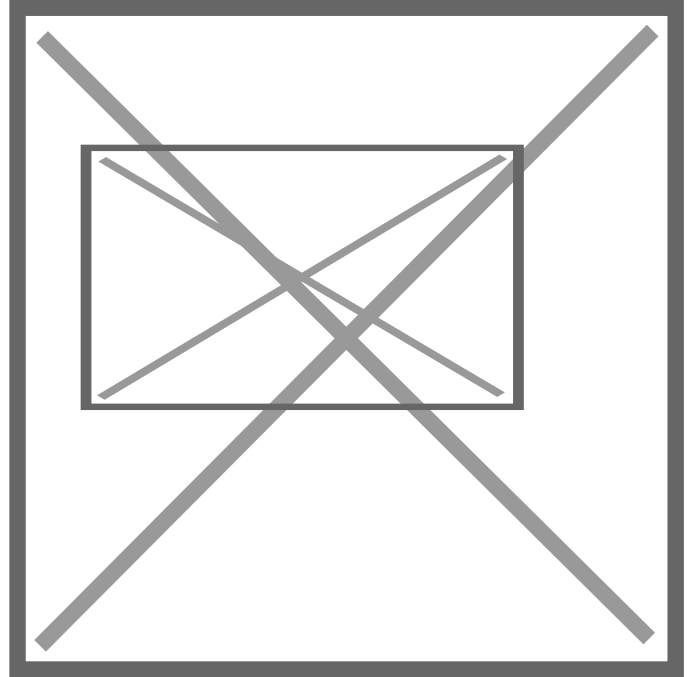


Ministry in Mexico opens eyes, hearts to God

by Chris Toy –



THE TEAM FROM the San Francisco Asian American Yerba Buena Corps poses for a picture with children from an outpost in Puerto Vallarta, Mex.

This summer, Major Ronald Toy led my small group of six young men from the San Francisco Asian American Yerba Buena Corps to a children's center/outpost in the Puerto Vallarta slums for a weeklong mission trip. Major Julio Vasquez also joined us from El Centro Corps to provide translation services and support. As the eight of us waited in the Puerto Vallarta airport to be picked up, I had no idea what to expect.

The majority of my small group, myself included, had no prior missions experience but God taught us throughout our trip to trust in him, as we could do nothing on our own, but everything with his strength.

My first impression of this area was one of staggering beauty. The weather was usually hot and humid, but occasional thunderstorms provided delightful refreshment. From the rooftop of the outpost, we saw brilliant cloud formations colored with reds and yellows, and a rolling green hillside all around the horizon. Mango, coconut, and banana trees complemented the rural, rustic, and modest homes. Every day felt like a dream.

During our stay, we helped teach vacation Bible school to about thirty kids, and held open airs around the neighborhood. When Major Julio concluded our sessions with an invitation to accept Christ, many kids raised their hands. ¡Gloria a Dios! Glory to God!

After our meetings we often had time to play with the kids in the nearby park. This was our favorite part of the trip, because we loved being around them, and were able to demonstrate our love through playing tag or soccer.

They, in return, showered us with so many blessings through their joyful smiles. When we had to leave, they pleaded with us to stay and to continue playing. Alas, we could not grant their requests. Our good-byes were full of tears and hugs.

This mission trip was a wondrous experience that I will never forget. I have never been more encouraged to live my life fully for God, and I heartily recommend going on missions to anyone who wants to know, share, and receive God's love.