

Day 2 – Wednesday, June 20

Day 2 began with morning devotionals. Each day before breakfast and after dinner, the team meets together for devotional time, keeping us focused on God and the work he is doing. Paul and his wife Karen led us with a reading of John 15:16, where Jesus talks about how he choose the disciples, and not the other way around. Similarly, God has chosen us to be here and has invited us to do this work. We should remain focused on Him and his purpose. Pastor Doug also encouraged us by saying that it is often the moments we feel are doing nothing of importance that God turns into something big.



After filling up at breakfast, we boarded the bus and headed to the community for our first full day onsite. The morning saw the team split into four groups: two teams would be painting houses and two teams would go on prayer walks - small groups walk around and ask the people in the community if we can pray for them. We started this activity last year, then this year many houses requested that we stop by and pray for them. God is good.



The stories we hear are heartfelt, most people are open to share about their lives. The team prayed for a man who broke his leg in a motorcycle accident and can no longer work, as well as a lady whose son went missing and is now raising her grandkids. Our visits were cut short due to a downpour - but what appeared to be the end of our plans, God used to blossom into something beautiful.

The prayer team took shelter in the community library, followed by a large group of children. The group asked the librarian if they could sing songs with the kids. Not only did the librarian say that singing was ok, but she led the children through the first few songs. Then, when the singing had stopped and the team didn't know of other songs to sing, a beautiful scene took place - unprompted, the children in the church began singing "Por Gracia".



This song is significant because of a team member on a previous trip. One of the team members, Femi, had decided that he was going to teach all of the children Ephesians 2:8 - *For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God.* With the assistance of others, he translated the song into Spanish, put hand motions to the words, and added a tune. He taught the song to our team, who shared this with the children throughout the week. The children happily sang along, and we would even see parents singing, who had caught the tune from their children.

Now, two years after the song was introduced, the kids in the library happily sang this song on their own, having memorized not only the words, but also the hand motions that go along with it. It was beautiful to see how God had spread his word, and it brought tears of joy to some of the team members.



Next, we had a wonderful lunch prepared by our hosts, who had been working all day to feed us. The lunch consisted of salad, rice, beans, beef fajitas, various fruits (the mangos are the best) and some sweet treats. Wonderful tablecloths, seat covers tied in a bow, and flower pitchers added along to the meal they served were just another display of their amazing hospitality.



In the afternoon, we were back to painting houses, but the prayer walks were swapped for Vacation Bible School and Teen Bible Studies. At VBS, the children saw a skit of 1 Kings 3:16-18 – the story of Solomon and the two women. This was followed by a lesson on how to pray, accompanied by a “prayer hands” craft and some snacks. Over at the Teen Bible Study, the teenagers worked on their painting skills, something they were able to do last year as well. Previously, they drew the Tree of Life, but this year brought forth some various displays of art – the Garden of Eden, houses, and more trees. Some of the older youth were very excited to join in the fun.

We wrapped-up the day and traveled back to the hotel for some relaxation before dinner. Many on the team decided to take a dip in the pool, which turned into an adventure with Frisbees and an inflatable volleyball net. After our downtime, we had dinner and devotions. Doug and Vicki led us in a lesson on Philippians 2:1-8, encouraging us to both be in unity with one another and also to value others above ourselves.



We serve a mighty and loving God, who chose not to leave us to the consequences of our sin, but rather to come down from heaven and suffer on the cross to bring us back to a relationship with Him. Praise God.