

Word from the Pastor- Our Mexico Mission

AUGUST 14

19 members left the church parking lot at 2am this morning. God made his presence known by moving someone to ask a good question that avoided serious problems later on in the day. God then moved Chuck McCaw to move like a butterfly (we don't like to think of it as speeding) and save the day. Our flight from Laguardia left from the older terminal and we encountered an overpass that was too low to allow our full size Kelly transit bus to go under it. God again manifested his presence by giving us light traffic that allowed us to park in a no parking zone, unload our luggage, and then walk to the terminal building with luggage in hand! Check-in was eventful as on every mission trip and each person had to be separately checked in. We made it to the departure gate with ten minutes to spare, and we are now in Houston. We almost lost half our group as the door shut on the train between terminals, but some fancy footwork saved the day! Love to you all from the group!

AUGUST 14 Evening

We had a productive first day. After arriving from the airport we had "pollo del calle" (street chicken) for lunch. Those who have been to Oaxaca before really look forward to it. After lunch we toured the new operations center for Simply Smiles in Mexico. It is just beginning to take form. A storage area and office area are complete, as is the perimeter wall and fence. We will work on the bathroom facility, and there are plans to replace the tents and platforms with a three story structure that will house up to 50 volunteers, more offices and meeting rooms.

It was partly cloudy and hot when we arrived but the temperature dropped as afternoon storms rolled in. We did not get rain until after sunset.

After the tour and orientation, the group broke into work teams. Most took 55 pound bags of rice and made 2.2 pound bags that would be part of each food kit distributed in the mountains. By dinner over a thousand individual bags were made. Tomorrow we bag the rest of the rice along with other items for the 2500 kits. Precision was key. Every kit must be equal. So accuracy rather than speed was practiced. And nothing could be spilled...every grain of rice is precious to the recipients. On a lighter note, my job was to go into the City for needed supplies. Also, we are trying to prop up Cindy. She was the only person selected for a body pat down at Laguardia and when clearing Mexican customs she got the red light and her luggage was opened for inspection. Everyone is tired from the long day, but it should be no surprise that the kids are still up playing cards! Overall, a smooth transition into our new surroundings and a lot done.

Should be interesting using the latrines in the middle of the night. Getting there involves going by obstacles such as a fire pit and a sand pile!

Greetings to everyone back home!

SUNDAY, AUGUST 15 Morning

Good morning Connecticut,

Most slept amazingly well last night and now there is a continuous stream of people headed to the latrines! I don't know this because I want to keep tabs on everyone but because you can hear everything from inside your tent!

It is a typical Oaxaca morning: chilly enough so I woke up cold and wondering if I should have brought a better sleeping bag. Lunch today may be "pollo del vecino" instead of "pollo del calle". That translates to "the neighbor's rooster" instead of "street chicken". The rooster started crowing at 5:45 this morning and has only stopped for random minutes or two. But why pick on the rooster...the music from the all night bar out at the highway (about a half a mile away) is still going strong and competing with the rooster. Sun has not yet risen and someone will notice the light of my Blackberry, so more later!



SEPTEMBER 2010

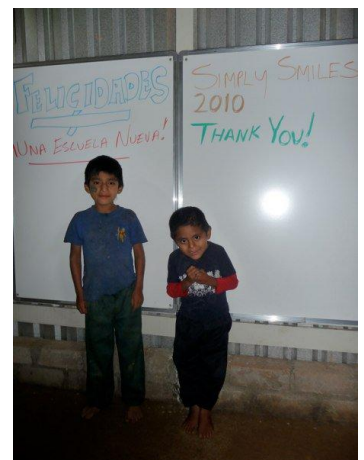
95 North Main Street
Winsted, CT 06098
860-379-1778

Article Submission:
info@firstchurchofwinsted.org

To request a copy
sent to your inbox
send an email to:
dstorrs@snet.net

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Our Mexico Mission - Daily Reports

SUNDAY, AUGUST 15 Evening

It was a very productive day! We finished bagging the rice into one kilo portions, filled in the trench around the septic tank (no easy task since the dirt was in the road outside the compound, loaded 6 tons of food into the truck that goes ahead of us to the mountain village, bagged portions of soap powder, drained water out of the septic tank using buckets (it was relatively clean and put in the tank to check for leaks...we're using latrines) and went to Casa Hogar to visit with the children and youth there.

Most of us are exhausted but excited by the amount of work we can accomplish as a team.

As usual, there was an Americans v. Mexicans soccer game. The youth at Casa Hogar were waiting for us to arrive. And in their own way, they waited to see if we would treat them the same way we did in the past. After a few minutes of apprehension on the part of both groups, the game was in progress and the friendships rekindled.

These kids need to know that their friendship is valued and does not vanish in the year that passes between our visits.

The kids start school next week and I asked if there was anything our church could do to ready them for the beginning of classes. The director, Carol, mentioned that a few of the handicapped kids needed new canes for school. So I told her that First Church would buy the canes for those who needed one.

I can go on about the children at Casa Hogar, but let me instead share with you some comments from the First Church team. Simply Smiles' base camp reminds me of the first time we went to Casa Hogar.

There is a lot of work to be done but definitely doable-Rebecca

The bucket showers weren't that bad at all it was refreshing-Chaz

A lot better than I had imagined-DJ

This is my first time and it leaves me amazed and humbled-Laura

Until tomorrow

MONDAY, AUGUST 16th

Greetings from Oaxaca.

Pace has picked up so it was impossible to send a message this morning.

It rained a good part of last night. When I walked outside at 3:15am the ground wasn't nearly as wet as I expected...but the steady drops hitting the top of the tent echoed inside the tent making it sound like it was pouring outside.

The rain stopped just before 6am, and the neighborhood rooster dutifully began letting us know it was time to get up.

Breakfast consisted of pancakes and sausages, and shortly after we were at work.

Highlights of our activities:

1. Jaron ended up in the septic tank. Most thought Olivia put him there for sticking his toothbrush into her water bottle. But he was actually in the tank to get as much water out as possible and then to clean out the sediment. Don't worry...bathroom is still under construction and not connected to the septic tank.
2. Jordan was showered with cement. Could have been a result of his sarcastic comments directed to Courtney and Meghan since the trip began, but was really a result of his position in the human chain to send buckets of cement to complete the support beams for the bathroom under construction. We will never get mad at a cement truck going slowly down a busy road...mixing bags of cement with sand, gravel and water was no easy task. Then buckets of cement were handed to people on scaffolding (a stretch to call it that but it didn't collapse on anyone...) eight feet above us.
3. We may have no water but our hands are clean. We finished bagging soap powder into bags of one pound each.
4. Don't tell us 75 pounds is not much to lift. The team loaded six tons of soap, beans, cooking oil, etc. into the truck. Most of it was in 75 pound sacks. Suggestion: don't arm wrestle with a mission team member when we get back. You will lose. Their arms are really strong now from all the lifting.
5. We will clean up whenever asked while Mexico, so don't expect us to do anything of the sort when we get back. A group went over to Casa Hogar and cleaned out the Simply Smiles storage area and brought everything worth saving to the base camp and unloaded it into the new warehouse.
6. The cashier at Sam's Club doesn't trust your pastor. I ordered 15 large pizzas to go for later pick up to bring to the children at Casa Hogar. She didn't think I would show up to pick it up so she insisted on advance payment and only in cash.
7. We can dance even when we are tired. We hired a Marachi band to play live music for the children tonight.
8. You can begin to see the exhaustion on the faces of many, but tomorrow's 8 hour ride into the mountains will give us a chance to rest. We will stop every hour to prevent motion sickness (the road has curves, inclines and descents that are too hard to describe). We will at times be two miles above sea level. Starting tomorrow messages may be shorter. Will begin relying on satellite communications. SPOT message was sent from the Simply Smiles base camp on Sunday. Will try sending one from the mountains tomorrow.

The Mission Team

Our Mexico Mission - Daily Reports continued...

TUESDAY, AUGUST 17th

We are on our way into the mountains so this will be short!

Rained most of the night. We got up at 6am, packed, had a quick breakfast and then were on our way. We stopped at the dump to buy sandwiches from Edith, the recipient of one of the 28 houses built by Simply Smiles volunteers. While our van got the sandwiches, the other van had to stop to change a tire. We were told that there has been a flat tire on each trip to the mountains...hope this is the only one for this trip, and better in the city than in the mountains.

We just passed through Ocatlan, a typical Mexican village with a town square, church, market and government building. The trip is 130 miles, and to prevent motion sickness we will stop every few hours. The trip will take 8 hours.

It was tough leaving Casa Hogar yesterday. The music was great, we devoured 15 pizzas, but the basketball game in the dark really made us want to stay. Nacho, a blind seventh grader, asked if He could come with us.

Many of the teens asked if we could stay just a half an hour more. As our Church's farewell gift, we donated melmac plates, plastic cups, and flatware. They did not have enough to serve all the children at the same time. And in all the time we've been going, I have never seen plastic cups. They were just using melmac coffee cups. Now all the kids and staff can eat at the same time. Something as simple and taken for granted as plates and forks was on the top of the director's wish list when I asked what we could do to make their lives a little better.

We are on a Federal highway that is being improved. So a good part of the first hour was on dirt. And it may be a highway, but there are "topes" or speed bumps all along the way. No wonder it takes so long to go 130 miles! Have to stop typing....getting car sick! More later!

TUESDAY EVENING...

We are in Miahuatlan, Oaxaca and heading into mountains...will send more this afternoon.

Arrived safely at the village, a very neat ride was curvy and mountainous roads with incredible valleys climbing between 2,000 and 12,000 feet above sea level.

The village has about 100 inhabitants who are incredibly nice but very shy. They mostly speak Spanish and the balance speak a mix of Spanish and the Indian dialect Zapotec.

The village kids teaching them some words

They have planned a Soccer game with 9-10 year olds from the village for the evening.

Breakfast 8:30 and then we are heading to other end of village...which doesn't look that far. But down into valley and straight up...quite a hike up to elementary school. We are hiking to elementary school to finish work started by numerous other volunteers.

The arrangements have changed, we are not sleeping outside in tents, but rather staying in homes, because the tents are having mold issues due to all the rain they have

had.

It was dry when they arrived, and then it poured after about an hour or so later.

Wednesday evening...

All are exhausted!

They were able to transport the supplies to within a half mile of the school...then had to carry all the supplies they needed straight up hill to the school, including two 75 pound doors, supplies, paint and painting supplies, ladders and all the water they needed. We managed to finish the roof, paint the exterior, install the 2 doors and install a water drainage system...digging 2 to 3 foot trenches on two sides of the building. Three kids from the village came with us, and helped us with our work today.

On the way down the mountain, there was a waterfall...and we all took the opportunity to bathe in the river.

After arriving back at the village the kids (with their endless energy) had a soccer game with the village kids...! (although Mike didn't report who won...ha!)

Thursday is a day of total preparation for food distribution that is to happen on Friday. The little village of 100 will swell to approximately 2,500!

Thursday evening...

We didn't think today would be as exhausting as yesterday, but it was equally so. We moved 6 or 7 tons of food out of a storage shed in the storage area and loaded it onto trucks, set up the staging area for distribution, set up fencing and made up tickets to help stream-line the process. Tickets were numbered 1 to 700 and were passed out so that each person received a ticket, and those number 1-99 were in one group, 100-199 another and so on. Most of the families receiving food were preregistered, so but will still have to wait for hours for their supplies.

Loading the 50 to 70 pound bags of sugar, rice, salt, beans and soap took a hard toll on us. We not only had to lift it and carry it, it had to be lifted up into the truck as well!

When all was done, we returned to the shed to clean it out, due to verdant infestation and the flooding the area has experienced...so all was scrubbed down...and floors washed!

Friday we will rise at 6:30 for an early breakfast, and begin the day of distribution from 9 am until 6 pm. The group will rotate responsibilities between, actually distributing the food, crowd control and helping women who have come alone with children who need the help.

Saturday morning 5:45 am

It's 5:45 am at the Simply Smiles Distribution Center base camp, and the villages are beginning to rise. Not our group...they are all thoroughly exhausted.

Friday was a numbing, yet amazing day. The village was filled with thousands of people, literally to bursting! The most amazing thing is that we were able to feed 2,887 people. 2,600 received

Our Mexico Mission - Daily Reports continued...

full rations of 10.5 pounds of supplies, and the balance were given everything that had left, so that all had something to eat.

Crowd control was mesmerizing, and a challenge, but incredibly orderly. We learned the real meaning of patience, when people who had been standing in line for hours, didn't seem to mind that we were going to take a half hour lunch break. Unfortunately, it poured in the afternoon, drenching everyone, but everyone was taken care of.

Distribution lasted a bit longer than expected, and we finished up around 7 pm.

After the distribution was complete, we had a 17th birthday party for Jaron at the base camp. It was also a celebration of all of the accomplishments of the week. We are planning to be on the road by 7 am...headed to most importantly showers and an opportunity to see the Pacific Ocean.

Will report more once we reach Houston!

Saturday Message...Closing Message!

~Maximum strength hydrocortizone itch cream with aloe for 100 plus mosquito bites...\$6.95

~New sneakers to replace cement and mud caked ones...\$49.99

~Provide 2887 hungry people in the jungle with food....priceless



STEAM VENT COFFEE HOUSE & CAFÉ

Saturday, September 11th ~ 6-9 PM

Featured Performers:

** Rock Stars **

Alex Cassaday & Riley Storrs

*Performing Hannah Montana's
"Hoedown Throwdown"*

6:30 - Open Mic

6:50 - Rock Stars - Alex & Riley

7:00 - Dark Horse

7:30 - Cece & Ruth

8:00 - Don Jones

8:30 - Mad River Crossing

9:00 - Open Mic / Jam Session

Steam Vent Café will serve light supper, desserts and beverages for the evening from 6 until 8 PM.

Steam Vent Coffee Houses will run every 2nd Saturday through November. If you would like a chance to perform, please call Debbie at 860-605-4742 or email info@firstchurchofwinsted.org

Benefit: Mission Activities

Free Will

September Pastor's Letter

Greetings to all,

I hope you had a good summer and that the heat of the last few weeks was not intolerable to you. But in the same way that the heat suddenly ended and was replaced by daytime temperatures in the 70's and nighttime temperatures in the 50's, we have switched from our 9am worship services back to our 10am worship services.

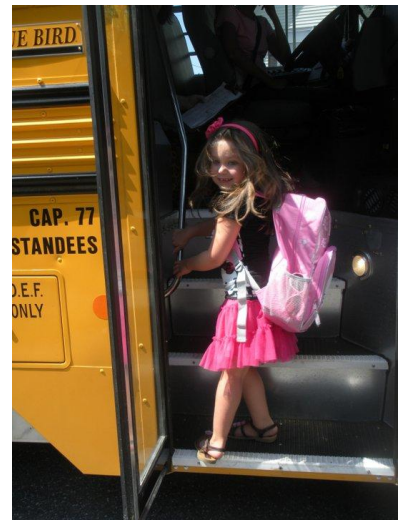
Along with the simple time change comes a flurry of activities. Sunday School begins on September 12, along with the annual Rally Day picnic for all. Steam Vent Coffee Houses also resume their regular monthly schedule with one taking place on September 11, and all Church Boards will also be meeting this month.

Next month, the leadership of the Church will be having their annual retreat. The purpose of that event is to step away from the rush of everyday life and to explore and discern God's call to and mission for our Church. It will also be a time for fellowship and team building. Two members of each Board will be attending the event.

With all that is taking place in the next few weeks, one might think that the summer months are a quiet time in the life of the congregation. The opposite was true! It was a busy summer, with lots of activities, including a physically challenging and very successful mission trip to Mexico and a flurry of activities in and around the Children's Discovery Center in preparation for the new school year. I thank everyone for their efforts during the summer, for we could not have accomplished nearly as much without all of your help!

May God continue to bless you as summer winds down and as we return to our fall activities,

Mike



Off to School 2010



Don't forget our furry friends this fall, dry summer very few acorns!

Cabinet News...

Several dates were discussed for upcoming events...
Coffee Houses every second Saturday through November
"All Church" Tag Sale for October 16th
Harvest Supper - November 6th
All Church Thanksgiving Feast - Nov 21st,
A possible night for "Bunco" - November 20th
Church Fair - December 4th

Property Maintenance has decided to leave the Nursery downstairs in the Head Start room...to help with toddlers using the restrooms.

The all Boards retreat is scheduled for Oct 1-3. We will be asking two members of each Board to attend along with members of the Cabinet.

Deacons reported that the "Voicent" alert system is on hold at this time. They are still discussing who will monitor and maintain the computer. Also under discussion is putting together a "prayer chain" at our next meeting.

Letters for vendors for the Christmas Fair to be held on December 4, 2010 will be sent out on September 1.

Upcoming Events - Mark Your Calendars!

<i>Celebrate With Us...</i>	<i>Board Meetings...etc.</i>	
<p>REMINDER!!</p> <p>Sunday Morning Worship Back to Regular Hours ~ 10:00 AM</p> <p><i>A merry heart does good, like medicine, But a broken spirit dries the bones. Proverbs 17 : 22</i></p> <p><i>Take time to laugh, for it is the music of the soul</i></p>	<p>September 01 7:00 pm</p> <p>September 04-06</p> <p>September 05 2-4 pm</p> <p>September 09 7:00 pm</p> <p>September 11 6-9:30 pm</p> <p>September 12 7:00 pm</p>	<p>CDC Parent Orientation</p> <p>Goshen Fair</p> <p>Juke Box Surprise-Riverton</p> <p>Laurel City Singers Resume</p> <p>Steam Vent Coffee House</p> <p>Rally Day & Picnic</p>

Birthdays

AND

Anniversaries

SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

11 - Kelly McAllister
 20 - William McAllister
 20 - Danny McAllister
 20 - John Eggering
 21 - Ann Jones
 26 - Pastor Michael Wu
 27 - Chelsea Jarboe
 27 - Wade Roberts
 29 - Mel Lee
 30 - Pam Allen
 30 - Shirley Calkin

SEPTEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

♥ 08 - Bob & Carol Miles
 ♥ 20 - Ed & Kathy Weaving
 ♥ 26 - Brett & Susan McAllister



*Life is like a roll of toilet paper ...
 the closer it gets to the end,
 the faster it goes...
 so have fun, think 'good thoughts' only,
 learn to laugh at yourself,
 and 'Count your blessings'!!!!!!*

Cradle to Classroom Focus Group to Meet

On September 19, a small focus group, the "Cradle to Classroom" community collaborative will meet at First Church. This focus group will be looking at services and assessing needs for Winchester's children and families to inform Cradle to Classroom's agenda and generate a "call to action" to ensure that all Winchester's children (birth through age eight) will be healthy, safe and successful.

Board of Christian Education News...

- Sunday School Teachers needed for fall. All it takes is one Sunday a month, we are in need of volunteers to for nursery, K-1 and 2-3. If you have interest please see Tanya Mongitore or call her at 860-738-2279 or on her cell phone at 860-921-8350.
- Children's Discovery Center still has opening for preschool this fall. Please call the center at 860-379-4838 to schedule a visit or get more information about the program.
- Rally Sunday will be Sunday, September 12 with a picnic to follow beginning at noon at The Mongitore's 328 Winchester Rd., Winsted. Please bring a dish to share. Hamburgers, hot dogs and drinks will be provided. Good old fashioned games will be played, bring your swim suit and towel for swimming and there will be a giant slide and relay obstacle course.
- A bear will soon be arriving in front of Children's Discover Center in support of the NW Chambers Believe It or Not Bear Affair this fall. The bear was painted by 11 children ages 7-16, as part of a give back to the community art camp under the direction of local artists, Danielle Mailer and Tina Zampaglione. The children painted the bear with a nature inspired theme and have named the bear "Keepin Faith". We hope you'll all stop by to take a look at the bear when it arrive in late August.
- BOCE meets September 14 at 6:45.

Children's Discovery Center:

- Parent Orientation will be held on September 1, at 7:00p.m.
- Graduation for 2011 has been set for Sunday, May 22, 2011 at 2:00p.m.




Artist: Karen Delton

September 2010



Artist: Debbie Storrs

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 AA/Alanon 7:30 pm	2	3	4 Goshen Fair
5 Worship Service 10:00 am Sr Choir Rehearsal Music in Riverton Jukebox Surprise 2-4 Goshen Fair	6 Sr Choir Rehearsal 6:00 Labor Day Goshen Fair	7 Property Maint 7:00	8 AA/Alanon 7:30 pm	9 Laurel City Singers 7:00 Rosh Hashanah	10	11  STEAM VENT Coffee House 6-9 PM Patriot Day
12 Worship Service 10:00 am RALLY DAY Picnic at noon At Mongitores Music in Riverton C-Side Alley 2-4	13 Sr Choir Rehearsal 6:00	14 Cherub Choir 6:00 Chris Ed 6:45	15 AA/Alanon 7:30	16 Laurel City Singers 7:00	17	18 Hartland Hollow Blue-Grass Festival 10-7 Mad River Crossing 11:00 am Yom Kippur
19 Worship Service 10:00 am Music in Riverton Valley Swing Shift 2-4	20 Sr Choir Rehearsal 6:00	21 Cherub Choir 6:00 Deacons 7:00	22 AA/Alanon 7:30	23 Wedding Rehearsal 5:20 Laurel City Singers 7:00 Autum Begins	24 Wedding 4:30	25
26 Worship Service 10:00 am	27 Sr Choir Rehearsal 6:00	28 Cherub Choir 6:00 Cabinet 7:00	28 AA/Alanon 7:30	28 Laurel City Singers 7:00	Oct 1	Oct 2