



Mexico Mission 2012

Canyon Hills Presbyterian Church

190 S. Fairmont Blvd., Anaheim, California 92808

Dear Friends,

It is that time of year when we begin to gear up for our annual mission trip to build homes for needy families in the Playas de Tijuana region. As part of our “roll out” I would like to take this opportunity to address some safety concerns you might have regarding the reported violence in Mexico, specifically in the border area of Tijuana. It is important to us that you understand we are very aware of these concerns and as we prepare for this trip we monitor the situation in Mexico frequently.

The most recent travel advisory from the US State Department concerning Mexico was issued in April 2011 and no new violence in the greater Tijuana area has been reported through Mexico Security Update on the US Embassy website for over a year and a half (<http://travel.state.gov/travel/>). We continue to carefully monitor any violence reported in the greater Tijuana border area and to date all violence reported in this area has been well to the east of the Playas region. **No violence** related to drug trafficking has ever been reported in the colonias in which we serve.

We understand the reality of the violence in the border region of Mexico and the picture that the media continues to paint, especially as we near spring break, and how these images can affect the perceptions of many of our students and their families. We absolutely understand the concern for safety; however we hope you understand that the picture presented on television and throughout the media is very different from the real experience of our family and our team leaders who visit Tijuana on a regular basis.

I have said before that if you would like to visit Mexico for spring break to participate in the traditional activities of college students including drinking, drugs and carousing then you should seek another location for these activities. You are inviting trouble. But if you are coming to Mexico as part of a mission team to endeavor in Christian ministry you will be hard pressed to find any violence that has been targeted against such work or groups. It simply has not happened. My family and I travel to Mexico frequently and have never experienced or witnessed this type of violent behavior.

The reported violence that has occurred due to the “War on Drugs” has made an unfortunate impact on the mission and ministry efforts of many benevolent organizations. If we are unable to continue our work in the poorest areas of Mexico the drug cartels will have created even more victims and will eventually gain the upper hand, plunging even more innocents into a downward spiral of poverty. Supplying durable and appropriate shelter for these families provides another step out of poverty for them and gives them hope for a brighter day. I certainly hope we can stand against the evil powers of this world and not allow hope to be extinguished.

On a personal note, I have never felt unsafe in all my time in the colonias of Playas de Tijuana. We have brought our children to the colonias since they were infants and let them grow up playing in the streets with the local children and building homes alongside our teenage students and adult leaders. God has richly blessed our mission and ministry with Futuro del Oro and Iglesia Nuevo Pacto. He has faithfully provided funding and workers for the success of our projects. As we honor God’s blessings we would never put our students or adult leaders in knowingly dangerous situations.

I know making the decision to send your student to Mexico for mission work can be a difficult one but please be assured we believe that God’s protection will continue to provide safe working conditions for all team members. We hope you will consider this invitation prayerfully and join our mission team.

Blessings,

Rev. Lissa Smith

PS: Enclosed you will find a Mexico Mission Information Brochure and our current [Risk Plan](#). More copies for friends can be found on our church web site or in the church office.