



# LOVE CROSSES BORDERS





*Youth in California, USA, and Tijuana, Mexico, reached across barriers to love, serve, and be one in the gospel of Jesus Christ together.*

Compiled by Brooke H. Reynolds

What would be a good reason to get up early on a Thursday morning during summer break? For hundreds of youth from Orange County, California, USA, and Tijuana, Mexico, the reason was simple: a youth conference unlike any they'd ever experienced.

That morning, the youth from California boarded buses and crossed the border to gather with the youth in Tijuana. From the moment they got together, the youth from both countries hugged and high-fived each other. Throughout that first day of the conference, they performed baptisms together in the Tijuana Mexico Temple, worked side-by-side at an orphanage, played games together, and enjoyed a makeshift soccer game.

On Friday, the youth, in conjunction with a charitable organization in Mexico, helped build four homes for four deserving families in Tijuana. With hammers, paintbrushes, and sweat, they saw a house take shape through their hard work.

At the end the day, they were able to present the keys to each family, and each home was dedicated to the Lord. Each family was also given a framed quote signed by the youth and leaders that read, “Se necesitan manos para hacer una casa, pero se necesitan corazones para crear un hogar” (“It takes hands to make a house, but it takes hearts to make a home”). The youth and the families were equally blessed through this service.



# HOUSE BUILD: A

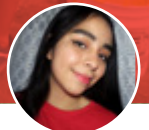
The family consists of Jose (father), Cecilia (mother), Sara (28), Ruth (18), and Suri (12). Their home had been destroyed by termites, and they had lost most of their possessions in torrential rains.

All day long, the family worked side-by-side with the youth. Cecilia's tears of joy flowed all day long as well.



THROUGH THESE ACTIVITIES, I REALIZED THAT LIVING GOSPEL TEACHINGS IS SOMETHING BEAUTIFUL, THAT HEAVENLY FATHER LOVES US, AND THAT SHARING OUR TESTIMONY HELPS US IMPROVE OUR FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST AND IN OUR HEAVENLY FATHER.

Ángela L., Tijuana, Mexico







MY TESTIMONY WAS STRENGTHENED BY THE MEXICAN YOUTH'S LOVE AND HOW STRONG THE SPIRIT IS THERE. NOW THAT I'M BACK, I'M GOING TO TRY TO SHARE A SMILE AND A LAUGH WITH MORE PEOPLE. IT'S NOT EVERY DAY YOU CAN BUILD A HOUSE, BUT YOU CAN ALWAYS SHARE A SMILE.

Luke S., California, USA



# HOUSE BUILD: B

Estefania and her two children, Camila (5) and Diego (2), had been living in an extremely small, one-room home with five other members of her extended family.

As she was handed the keys to her first home, Estefania was brought to tears. She thanked the youth for this act of love and service. To her and her family, it represented the love of her community and the hope of a brighter future.





I REALLY LOVED HOW WE APPLIED THE SCRIPTURE "IF YE LOVE ME, KEEP MY COMMANDMENTS" (JOHN 14:15) THROUGHOUT ALL THE YOUTH CONFERENCE BY SERVING OTHERS ON BOTH SIDES OF THE VEIL, LEARNING HIS WORD, SHARING OUR TALENTS, AND LOVING SOMEONE WE DIDN'T REALLY KNOW AND DIDN'T HAVE THAT MUCH IN COMMON WITH. WE ALL KNEW WE ARE SONS AND DAUGHTERS OF GOD AND WE ALL ARE THERE FOR THE SAME PURPOSE—TO LOVE JESUS CHRIST.

Ernesto G., Tijuana, Mexico



MY FAVORITE PART OF YOUTH CONFERENCE WAS DEFINITELY THE SERVICE. EVERYBODY WAS PUTTING THEIR HEARTS INTO BUILDING THIS HOME FOR THE FAMILY, WITH A SMILE ON THEIR FACE. SERVICE IS AN EXCELLENT SOURCE OF JOY.

Trevor D., California, USA





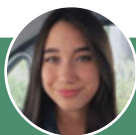
# HOUSE BUILD:

In this family are Roberto (father), Micaela (mother), Gloria (daughter, 13), Esther (daughter, 10), and Abraham (son, 8). Roberto works as a cook six days a week. Micaela raises her children and makes foam flowers to sell to stores and schools.

Two years ago, Roberto started going back to church with his family. He felt God's love and felt the need to serve and love others, so each Friday he would bring hundreds of burritos and flavored water to migrant groups from Central America. He feels that God always blesses him for his service and that his new home is one such blessing. But he was even more excited about the incredible gratitude, love, and unity he felt among the youth.

**EVEN THOUGH THE CALIFORNIA YOUTH DIDN'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT DANCING TO MEXICAN MUSIC, THEY MADE THE EFFORT TO DANCE AND REALLY TRIED TO LEARN. I KNOW THAT THESE ACTIVITIES FORM ETERNAL FRIENDSHIPS THAT LAST FOR A LONG TIME AND ARE THE MOST REAL.**

Lilly A., Tijuana, Mexico







JESUS CHRIST REALLY LOVES EVERYONE AND HE BLESSES HIS CHURCH IN EVERY AREA OF THE WORLD. I AM GOING TO MAKE IT A GOAL TO SERVE SOMEONE EVERY DAY, EVEN IF IT'S HARD. SERVICE IS ALWAYS WORTH IT.

Noelle L., California, USA



# HOUSE BUILD: D

Nancy, a recent college graduate, was living in a rented home about the size of a small bedroom. For years she had two great desires: to teach elementary school and to own her own home. The dream of teaching was close to coming true, and now (after she had volunteered 500 hours helping build houses for others, by the way), Nancy's dream of a home came true. Tears of joy flowed steadily down Nancy's face as she expressed her deep thanks.







I TRULY BELIEVE THAT WE HAVE TO SERVE GOD'S CHILDREN TO REALLY FEEL HOW MUCH HE CARES ABOUT US. MY FAVORITE PART OF THIS SERVICE TRIP TO MEXICO WAS SEEING AND FEELING THE LORD'S LOVE RADIATE THROUGH THOSE WE WERE SERVING AND THOSE I WAS SERVING WITH.

Hailey M., California, USA



IT STRENGTHENED ME TO KNOW THE GOSPEL IS FOR EVERYBODY. KNOWING I AM NOT ALONE, THAT THERE ARE MORE PEOPLE LIKE ME IN THE CHURCH WHO HAVE FAITH AND BELIEVE IT IS TRUE, HELPED ME STRENGTHEN MY TESTIMONY. I LOVED TO SEE ALL OF US PERFORMING SACRED ORDINANCES AT THE TEMPLE.

Jose Abraham W., Tijuana, Mexico



In the evening, the youth enjoyed teaching one another their customs. One of the highlights for many of the California youth were the beautiful dances the Mexican stakes performed in traditional costumes.

Firesides were also held throughout the conference, translated into Spanish and English.

As the conference concluded on Saturday, the youth gathered for a morning fireside where youth from both countries combined to sing "Come unto Christ." They sang in both English and Spanish, and many felt that this was the culmination of the entire conference—Latter-day Saint youth coming together, united as one, with the common goal of following their Savior. **NE**

*The author lives in California, USA.*