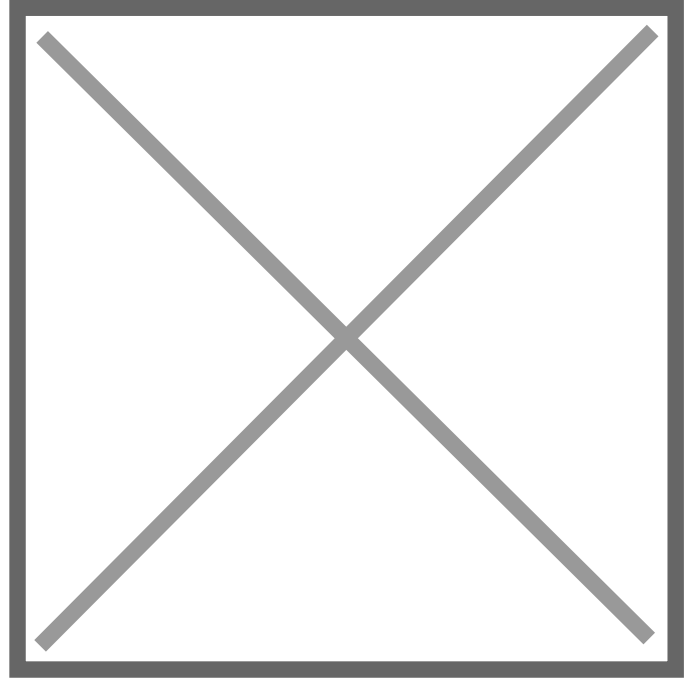
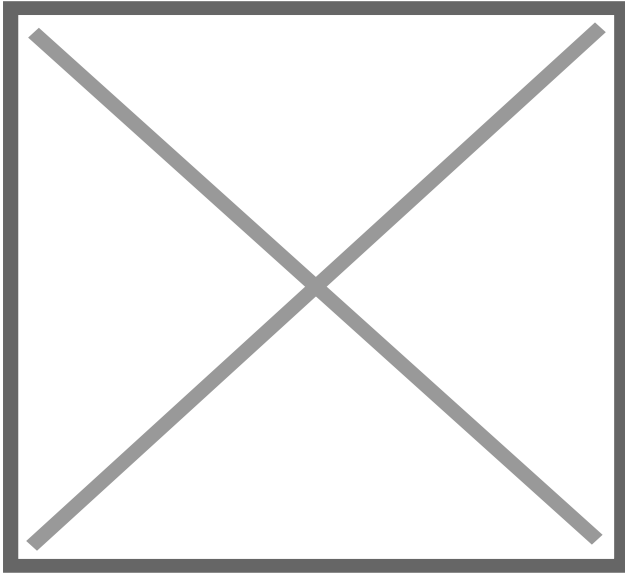


Mission: El Salvador

Team from Redwood City Corps ministers in corps officer's native country.



Redwood City Corps members work with children during their recent visit to El Salvador

A group from the Redwood City, Calif. corps, along with Corps Officer Captain Jennifer Cortez, undertook a mission trip to El Salvador earlier this year. The team included Jose Moreno, Luis Molina, Andres Cacatenco, Bonnie Miller and Electo Cortez. The captain's father, Rene Cortez, was their host during the visit.

The team began their outreach in the community of Usultán with vacation Bible school (VBS). The local children were so excited that many arrived before the 8:30 a.m. starting time. During the four days of VBS, the kids explored different crafts, with parents participating on the last day. The children enjoyed the Bible stories and learned their memory verses, as well as enthusiastically taking part in music activities. They were thrilled with the McDonald's Happy Meal toys that the team gave them.

Many of the local teenagers served as leaders and also helped with clean up—sweeping, mopping and putting materials away—all with joy in serving the Lord.

On the final day of VBS, 116 children attended, along with many parents and volunteers. As a special treat, one of the team members provided ice cream for everyone.

The team also conducted evening services. One night, two men who had been drinking came to the door for water. A team member spoke to them and got them water. He ministered to them during the whole service. The next night they were present—sober and thirsty for the Word.

One day the team drove outside of town on dirt roads to an outdoor church where 40-50 people were waiting. They sang, prayed and gave out gifts of books, pencils, shorts, crayons, eraser, toys and pens. It began to rain, and they had to end quickly, as the creek could flood and prevent them getting back to town.

Another day, they drove a long distance with the local corps officer, Captain Armando Fernandez, to visit and pray with a man who was ill. He lived in a small house with dirt floors. Very weak, he was resting in a hammock, but was thrilled that the captain and the group made the effort to visit and pray with him.

The local corps lacks many items taken for granted in the US. Cortez purchased dishwashing detergent for them, since they had no soap to wash the cups that everyone uses. Other needs were for toilet paper and paper towels. If the children needed toilet paper, they had to request it from Fernandez, who would give them two sheets. The children's playground has no swings, just a worn-out slide and a frame where swings used to be.

Recently, Cortez noted: "The motivation for our mission trip was that we saw the need in the community. We wanted to share our resources and to help the local corps.

Since our visit the corps has grown, with children enrolled as junior soldiers and Sunbeams, and participating in other activities. Parents are attending Home League and men's programs. We are excited with the results of our trip and are preparing to go again."