



May 2009

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Communities United for Health

Why Mexico?

Someone asked recently why we go to Mexico instead of serving those closer to home.

First, it's a matter of call. Jesus didn't call us to minister only to our neighbors down the street; He called us to minister to the entire world. Some of those places are very different from what we consider comfortable. The needs may be enormous. Those of us who have been to Mexico are drawn to return to do what we can do. It is mostly a ministry of presence, but we do improve the quality of their life in small increments each year.

Second, it is a family ministry. This gives our children a chance to experience a different culture. They learn that kids living in a very different social environment, speaking a different language, with very different customs, are after all, kids. They play soccer, fly kites, build bird houses, work together, pray together. Even without the relative material wealth that we enjoy, the children in Mexico seem to manage just fine. Parents unanimously agree these are invaluable lessons for their own children to learn. The kids themselves enjoy it immensely and look forward to going back the next year. And don't forget: they are giving up their Spring Break to do this.

Third, it is an international mission within fairly easy reach. We can be there by driving ten or eleven hours. It is affordable. Working with an organization that has been operating in this ministry for 20 years, we can be effective and safe in accomplishing our mission.

Why Mexico? Read Mark 16:15. *"Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation."* Perhaps even the scary parts.

-Tom Boehmer
Canyon Creek Presbyterian Church
Richardson, Texas

Have you been there?

Have you been to Mexico? Have you seen a country trying to educate its children in small crowded classrooms? Trying to lure teachers to remote coastal areas with no running water or electricity? Have you seen people working tirelessly to try to change the superstitious fearful perception of its people toward those with mental and physical handicaps? Have you seen people walk off the streets to see what Americans are doing in their little town and then stay for the rest of the day to help? Have you seen Mexicans tear down a shack to use for firewood to cook the fish they caught that day – fish that would have fed their family – to feed a group of Americans who had lunch makings with them already? Have you seen Mexican kids and their dads playing soccer with the Mexican cooks at the hotel after a full day's work? Have you seen buildings built, hearts softened, lives enriched, all in four days of hard work? These are only a few of the things I have seen in Mexico. And each time I've been, I have seen the face of Jesus.

-Sandra Hurlbert
Canyon Creek Presbyterian Church
Richardson, Texas

CUPS is an ecumenical ministry that assists northeastern Mexican communities improve health and education and foster a sense of community, while providing volunteers an opportunity to serve and be served.

Inside this issue:

2009 "A Very Special Year"	2
What's Happening?	3
2008 Donors	4
Jane and Five Books	5
Support Form	6

2009 “A Very Special Year” for CUPS

2009 was planned to be a very special year recognizing CUPS’ 20th year serving Mexican border communities in the state of Tamaulipas. An anniversary t-shirt was designed. CUPS was prepared to face the ongoing challenges associated with increasing the number of faithful churches working in Mexico and obtaining the necessary financial support to assure that its mission work would continue.

2009 has been “a very special year”, but certainly not the one planned. Some of our most faithful and most enthusiastic mission teams cancelled this year because their church leaders were concerned about their safety. The “H1N1 Flu” is now offering still another major concern to mission teams remaining on this year’s schedule. And the economy’s downturn has contributed yet another challenge in this “very special year” as many of our annual donors and donor agencies are facing their own financial concerns.

2009 — Will it be “a very special year”? YES. While it will not be the year planned, it will result in a new level of commitment to strengthen CUPS’ ability to perform it’s mission work and service to Mexican border communities. CUPS’ mission is too important to let a misinformed public perception of dangerous local conditions, an unexpected flu episode and a financial downturn deter it’s work to enhance the lives of the less advantaged in the region served.

So how can you help?

CUPS needs mission teams to do God’s work. Please work within your congregation to continue, grow or initiate the formation of mission teams. A team can be supported by a single congregation or co-congregations can unite and form a team. Please visit the CUPS website (www.cupsmission.org) for information on mission group requirements or contact the CUPS project office in McAllen at 956-686-7456.

CUPS needs additional volunteer assistance. You can help recruit new church mission teams to work with CUPS or make presentations about CUPS and it’s work in Mexico. You can help with fund raising, or project planning. Your photographs can add to our promotional materials. Contact the CUPS office with your interests and skills. There will be a place for you.

CUPS needs continued financial support. CUPS needs it’s annual donors to continue providing their faithful support. We know each donor makes a choice when following His teachings to care for others. Your choice to support CUPS gives hope and help to real people.

- ◆ Alia Muza and her special education team who work long and hard with special needs children and their families, like Lupita, Cesar, Sergio, and Axel.
- ◆ Isabel De La O and her teachers at the Tzehuali School in Matamoros who also work long and hard for their students like Juan, Marisol, Beto, and Amy.
- ◆ Letty Sanchez from Jose Delgado, who is responsible for organizing food preparations at the primary school.
- ◆ Cristina Urena and her teachers at the Ensenada primary school whose work and after school tutoring helps rural children prepare for a 21st century technical world.
- ◆ And finally, there are those who come from the U.S. to spend a short, intense time in Mexico — Tom, Norma, Jim, Susie, Robbie, Steve, Linda, Trish, David, Ralph, Ellen, Sue, and so many more — whose time to share, help, witness, learn, and receive becomes possible with donor support.

Additional efforts are being made to contact past supporters and other organizations to help shore up CUPS’ financial position and prepare for a robust 2010 project program. You may send your donation to our business office address: CUPS P.O. Box 6933 Kingwood, Texas, 77325 or contribute on the CUPS webpage.

What's Happening?

CUPS' most important news is that with God's help and our committed volunteers, donors and Board, we continue to serve in Mexico this year. Three dining hall and kitchen units were completed this spring for two primary schools and one kindergarten in rural farming communities near Valle Hermoso. Now schools have new, easy to clean facilities to prepare nutritious meals for the students.

Headlines about Mexico are numerous this year. It is not the kind of news that makes decisions about working in Mexico easy. Even when committed servants were unable to come due to concerns about safety in Mexico and even as we truly missed greeting old friends and making new friends, good things definitely are happening. Our volunteers travel in and out of Mexico with no problem and the Valle Hermoso community remains peaceful and caring for both its residents and visitors.

The rural communities scheduled for work projects this spring responded with the need to help out. For example, teaching occurred as ladies learned how to apply sheet rock "mud." Brenham Presbyterian Church team members helped out at the Jose Delgado site for two days. Canyon Creek Presbyterian Church, while unable to come, helped out with additional funds to complete the roof for the Jose Delgado primary school outdoor pavilion. This was truly an answer to prayer, said Maribel Gonzalez, the President of the school's Parent Association.



Ensenada Kindergarten mothers make their kitchen beautiful.



Nueva Creacion Kindergarten mothers helping out.

Our work then shifted to Valle Hermoso where construction began on a special education structure and a building for a kindergarten. It is harder for communities in urban areas to participate during normal working hours because of their jobs, but they did. I will carry forever in my heart and my head, the picture of a mother, holding her baby on one hip while she tied rebar for the building where her child would finally have classroom space and the child in her arms would someday attend as well. I am grateful to a Northwoods Presbyterian Church volunteer and photographer for giving us this picture.

Our 20th anniversary celebration involves school children and piñatas made by the CAM Laboral students in Valle Hermoso. They do a beautiful job. When we went to make a donation to the school for the piñatas, Lupita Ruiz, the principal, turned us down, flat. It was their gift to CUPS.

We worship on Wednesday evenings at the local Presbyterian Church. We are greeted with smiles and handshakes. The pastor and his congregation pray for us — safety in work, safety in the return to our families, and send greeting

back to our churches. Prayers also go up for safety and health in Mexico — their country and our neighbor. We do not feel alone or far away from home when surrounded by God's love, His family, and the many contemporary examples of Jesus' admonition to love and care for our neighbors.

The love, support and prayer from each of you sustains our work. Never forget this as you go about your day. God's blessings be upon each of you for your help.

Que Dios le Bendiga!

Louise Flippin,
Missions Director



Yes! I want to help CUPS in its important mission: Working together with communities on the Mexican border to meet their needs and share God's love.

Please check all that apply:

Here is my pledge to the CUPS 300 Club for 2009:

- \$25 per month -OR- \$300 per YEAR
 and my check is enclosed.

At this time I am unable to pledge, but enclosed is my donation of:

- \$500.00 \$250.00 \$100.00 \$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

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Email _____

Name of Church or Volunteer Organization:

Mail your donation, along with this form, to PO Box 6933, Kingwood, TX 77325 OR donate online at www.cupsmission.org.

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All donations are tax

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Dear Friends of CUPS —

Each donor makes a difference in the lives of those in the communities where CUPS works. Not everyone can be with us while we work in Mexico, so we share these photos with you. Your task is to imagine—sounds of hammers, trills of electric saws, laughter from volunteers and parents, or music given to us by children expressing their appreciation. It is a symphony of love.

YOU are a part of God's music.
Thank You!



New classroom replaces old unsafe one (see ceiling damage) at Obregon School.

2008 Donors
Making a Difference

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Baker, John & Lois
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Jane and Five Books

- ◆ Donated computers enhance learning in special education classrooms
- ◆ Donated books stimulate learning in Valle Hermoso and Matamoros schools
- ◆ Donated pencils, notebooks, and crayons provide necessary tools for primary and kindergarten students from families with limited resources.

Jane, a CUPS' friend, sends books in Spanish several times a year. Her most recent box of books expanded the Nueva Creacion Kindergarten library (Valle Hermoso) from 5 books to 20 books. Your donation can make a big impact too.

Ongoing needs for schools include computers, printers, books in Spanish and English (the latter helps with the primary school English language program), school supplies for students and teachers — pencils, crayons, colored pencils notebooks, pencil sharpeners, construction paper, scissors, backpacks and just so much more.

Sometimes donations are special surprises. The Gonzalez Presbyterian Church recently brought a school play set for a special education school in Matamoros. School desks and chairs are another welcome contribution to Mexican schools. Larger donations like these need special attention by the CUPS office so call Laura to ask about this (956-686-7456).

Donated health supplies such as wheelchairs and diapers, both adult and children's, find ready recipients. A recent donation of adult diapers meant they were used in Mexico rather than destroyed here in the U.S.

There are other potential donations in this area ranging from band aids to crutches to gauze. You can call or e-mail Laura if you can help in this area.

CUPS thanks each of you for the difference your donation makes in the life of a child, they are blessings to those who receive them.

Gracias.



Children from Ensenada Kinder receive books from Ellen Boehmer, CUPS Board Chair



Nueva Creacion students thank Northwoods Presbyterian Church volunteers for their hard work.

*New Covenant Presbyterian Church, McComb, MS, working on special education building in Valle Hermoso. (middle picture)
Northwoods Presbyterian Church, Houston, TX, team members preparing for pouring cement floor at Nueva Creacion Kinder, Valle Hermoso. (bottom picture)*