

Project Mexico & St. Innocent Orphanage



Building Hope for Boys Without Families and Families Without Homes

UNITY IN CHRIST

For many, summer is a time for exploration, relaxation, rejuvenation and spending time with loved ones. For me, it is all these things and more, as it offers many unique opportunities necessary for my own personal and spiritual renewal.

Summer is a time when I can step away from the office and meet some of the special people that make our ministry a reality; a time when I can share new ideas regarding our programs; a time when I can hear the stories of a young individual who came to build a home and left a changed person; a time when I can showcase my staff and their unquestionable contribution to our success; and a time when our boys get to visit with over 400 friends, both old and new. It is especially a time when I am blessed to hear the outpouring of support and encouragement for our care of the needy and our role within the Orthodox Christian community.

As the Executive Director, the sense of unity and purpose I feel for our Project Mexico family is difficult to contain and even harder to express. I am so fortunate to see the many devoted individuals, organizations and communities that regularly labor to support a home building group, organize a donation drive, or pass a tray on the feast day of St. Innocent. As for my incredible staff, their dedicated service inspires nothing but gratitude and admiration. When I consider all that God has been able to accomplish through each of us, it is clear to me that He is surely pleased.

Our ministry has much to be thankful for, but as some of you might know, the fall is historically a financially challenging season. I humbly ask that you consider an additional fall gift if you or your parish community are able. These gifts go a long way this time of year to relieve the pressures of doing God's work with limited resources. Thank you all for your continued prayers, encouragement and support. We can't do this work without you!

Together in Christ,

Ben De La Riva
Executive Director



Executive Directors,
past and present, together during OBT.

OUR MISSION

Project Mexico performs works of mercy and helps others do works of mercy in the name of Jesus Christ, transcending cultural barriers by building homes for the poor in Mexico and by providing a home for orphaned boys through St. Innocent Orphanage.

OUR VALUES

Acts of Mercy
Excellence
Education
Love & Compassion
Mission Work
Partnerships
Witness

OUR THANKS

We are incredibly grateful to the 400 volunteers who gave of themselves this year to build homes for 20 families in need.
Glory to God!



info@projectmexico.org

A LITTLE MORE BEING

Greetings in Christ! This is a phrase that we often say, but what does “*In Christ*” truly mean? Is it “in the name of,” or “in reference to,” or “in association with?” These are all fine answers, but somewhere inside, I suspect we are looking for a deeper answer. The other day in Vespers, it hit me; the very first line of our routine prayers contains a plea: “...come and abide *in us*.” We are beseeching Christ to continually persevere with us at all costs, even to death — to truly live *in us*. That’s the real start of things. And absolutely everything else, day by day, hour by hour, flows from that start. But what really does it mean or look like to abide *in Christ*? Surely, it’s a question too profound to explore fully here. I think we discover the answer throughout our lives, and we do well to willfully participate in the process. Perhaps it starts with a little more *being* and a little less *doing*. After all, we are human *beings*!

For me, my year and a half at Project Mexico has provided a wonderful context to chip away at the answer. As a good friend has said, “It’s about living in the tension.” One realizes that aiming for unity within diversity fits much better than aiming for blanket equality and fairness. Aiming for goodness is much better than aiming for rightness. And if an ordinary day happens to bring a mudslide or a breech-calf birth instead of what it was supposed to bring, so be it! So what, exactly, is the point? Love – love of God, love of others, and love of ourselves. After all, Christ is *in us* and we should always be a reflection of Him.

In Christ,

Fritz Muehlhausen, *Program Coordinator*

Our volunteers build each home by hand in only four days, and on the final day the home is blessed and presented to the family.



TOP NEEDS

- 1. Food for One Month**
\$2,500 – Help provide meats, dairy, fruits, vegetables, and of course, beans and tortillas for all the delicious meals served in our kitchen!
- 2. Gasoline for One Month**
\$1,700 – Keeping our vehicles fueled is crucial for getting our boys to and from school, counseling sessions and other activities, as well as supporting the daily operations of the orphanage.

BECOME A SCHOOL BUDDY

Education is essential in assisting our boys to break the cycle of poverty in Mexico. In pursuing their educations, our boys realize that they have the potential for a bright future. In addition to attending school, we aim to provide them with all the resources they need to succeed: supervised homework time, on-site tutors, hands-on activities, a widespread library, and a well-equipped computer learning center. As a Project Mexico & St. Innocent Orphanage School Buddy, your educational sponsorship will cover the costs of tuition, books, activity fees, uniforms, transportation, supplies and more. To learn how you can become a School Buddy, contact Soula De La Riva at soula@projectmexico.org.



The boys were excited to see Greg & Margaret this summer.

400 VOLUNTEERS BLESS 20 FAMILIES!

This year, it has been a true joy to participate in the workings and movements of God's love! We have been blessed to provide homes to 20 beautiful families that have amazing stories. Whether it be a young couple with a newborn baby, a grandmother caring for her grand-daughter, or a young mother with two asthmatic girls, it is humbling to see how richly these families live out their lives. We recently revisited some of the families and found that one had already painted their house a lovely shade of baby blue, while another had already moved in and decorated their windows with stones. It brings us such joy to see families taking ownership of their homes so quickly and enthusiastically. Glory to God!



During the summer, we held our Orthodox Basic Training (OBT), where 175 volunteers built seven homes in one week. Everyone had their hearts stirred and perhaps set afire by Fr. Gregory Horton, our guest speaker, who urged us to be visions of love in all that we do, and in *this* way, become missionaries. Each summer, *this* is our goal, to spread the love of Jesus Christ by ministering to our neighbors in need.

Thank you to all those who served this summer to make our Home Building Program a success. We want to especially thank our summer staff who facilitated over 400 volunteers with zeal and love: Sam, Charlie, Theodore, Alexander, Anastasia, Annie, Nathan, Macrina, Stefan, Noelle, Hannah S., Nick, Grace, and Hannah Z. In addition, we were blessed by the hands of Anne-Marie, Matushka Elizabeth, Rose Marie, and Melanie, who were our first-ever OBT kitchen team, and worked alongside our staff to cook and clean for hundreds of hungry people! And of course, we want to thank all the volunteers who came to build; every effort that you made to be present and serve was a sacrifice of love. We hope to see you all again soon!

In Christ,

Zachariah &
Sophia Swanson
Work Trip Coordinators



Top: Our faithful summer staff.
Right: 175 OBT volunteers from 14 parishes,
built 7 houses together in one week.

2016 HOME BUILDING WEEKS

We are happy to announce the tentative dates for our 2016 Home Building Season.

Spring: Mar 21 - 26

Week 1: Jun 8 - 14

Week 2: Jun 17 - 23

Week 3: Jun 30 - Jul 6

Week 4: Jul 14 - 20

Week 5: Jul 29 - Aug 4

Week 6: Aug 10 - 16

Week 7: Aug 19 - 25

*Please note,
registration is not open
at this time.*

*An official email will be
sent in the coming months,
releasing the opening
date for registration.*

Project Mexico of the Orthodox Church



Building Hope for Boys Without Families and Families Without Homes

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The families bring us great joy!

HELP US BUILD HOPE!



Brighten a Future

Sponsor the costs of educating one of our boys by becoming a School Buddy for 2015-2016.



Plan a Fundraiser

Organize an event or campaign to help us meet some of our ongoing and top needs.



Fill Our Pantry

Coordinate a donation drive to collect food and supplies for our growing boys.



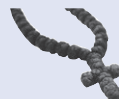
Build a Home

Change the life of a needy family by volunteering on a home building trip in Mexico.



Give a Gift

Become a sustaining member of our ministry by donating on a monthly basis.



Say a Prayer

Sign up to receive our quarterly emails to pray for all of the petitions of our ministry.

TO GET INVOLVED CONTACT (619) 426-4610 OR INFO@PROJECTMEXICO.ORG