

# hope



...for families in the  
barrios of Sonora, MX

## June 2007 Newsletter, part 1

**Manos de Dios spent the last two weeks of June in Mexico. There is so much to share that it takes two newsletters to cover it all!**

### Water Fun Day in Barrio...a great success!

**Friday** (June 22, 2007) morning Eric, Lucy tambien, Allen, Lucy uno and I arrived in Peñasco from Desemboque. Shortly thereafter, Lucy and Lucy joined by Diane Schilling and Rosalie Mercer went to the prison to visit the nine women prisoners. Other members of our team prepared the equipment for the Water Fun Day planned for the next day in Invasion Nueva Peñasco barrio. Eric and Allen went to missionary Pat's house to fix two A/C units: one in their master bedroom and the other in their Suburban. (This was such a blessing as it is so hot in Peñasco and the Ricos had a trip planned in that vehicle the very next week!) Friday night the entire team of 19 people met for a barbeque at our trailer. We made final plans and prayed for the next day's outreach activities.

**Saturday** morning a small group of us prayer walked the Invasion Barrio at 5am. At 8:30am the set up crew arrived at the vacant lot in the barrio to get ready for the fun with water! As soon as we arrived people started gathering and wondering what was going on. We must have been a sight. A flatbed trailer with two large water

tanks, two pick up trucks loaded with all kinds of stuff, and three vehicles loaded with Americans! As we were unloading we told them what was going on and encouraged them to tell their friends that everyone was invited!

**Pastor Lupe**, his wife, Rafaela, and their Club (youth group) arrived in their bus. The youth were ready to start chaperoning the younger kids and joined in the soccer, foursquare and bubble blowing games we had set up in the road. Rafaela and a group of women from their church dressed up like muñecas (dolls) to provide a children's message. They sang, danced and encouraged the children to accept Jesus into their hearts. As they entertained and shared, we got the tanks of water, pumps and hose ready to get the kids wet! **Just as the water** was turned on, our group handed out the no-more-tears shampoo. Kids started putting shampoo on their hair, clothes, bodies and anyone that would hold still for a second or two. The area was saturated with suds, bubbles, soaked clothing and SMILES! It was total and wonderful



Water and shampoo on a hot summer day!



...even a haircut!

More photos online at [www.ManosdeDios.org](http://www.ManosdeDios.org)

chaos. Every once in a while the hose would be turned toward the gathering of moms on the edge of the activities. They squealed as they enjoyed the refreshing water spray. There was a serious side to this event. A few of the mothers brought their babies to the water hose to be bathed. One child, about 8 months old, looked like she had never had a bath before. She was so dirty. As she screamed I gently got her wet and her mother washed her body and hair. She was rinsed off and wrapped in a towel and carried away by the smiling mother. That one incident made the day worthwhile. As the kids were getting sprayed, a mud puddle formed. That set off another activity: mud wrestling. There were four boys (about 8 years old) who discovered the mud puddle and started mud wrestling with each other. We were able to rinse off almost everyone before the water ran out and thanks to all the donated towels, most everyone received a towel (delivered with a hug!). Later, we saw many moms using the (now dry) towels for shade. My guess is that this winter those towels will serve as blankets!

As the water fun was going on, some of our team were cutting hair. Boys, girls and even entire families lined up to get their hair cut. The grill was heated up and the hot dogs were cooked and served. The hot dogs were donated and cooked by Pastor Tab Gray's church (the church that serves the Americans in Peñasco) members. Even with all the different activities going on there were few problems and everyone was having fun. Even the people sitting in their cars watching were seen smiling and laughing. What a blessing! **Thank you, Lord for this opportunity!**

**After the water ran out**, the hair cutters had put away their scissors and razors, and the last of the hot dogs were served a puppet and clown show began. Missionary

Miguel and his crew, dressed as clowns, shared funny stories with a 'lesson' and gave the gospel message. His group went on so long we had to unplug Pat's sound system and tell him it was time for us to leave! The children were still watching intently! To everyone's knowledge no one had ever done a Water Fun Day in a barrio before. The kids and parents loved it and wanted to know when we were coming back! The volunteers loved it, too and said they would do it again. We were dirty and tired, but joyful. We all needed a shower or a swim in the ocean as the wind and water had plastered the sand to our faces, arms and legs! So, I guess the Water Fun Day will be a regular summer event! It took a lot of work and our group stepped up and did the job. Many thanks to Rosalie; Jamie; Diane and her kids Sonya and Ben; Hank, Maureen and their son Ryan; Paul and Karyl; Lee and Marie; Paul; Nelson; Lori; and missionaries from Peñasco Pat, Gerry and daughters Kasee and Carli. You were a blessing to the families of Peñasco. I'm sure many saw Jesus in your eyes, in your actions and in your hearts.

**Saturday evening** we held a debriefing and received very helpful information and suggestions from the group for future outreach programs. Then, it was off to dinner. Twenty of us went to dinner, sat at three different tables and had some interesting conversation and fellowship. That evening seven of us gathered at our campsite for prayer. We presented to God the barrio we had visited that day, as well as members of our group and the needs of Mexico. There was an awesome



**Muñecas (dolls) lead songs**

presence of the Holy Spirit and special unity of this team.

**Most of the team** started back to Tucson Sunday morning or after the worship service (at Peñasco Christian Fellowship Church). Lucy and I had plans to meet with pastors the following week and Pantano's Pastor Tim Coop would be arriving the next Friday, so we would be staying to coordinate more activities. The June 2007 part 2 newsletter will cover the next week in Peñasco.

Vaya con Dios,

*Dennis*

### *A missions team member comments....*

We when do an outreach in Mexico I watch the mothers' faces. When we first arrived for the Water Fun Day the mothers that live in that barrio were hesitant and seemed to be wondering what our true intent for coming into their neighborhood was. Then, they noticed that we brought OUR children to play and interact with their children. They softened slightly. Soon, our adults were being silly...dancing dressed as dolls, squirting water on kids and adults, getting wet while being fully dressed, playing in the mud and hugging soaking wet children. The mothers' faces radiated smiles of acceptance. They dropped their wall of resistance and began to enjoy the event. They responded positively to our stumbling attempts at friendly conversation. Some let us take their babies to the water hose to be washed. **We came to be refreshed TOGETHER by the water on this hot day in a barrio in Mexico.** **This was our way of showing Jesus' love.**

*Marie Hale*

**We need your help!**

Manos de Dios is making a difference in the lives of families, pastors and prisoners in Sonora. Please prayerfully consider making a monthly or one time financial contribution. We are available for speaking engagements for club, church group or business meetings. Contact us for details (520-975-7356). Donate on line at [www.ManosdeDios.org](http://www.ManosdeDios.org).

Thank you!

**Dennis and Lucy Smith, Manos de Dios (translated: hands of God)**

We named our mission outpost located in the inland pueblo of El Diamante "Campo Animo" (camp encouragement). We pray that when we are finished getting it ready for visitors it will be a place that many will find encouragement, safety, shelter and a place to draw closer to Jesus! We envision short-term missions teams ASSISTING with outreach programs for the indigenous workers in the near-by camps; building projects; and self-sustaining programs in this community located about 120 miles south of Peñasco.

On June 19th the Mexican border guards pulled us over to inspect the items on the flat bed trailer we were pulling. The only thing they were interested in was the generator we were taking in to run the pump for our planned Water Fun day in the barrio. After paying a \$50 "import fee" on the generator, we were on our way.

A few days before Pat and two workers had dug a hole and installed a septic tank near our trailer in El Diamante. Then, Lucy and I hired two local men to pour a concrete slab in front of the trailer, extending the slab to the septic tank. (And we were so glad they did! This helped control the dust and kept the trailer cleaner and cooler.) When we arrived on Tuesday afternoon it was HOT... 120 degrees! The electricity to the property was not strong enough to run the air conditioner in the trailer, there was only a trickle of running water to the property and the septic was in but not operational, yet. We were in for a



## Future trips to Sonora!

Saturday, September 29th (tentative) **Medical Clinic in the Prison** Doctor, nurse and translator needed. Donate funds to purchase needed medicine for prisoners.

Saturday, October 6, 2007 **Youth Concert in El Diamante in partnership with the Rock Church of Sahuarita.** Assist in this outreach to the teens of small towns 100 miles south of Peñasco (6 hour drive from Tucson). Camp with us at Campo Animo.

For more info and to sign up to join us on these short term missions trips ...contact Dennis and Lucy Smith, [GetInvolved@ManosdeDios.org](mailto:GetInvolved@ManosdeDios.org), 975-7356.

November 8-11, 2007 **Amor/PCC house building trip in Puerto Peñasco.** Register online between August 18 and September 30th. [www.pccwired.org](http://www.pccwired.org)

challenging visit in El Diamante! The only thing we accomplished that day was to unload the trailer, give away some donated bicycles and visit with our neighbors. Our first night in Campo Animo we dealt with extreme heat, itchy bug bites and therefore, very little sleep. Welcome to El Diamante in the summer!

**Wednesday morning** Pastor Alfonso and his wife, Angelita, invited us to a breakfast of fresh fruit, eggs, oatmeal, tortillas and chorizo. During the 2+ hour meal we talked about many things. They told us about their goals for the church; thoughts about the community and it's future; the new highway that will pass close by; and ways Manos de Dios can assist them, the church and the community. We were told the community needs a shoe/boot store, a GOOD restaurant (The only ones they have currently is food being sold out of homes) and a secure wireless Internet café. No phone lines in this town. Cell phones are used exclusively. Anyone want to start a small business in Mexico, in a

town of 1500 people? We appreciate our relationship with Pastor Alfonso and Angelita so much. They are mature in their faith and are willing to help us as we learn how to work with Mexican pastors. They openly share their hearts with us. We are praying about and planning for future projects to grow the KINGDOM in their area. They have a heart for the families in their community, the Indian workers in the surrounding camps and other pastors and their families. We will continue working closely with Alfonso.



**Manos de Dios with Pastor Alfonso & wife, Angelita, in front of their church**

The community water pump in El Diamante only operates from 10 in the morning till 4 in the evening. And it is NOT high water pressure by the time it reaches Campo Animo! Wednesday afternoon and Thursday morning Lucy and I spent time filling a borrowed 400 gallon water tank (from the community water tank- where we can get as much water as we can haul, at no charge). We watered the plants and trees on our property. We kept our new cement slab wet and put water in buckets for bathing and washing dishes. Throughout the next two days, we cleared our Campo Animo property of trash, and burned some leaves and brush. We were careful not to do too much between 1 and 5pm due to the extreme heat.

At 6:00pm each day we met Pastor Alfonso and Angelita at the city park (a dirt lot with a basketball court) where Angelita lead el Estudio Verano (VBS) program for the children in the two neighboring communities, El Diamante and Retranca. It was very different than an American VBS, but just as effective. They needed electricity for



Estudio Verano performers

the sound system but did not have a generator. What were they going to do?

As usual in Mexico, they improvised. Alfonso went to a street light pole and removed a small plate at the base of the pole. He then took his wire cutters and cut the "hot" wire inside the pole. He then took the wires from the sound system and spliced them to the wires that fed power to the streetlight. Instant power to their sound system! I told him he was "muy loco," he just

smiled and said, "no problema." For two hours, 100 plus children sat in chairs (did I mention the temperature had cooled off to about 100 degrees?) while listening to a message, singing songs and participating in activities. Lucy and I were amazed to see them be so well behaved and still interested in what was going on in that heat. The children repeated a short scripture verse, watched dramas, and listened to songs. There were contests for prizes and a juice box for each child.

Allen, Lucy tambien and Eric arrived at Campo Animo Thursday morning and delivered the donations of food, clothing and kitchen items to the church for distribution to the needy in the community. After delivering the supplies to Pastor Alfonso we took time to visit and share dreams, plans and concerns. Then it was time to leave Campo Animo and drive the 31 miles to Desemboque. Thursday it cooled off a little. It was only 117 degrees. In Desemboque our friends would be happy to have us stay in their one-room homes, but we opted to check-in for one night at the only motel in the community. It has 10 very basic rooms each with two double beds, an overhead light, an air conditioner, a sink, toilet and a shower. That's it. Nothing else! (no TV here!) That was OK with us. We appreciated the shower and air conditioning so much! Pastor Rueben and his wife, Erika, cook for us every time we visit, but this time we invited them to the motel to have lunch with us. A group of ten came to our US-style lunch of sandwiches, fruit, chips and cookies We had a good time of fellowshiping during lunch and then suggested we go for a swim. After putting our bathing suits, we headed for the beach. Our Mexican friends walked right into the water in their clothes. We waded out deeper to



Angelita teaches Bible verse



Cooling off in Desemboque

find cooler temperature water and chatted there for over an hour. I thought Lupita (she only has one leg and walks on crutches) would not be able to walk through the sand and would just sit on the motel balcony. It was about 250 yards to the ocean. The next thing I knew she was going down a steep ramp and was heading for the ocean! She made it to the water with out any mishaps and then sat down in the water. She rolled over so the water could splash on her face and body! Lupita displays determination and fearlessness each time we see her! Later that afternoon we went to the church and delivered the donations of food and clothing for Pastor Rueben to share with the members of the community. Thursday evening we attended their worship service. Including our group, there were about fifteen people in church. Erika started the service with prayer. When she prays, she closes her eyes and speaks boldly and with great emotion while pacing back and forth. Her prayers usually last between ten and twenty minutes. The rest of the people also (vocally) started praying (some pacing back and forth in the rear of the church) which made the building come alive with the sound of words and praises to our Lord. After a short message we were invited to have dinner of large blue shrimp with Erika and Pastor Rueben and family. It is always a joyous occasion when we fellowship over a meal with them and tonight was no exception. The day had been long and hot, so we retired to the motel for an evening of reflection and rest.

Friday morning after a breakfast of cereal and fruit on the motel patio, we started off to Peñasco.

His servant,

Dennis

## Please join us in praying ...

For pastors and their wives who devote their lives to serving our Lord in the barrios of Sonora, Mexico. That they would have endurance as they live day in and day out in the extreme heat of the summer.

That our hearts will earnestly seek God's will and plan for our work in El Diamante, Desemboque and Puerto Peñasco. That we see where God is already working and join Him in His plan, using the resources He provides (whether locally or from donations).

We praise God for our special friends in Mexico and the precious relationships we are building with them. We thank God for the gift of TIME to spend with these brothers and sisters and all that they teach us!

After staying in El Diamante for three days, finding out how hot it can be, and reflecting on our hope for mission outpost, Campo Animo, we wanted to find a scripture verse that would reflect what we were feeling. This comes pretty close. **"The Lord will create over all of Mount Zion and over those who assemble there a cloud of smoke by day and a glow of flaming fire by night; over all the glory will be a canopy. It will be a shelter and a shade from the heat of the day, and a refuge and hiding place from the storm and rain."** Isaiah 4:5-6



### Manos de Dios wish list:

#### El Diamante church needs:

- \*Cases of bottled water for Youth Concert
- \*Compact 4 cylinder **PICK UP TRUCK** in good working condition

#### Desemboque church needs:

white or green plastic stacking chairs

Manos de Dios is the sole support for two community/church food banks. Here are some of the much needed items:

Peanut butter	Cooking oil
Chocolate drink mix	Canned tuna in oil
Powdered laundry soap with bleach)	Macaroni and cheese (the good stuff)
Mashed potato flakes	Laundry softener
Coffee	Soup mixes
Beef Stew	Juice boxes for kids
Meat ravioli	Canned corn & beans
Vienna Sausage	Canned ham
Otter Pops	Canned milk

You may provide these items or give a cash donation to Manos de Dios for a specific need. For donation drop off or pick up [GetInvolved@ManosdeDios.org](mailto:GetInvolved@ManosdeDios.org) 975-7356



For lots more info go to:

[www.ManosdeDios.org](http://www.ManosdeDios.org)

## Partner with us to offer hope...

Manos de Dios is a 501-c-3 not-for-profit organization that partners with local pastors and missionaries in Sonora, Mexico to assist the poor with immediate relief efforts and long-term self-sustaining projects.

Work projects are staffed with volunteers from the Mexico Missions Life Group of Pantano Christian Church plus other volunteers. Please prayerfully consider supporting our work to help the poor in Mexico.

Go to our website for details:

[www.ManosdeDios.org](http://www.ManosdeDios.org)

### No Uniform — No school

Children in Mexico are required to wear a uniform to attend school. Many families can not afford to purchase a uniform for their children. Manos de Dios provides uniforms for children each school year. We

distribute them through our evangelical pastor partners in Puerto Peñasco. We have set of goal of gifting 90 uniforms to needy children for the 2007/2008 school year. Please prayerfully consider donating funds to help a child attend school. Education is so important! Each \$50, tax deductible contribution provides a complete uniform including: two polo shirts; a uniform skirt or pants; and a pair of shoes. To donate go to our website [www.ManosdeDios.org/donations.html](http://www.ManosdeDios.org/donations.html)

Click on the School Uniform button. Or ask for a pre-addressed donation envelope after worship services at Pantano Christian Church Mexico Missions table or The Rock of Sahuarita Church Information Table now through August 12th.



*Thank you for your generosity!*