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## THE IMPACT OF LOCAL MISSIONS WEEK

BY LIVY JONS

I've been attending Local Missions, an annual volunteer experience run by my school, for the past four years. It's a week-long overnight event that aims to involve Heritage High School students in volunteer work around Fredericksburg, Texas over the summer. When I began attending, I found myself undergoing a transformative experience that helped me develop leadership skills and independence, and taught me how to open up about personal struggles and insecurities. During Local Missions, I helped around my town by aiding small businesses like thrift stores and through caretaking in places such as local nursing homes. One of my favorite volunteer activities to participate in is The Boys and Girls Club, an organization dedicated to

providing free daycare to kids from low-income families. I watch and entertain the children, and it's incredibly rewarding to see the joy on their faces when they say seeing me every summer is the highlight of their year.

Over time, I noticed that my interactions were having a truly meaningful impact on the kids beyond just making them happy for a few weeks. One day, a girl was sitting at a table all by herself. I could tell she was upset and excluded, so I sat and talked with her. Seeing how much fun we were having together, the other girls gradually made their way to our table. Because the kids looked up to me, they trusted what I did was fun and joined us, leading to more fun for



*Executive Director, Kelly Graham, with our friends Maurilio and Gloria, and their son David (far left) during our medicine delivery trip to Ojinaga in June. We have taken 4 trips to the border to pass off medication. Maurilio and David passed off the meds to our friend Pastor Pepe, who drove across the desert to deliver the medications to the villagers.*



*Acelynn Thompson and Lily Bray, amongst their Heritage School peers, bagging groceries for the elderly during Local Missions Week in July. We partnered with the Needs Council to bring the bags to the doors of the residents of Evergreen Villa!*

*"When you serve on a trip, God's gonna start opening doors all throughout your life. The blessings that come to you, and those around you are unbelievable. You have to come and see how it impacts your life"*

**BRIAN DISHMAN, GRAND PRAIRIE TX**

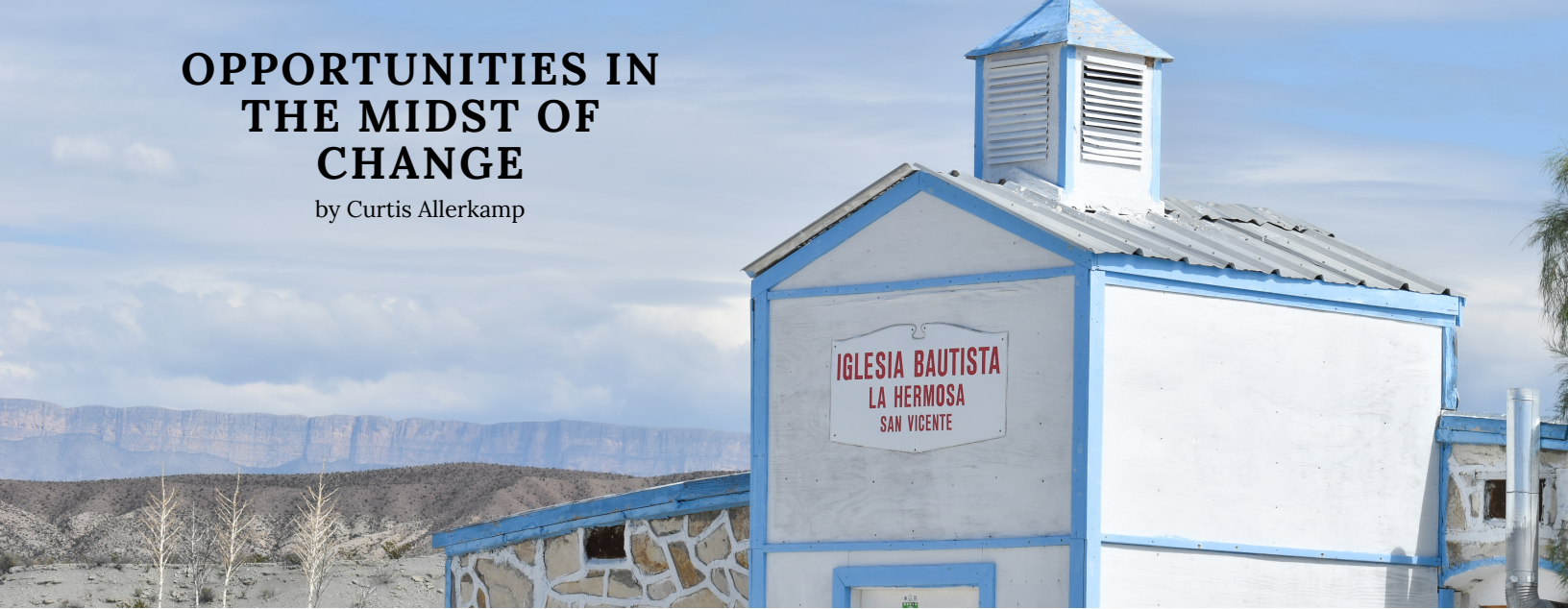
everyone—including the excluded girl. On my last day working there, another little girl told me that when she grew up, she wanted to be just like me. I was initially taken aback, but this moment solidified how much these kids look up to me. It made me proud of my volunteer work, and more importantly, helped me become more aware of my actions and taught me to lead by example. Now everywhere I go, I think about how others might find inspiration in my actions and how I can model kindness with my behavior.

On top of volunteering, Local Missions provides us a time to share insecurities and burdens we've gone through called "The Circle." Every night after dinner, we form a circle around a chair and sing worship songs under the stars. If someone has a burden they want to share with the group, they sit in the chair, and we pray over them. In my first and second year at Local Missions, I was too timid to share, although I knew God wanted me to. In my third year, I finally built up the courage to speak up. The school year had been a tough one for me. I struggled with my mental health and anxiety. To be honest, it had gotten so bad that I began to lose sleep, which induced heart palpitations, and led to me missing school. This was a huge step for me and was the first of many in seeking help for my anxiety. After I returned from the Local Missions trip, I began to develop strategies and coping mechanisms, including planning out my schedule and trying to sleep earlier. Now, I feel comfortable communicating with others about my struggles. The relief that follows from sharing gives me the strength and independence to face challenges that used to cause me stress. Additionally, I can use what I have struggled with to help others. By sharing, I lead by example because many people keep their burdens to themselves as I have. I hope that communicating what I have experienced encourages others to do the same.

Local Missions has had a considerable impact on my life. It taught me the importance of leading by example during my volunteer work. Becoming more honest with myself and others led to bettering myself academically, athletically, and mentally. As I continue to prepare for my future, I know that I am now more than capable of balancing my extracurricular activities and am more equipped to manage my anxiety. Local Missions brought me wonderful friendships and gave me a space to learn and grow, and ultimately paved the way for me to continue growing into my ideal self.  
Livy Jons is a Senior at Heritage School

# OPPORTUNITIES IN THE MIDST OF CHANGE

by Curtis Allerkamp



Twenty one years ago this month, I had surgery. It was supposed to be a 24-hour stay in the hospital after the surgery. Because of complications, that one-day stay became a five-day ordeal. I was so miserable and in so much pain. Now God did not cause this to happen, but He sure used it to change me and make me a better carrier of the Gospel.

I learned three important lessons during those five days. All of them have been very important in the subsequent years of my work.

I learned to cope with my suffering by focusing on Him. I endured not by gritting my teeth as I had learned as a child, but by putting my pain on Him. By going to Him when it seemed unbearable, He made it bearable.

I became acutely aware of the folks in the hospital who were there to care for me. At first, when I was awake in the middle of the night for one more test, I was irritated. But over those long days I began to look forward to seeing each one. They always came with a gift of a smile knowing full well I was not happy to be poked with one more needle. It must be really hard to put that happy face on when you know the other person is not really happy to see you! As they and friends came to minister to me I found a new level of gratitude.

Finally, through my suffering I became more aware of the suffering of others. Empathy is one of the finest gifts we as children of God can have and give to others in need. It forever changed my perspective and attitude when visiting others in hospitals and nursing homes. I no longer go out of a sense of duty only to leave as quickly as possible. Rather I go to truly visit and leave a bit of myself with the person I am visiting, as well as those who are responsible for their care. I go with joy in my heart

Calamities of life, whether they are personal or corporate, are opportunities for us to grow and change. Eight years ago Sara began to embark on a major change. We knew in order for the work of the mission to continue that we had to begin the process of transition. Transition not only for the mission but for ourselves as well. It has been a long and arduous process from both perspectives.

It has now been three years since I led a medical team, or even been part of one. It has been over a year since I facilitated a youth group and almost a year since I organized any group whatsoever.

I handed over day to day operations as I stepped down from my position at the beginning of this year. It has been a crazy year. We could not have picked a worse year to do this or maybe it was the best year to do this?



*Rory Shelton, Jake Roberts, and Pastor Daniel Phillips striking poses while building new tables for Heritage School. The school was in major need of new tables to spread out students for lunch and outdoor chapel this year.*

I believe this year has been and is an opportunity to improve. I believe the scripture when it says that all things work together for them that love the Lord.

I continue to diminish my work for MdC as the course of my life changes. It is painful and rewarding at the same time. Redirecting the course of my life after twenty-five years of being almost solely focused on Mexico is difficult. But Sara and I are looking forward to the path that lies ahead.

What will we do? Not fully sure. We will definitely spend more time with our grandchildren. I am sure there is more in store for us. What is that? I am not sure but I know He will present it to us, as we move forward.

As I look at the world around us I see much need. All I have to do is step in to fill that need. This is how we are to present the gospel to a hurting world. You see I am not really stepping down. Rather I am stepping up to a new challenge!

## WHAT IS LOCAL MISSIONS WEEK?

By Rory Shelton

Local Missions Week at the surface is a week-long community service opportunity where students are able to serve their community through servant leadership. However, when you dive deeper into the experience, you find something that is hard to find anywhere else. You are able to find and grow a deep personal relationship with God. The worship is comparable to no other in my experience. It is this emotional and spiritual environment that is truly unique and amazing.

Personally, I have loved my experience at Local Missions Week, and I can say today that going to LMW has changed my life. The service activities you do show servant leadership and helps you give back to the community such as Christ did. I have been able to not only deepen my relationships with my friends but also deepen my relationship with God during this week-long experience. Every year, I long for the spiritual environment and community that I am able to have there. And every time I leave, I am looking forward to the next trip. Truly I can tell you that Local Missions Week is something so very unique that my experiences will stick with me for the rest of my life.

Rory Shelton is a Junior at Heritage School



*Tres Jons painting the exterior of a local veteran's home. We partnered with Fredericksburg Evening Rotary and VFW on this project!*



*Heritage Junior, Josh Tabor, working with Mark Cornett to lay the foundation for a carport here at Mision De Candelilla!*

## DIRECTOR'S REPORT

By Kelly Graham

Navigating Covid-19 has continued to be a challenge. I'm sure you are all as tired of this as we are! However, we are excited to run a small, limited, crew in October to our villages in Marquez, Paso and Alamos. These villages have not had a clinic for one year, as this was the first round that we had to cancel due to COVID in the spring (and San Vicente in September). We will have procedures in place to protect both the patients and participants. We feel it is necessary to give an in-person evaluation of the patients at this time. We also know that we miss these sweet people, who even provide encouragement to us as we minister alongside them. Just getting a little time of scripture and prayer together in the desert will be exiting!

Kenny and myself (Kelly) have also had the privilege of running four refill trips to Ojinaga for all of our villages. These refills are simply their maintenance medications (heart and diabetes) based on their past charts. This was done in cooperation of several people in their communities who were able to take these medications to be delivered. On these trips we had our now-customary meal with Gloria and Maurilio around their dining room table, which is a joy for us. From there, they help coordinate with Pastor Pepe and others to be sure medication got to each person in the villages.

Local Missions Week was a great success! While it was exhausting, we had fun ministering with the Heritage School students. Due to COVID, we had to limit our community interactions but we were to find safe ways to serve and encourage! During LMW, we painting the entirety of a local veteran's home, built the foundation for a car port at HQ, delivered groceries for the elderly, and even managed to encourage the nursing home community with signs and songs!



Summer Cornett and Sarah Stafford helping us fill medications for the villagers here at the mission building.



Luke Roberts and Josh Hoermann hold up encouraging signs for the residents of Fredericksburg Nursing Home. Although unable to minister inside this year, the students were allowed to show up at the windows and share the love of God at a safe (social) distance!

## UP AND COMING!

**Open House Silent Auction** - We will be hosting an open house in November at the mission. This will be a limited occupancy all day event. We will have a few more art pieces that will be on display. Look for more to come!

**October 14-18 Alamos de Marquez Trip**

**November 4-8th Boquillas Trip**

**Well-Child Clinics** - 1-Day clinics to the elementary schools in Navaja and Centinela. Partnered with Fredericksburg, New Braunfels, and Piedras Negras Rotary.

**Potential Construction Project Trips:**

Finishing touches on the Boquillas clinic. We hope to expand the kitchen on the church as well.

Jaboncillos church/clinic - The church building is in major need of repairs. A kitchen and 2 exam rooms are a top priority. Currently, we run pharmacy and clinic all in the very small sanctuary. We would also love, love to build a new outhouse! This will allow us to facilitate clinics and VBS much better, and it will serve the village!

OCTOBER 2020

## WOULD YOU CONSIDER A FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION?

Would you consider helping us raise \$40,000 to finish out our year. As many of you also know we had to cancel Fiesta 2020, which is our annual fundraiser. We ask this from the depth of our heart and with the hope that you can partner with Misión De Candelilla. Although we have managed to mitigate some of our normal operating costs, we still employ one full-time and two part-time staff. Even yet, we have hope to grow and expand in 2021

While we haven't run full trips, medication was given for each canceled trip. There also have some fixed costs that we were not able to cut, these are some of our insurances, service contracts, building costs and staff expense. Those of you that have been with us know that we work hard to be very frugal. Even in this down year we have provided vital medications to those desperately in need at no cost. In return, these are the same people that without asking are always so generous and often bring us special meals, wait for us to be sure we make it across the rough terrain and call us, when they have access, to check on US!

Would you consider helping cover our operating costs? We need to raise \$40,000 or more to complete our year as we ramp up for more trips with full participation. Furthermore, we have continued our support of a few pastors in Mexico. This is so they can travel to several other villages for pastoral care.

We are also coming up with plans to expand our ministries reach to other communities in need. What I have personally always loved about Misión de Candelilla is how we are able to provide a physical humanitarian need alongside a spiritual encouragement through the word of God and Prayer. We love the mission, and we hope to continue to be a people of light in the dark corners of the world.

*Our current operating cost for missions trips in need of coverage are as followed:*

- Maintenance medication refill per village - **\$500**
- Travel and delivery cost for MDC per trip - **\$600**
- Medical lab supplies for one clinic - **\$200**
- Stipend for one translator; 1 trip - **\$300**
- Support for 3 Mexican Pastors- **\$200 each, every 2 months**
- One month of Vehicle Insurance- **\$800** (4 vehicles)

## Would you consider helping us continue this work?

Our fees received from participants only cover the basic costs of each trip. All of our other expenses are covered by private donations. Would you consider becoming a monthly donor? You may also donate on line at [mdcmexico.org/donate](http://mdcmexico.org/donate)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed is my one-time donation for \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed is my monthly donation for \$ \_\_\_\_\_



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