was done in an area named Paradise, but it certainly isn't paradise.

As I made my way back to the car, a humble woman approached me to see if she could have some food. As I couldn't understand her, I had Karen interpret. She invited us in. When we saw her home, we were all deeply saddened.



I have never seen such a humble, impoverished home. There was no front door, only a long, thin piece of fabric covering the entrance to her house. When I entered the home, it had a dirt floor and had room enough for one twin bed. It was so dark in the house that I could hardly see the bed, which was the only place we could put the food boxes. She had three children living in this small home and all shared the same bed. This is the whole point of the food drive, to seek out the poor and destitute and to provide them a glimmer of hope.

The hardest part of the food drive is not being able to help everyone. There are so many poor people and focusing only on 47 families, while a great thing, makes you yearn to help more in any way you can.”



Edwards shared, “Our family, along with Megan Roberts and Caleb Cerdhe, drove to a very impoverished area called Paraiso. We said a prayer that we would be guided to those whom we were supposed to give this much needed food to. The first house we stopped at, the lady saw us she said, “You remembered me!” This surprised us because we in fact did NOT remember her! Haha! We didn’t tell her that though. Apparently someone in our group had chosen her home last year as well. She said that because we had given her food and supplies last year they were able to afford to put a roof on their home. She began to cry and said that God had sent us and that he did not forget her family. It was a very touching moment. I believe God wanted us to go to her home so we could see for ourselves what good came from the service of our group last year. What a blessing!”

“The most memorable experience for me that night was when we went to a home that had three children. They were six, five, and three years old. The parents invited us into their home. They immediately apologized for having no electricity. We told him it was just fine and they didn’t need to worry, there was just enough light that we get all see each other still. Caleb told them why we were there and Rilynne (15 yrs old) shared her testimony with them. I told him that I was so grateful to meet them and their family. They seemed pretty quiet while we were in their home, but as we were leaving the mother ran out after us crying. She told us that she had been praying for help. Her husband had lost his job and they didn’t have any food in their home. She said they hadn’t had food since Christmas Eve, which was Sunday. It was now Tuesday! I began to cry right along with her. Megan and I both hugged her while she talked to us. She wanted to know if there was anything she could do to repay us. Lee told her that if two Elders ever stopped at their home that she should listen to them! Always good to put in a plug for the missionaries! It was hard for me to leave that family. I just wanted to keep hugging all of them! I’m so grateful that we were able to help them in a little way.”

One thing that touched Duane while we were doing the food drive, was a young boy, maybe 6 years old, walking to the corner hut that was the store for the neighborhood. As we stood by the store, he offered the boy a piece of candy. He refused. The store keeper said he might take it from her, so he gave it to her, then she handed it to the boy, and he still refused. When asked why, he said that his mother had told him not to take candy from strangers. Ah, mothers are alike everywhere! He brought out his 10 pesos (\$.40), and bought a single candle, and walked off again, to take the nights only light back to his home.

“One home we went to was a bit of a miracle. It was dark and we had one basket of goods left. So we quickly stopped at a home that was easily accessible. When We all took a closer look we noticed that it was actually a really nice house and the people obviously had enough. When the owners came out Caleb asked what we should do. Lee said to ask the people of they knew anyone who could use some help. The man got really excited and said that yes he did know someone who could really use the help and that they lived around the corner. He had us follow him and led us to a tiny little shack. It was maybe 12x12 with cardboard walls. The family invited us into their home. They had 5 children plus the mom and dad. There was a large bed in a corner where they all slept together, a dilapidated couch in another corner. In the center of this room was an overturned bucket with 3 candles burning on top of it for light. Caleb explained why we were there and what we were doing. They were so grateful! The man began sharing his testimony with us on how God’s hand is in everything. He said God sent us to their family because God hasn’t forgotten them. He said we came so far to find them in their humble home. The neighbor who led us to this house looks after this family and gave the children balls for Christmas. It was beautiful to see how the neighborhood was looking out for each other. I think the man spoke more than we did! He just continued to praise God and thank us. It was a beautiful experience!”



Tannis Graves mentioned that during the food drive she was taken back to the days of her own mission. She had forgotten how most of the world lives, and was grateful for this humbling reminder. “It is overwhelming to see babies sharing beds with chickens.”

After one delivery, Matt Graves saw a boy walking by wearing a Yankee hat and asked if he liked baseball. When that was translated, the boys eyes lit up and he started to tell about all the wonderful baseball things he had seen, and was collecting. Matt remembered something, ran back to the van, and grabbed his baseball. Hurrying back to the boy before we went on with delivering, he handed the boy

the ball. Delight broke out on his face and he yelled, “this is the last thing I need, I have a bat! Gracias, Gracias!!!!”

As we brought the boxes of food to another family, we learned there were 11 people living there, a grandmother, 3 of her kids and their kids. It was close to dark, and the grandmother was by the fire, in the corner of the yard, cooking something. The other adults invited us to bring the food into the home, and when we turned around I noticed that the grandmother was crying. I alerted Ramon to ask her what was wrong and if we could do anything for her. She said that she was crying because she was making beans....and then she gestured to the food that was now in the house. She was overcome. You could see the weight on her face, the burden of responsibility to feed her family was visible. She said she only had beans, but would we like to stay and eat with them. Oh, what a generous woman. It's so interesting that her first response was to share. We thanked her and went on our way, touched that she was emotional and grateful.

It seemed that the people this year had more desperation in their eyes than in years past. We've never had people come to us when they figured out what we were doing. The Heiss family told about their experience with the Christensens -

“Now the unstated goal of the food drive is to seek guidance on who needs food. But this time we stayed in this single neighborhood as women came out to see if we could donate food to them. They are all so poor, so passing out most of the food in a small neighborhood was as good as driving around seeking out those in need.”



The Hunts, Slichtas and Randy chose a house, and explained to the lady what they were doing. She asked if they had brought food to her home last year at Christmas? She said someone left food and oranges at her home, with her 4 children while she was away working. (We've done



oranges every year, so that was a good indicator it may have been us.) She thanked them so much for the food last year and now again today. She excitedly invited them in and was so happy to visit for a minute. She told them that she has never had visitors. She had no family, her husband had left her, and she and her kids had never had anyone stop by their home with a

warm greeting. The good food and the caring smiles they shared that day really made a difference for her.

We found another family that we had visited last year. It looked familiar, and then Ramon asked the father if they had a dog last year named Gringo. He was a bit embarrassed but said yes. It WAS them! Their one room home was covered in plastic last year, and they had used water bottle lids as washers with the nails to hold the plastic in place. This year they had built another room. It was so good to see how excited they were about the progress they were making.





Darkness fell, and we made our way back to the hotel, and got something to eat at the restaurant there. We all knew the morning would bring goodbyes, as it was the day we would be leaving. It was so much fun to be together!!

Wednesday Dec. 27

We were the last ones to leave San Quintin that morning. Everyone was headed north, some to stay in Ensenada for some fun and recreation, and some to cross the border and stay in San Diego, and others to make their way home.

Here is a snap shot of the trip “by the numbers”

Food Drive (a few of the items provided)

\$74,728 Pesos spent on the food drive (\$4,061 Dollars)

620 Pounds of Flour
560 Oranges+- (280 pounds)
620 Pounds of beans and rice
235 Onions
235 Bars of soap
210 Pounds of tomatoes
210 Pounds of potatoes
210 Pounds of sugar
206 Pounds of laundry soap (and multi-purpose cleaning)
206 Pounds of corn
175 Gallons of Milk (liquid and powdered)
154 Pounds of bananas
140 Kitchen cleaning sponges
103 Pounds of animal lard
103 Pounds of salt
94 Brooms and buckets
94 Liters of cooking oil
52 Pounds of cheese

14,000 Total miles driven by the cars in the group, combined.

1034 Work service hours provided
(not including pre-trip gift gathering, eagle projects, traveling or “down time”)
650 Total people receiving gift items
129 Families receiving gifts
128 Children’s books in Spanish, for local pre-school/orphanage.
50 Feminine Hygiene kits, for young girls shelter
47 Service team members from America.
40 Sets of knit gloves and hats
40 Hand-made Blankets
30 Doterra Backpacks
4 Eagle Service Projects
2 Jaguar bites
1 Very memorable service trip

Some thoughts from some of the Service Team -

- Duane - This trip was a bucket list item of a different sort.
- Megan - I can be more patient with my trials, after seeing what these people do with a smile on their face.
- Jana - I dream that I am delivering food and embracing people
- Chari - Each night the hotel felt like luxury. One evening I was cold and started complaining, then caught myself and stopped.
- Dex - Those houses are just pieced together! It felt good to do what Christ would be proud of at Christmas.
- Jayna - I'm back home in what now feels like a palace.
- Cami - As I look back on this experience I am honestly left speechless. It was absolutely life changing in so many ways!
- Crystal - I won't soon forget any of these beautiful families!
- Marcia - It was about sharing a message of God's Love for them.
- Karen - Such a fabulous experience!
- Josh - My favorite parts were the bumpy roads and being with all the family in the motorhome.
- Darren - It's not always about efficiency, it's about love.
- Caleb - Our Mexico trips give us a glimpse of the charity Christ has for each of us.
- Danielle - The spirit doesn't need a language.
- Reid - Sure, it is great to be home, but as soon as you arrive, you realize your heart is still with the wonderful people you served and grew to love. It all seems like a world away.