

Mission to Mexico – A Spiritual Journey!

By Scott Laird

It was a mission to provide service. It was a mission for spiritual growth. And it was a mission for fun and fellowship.

Nine members of the Vernonia Community Church, led by Pastor Grant Williams and his wife Eldonna, recently traveled to the Baja peninsula of Mexico, spending a week working, teaching, and helping residents in the small town of Maneadero. The group was joined by fourteen members of the Faith Baptist Church from Dallas, Oregon, on their trip.

"It was fabulous," said Pastor Williams about the experience. "It was a lot of work, but we all want to go back."

The group drove from Vernonia and spent their time working on a variety of construction projects. "We put a roof on a structure, an addition and a roof on another structure, and helped pour a 22 x 16 foot concrete slab. We painted and put up rafters. We also unloaded a huge truck of building supplies that arrived late on our last evening," said Pastor Williams.

According to Pastor Williams, the trip was undertaken with specific goals, "We went there to help meet their physical needs by helping with construction and repairs of village structures. We went to meet their spiritual needs through our vacation bible school program. We went for our own personal growth. And we went to enjoy the recreation and fellowship that comes from a shared adventure."

Maggie Peyton, one of the Vernonia participants, also considered the trip successful. "It was hard work,

but it was fun. We were all stretched to the point of growing; stretched physically, emotionally, and spiritually."

The Vernonia group was made up of the Naeve family- Shawn, Linda, Sarah and Josiah; Tarah Johnson, Kathy Meier, in addition to the Williams' and Ms. Peyton.

About fifty of the village children participated in the vacation bible school which was taught through an interpreter using crafts, stories, and games. "You didn't need to know the language to understand each other," said Peyton. "We were speaking a universal language. People understand the heart, the eyes, and laughter."

The group also helped the community by bringing a large assortment of donated clothing for the residents, and brought fifty backpacks that they filled with school supplies for the children.

The mission group traveled to help the Juahacans, a displaced indigenous people who live in a sub-village of the town of Maneadero. The village had electricity but no running water, no plumbing, no telephone, and

no mail service. "There is such a difference in Mexico; you see it as soon as you cross the border," said Peyton. "You see garbage everywhere, especially plastic. You see and smell raw sewage. There are people shooting up drugs out in the open. There is sewage in the ocean so you can't swim. You see the class difference between rich and poor distinctly; there is no middle class."

The group was there to assist Missionaries Tim and Kathy Johnson from California who represent Calvary Chapel Church. The Johnsons have been working as missionaries in Mexico for sixteen years and have been in Maneadero for only the past year. The group from Vernonia raised money for their trip by holding a series of car washes, selling firewood, operating a shuttle service during the KUPL fishing derby and the Cycle Oregon visit, and by hosting a very successful enchilada feed.

When asked about highlights of her trip, Peyton mentioned one of the village ladies. "She was so sweet. She gave us the most heartfelt hugs. We didn't need to know the language - we understood what she was telling us."

"We are so thankful for the opportunity to help these people," said Pastor Williams in closing, "and they were so appreciative."

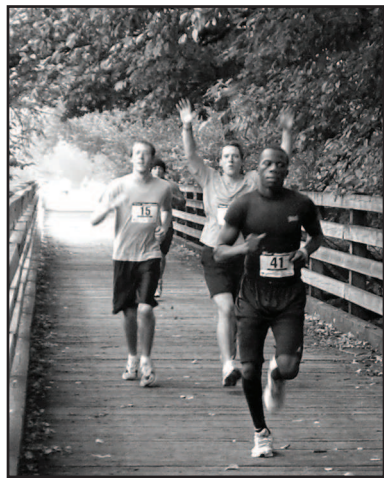


The Vernonia Community Church invites everyone to a celebration of their trip to Mexico. Come enjoy a slide show, snacks and fellowship on September 23 at 4PM.

Participation Doubled for Fifth Annual Vernonia Bear Creek Run/Walk

The day started off foggy and cold, but by 7AM volunteers were already setting up for the day. Within thirty minutes the Anderson Park Pavilion was alive with runners signing up for the 5K and 10K runs. Fifty-one runners participated, doubling the number from 2006. Runners came from Vernonia, Hillsboro, Forest Grove, Camas, Warrenton, Astoria, Portland and West Linn. Fifteen of these runners were from Vernonia.

The 10K started promptly at 8:15, sending twenty-four eager people south along the Linear Trail. Twelve minutes later twenty-seven 5K participants were on their way north toward Vernonia Lake. By 9:30 all runners and walkers safely returned to the Pavilion to enjoy rest and refreshments. Awards were given out (first place medals for Male/Female 5K and 10K and first and second place ribbons for the 5K walkers), and a raffle was held. Vernonia Cares Director Sandy Welch thanked everyone for the impact they were making on the local community. Approximately \$1,500 was raised by this event through sponsorship and the run itself.



10K Run - Men

1st	Yrineo Gonzalez	Longview	39:18
2nd	Kevin Filkowski	Longview	39:47
3rd	Tsegay Gebrewald	Astoria	41:17

10K Run - Women

1st	Kimberly Robison	Beaverton	49:12
2nd	Anna Grass	Beaverton	51:17
3rd	Laura Ansari (tie)	Hillsboro	51:29
3rd	Kara Loriontwo (tie)	Hillsboro	51:29

5K walk

1st and 2nd	Mother and Daughter Liz and Vera Hutchison	Forest Grove	51:32
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5K Run - Men

1st	Ted Allison	West Linn	17:14
2nd	Szabolcs Vas	Astoria	19:00
3rd	Alan Beck	Warrenton	19:24

5K Run - Women

1st	Alisa Wise	Camas	23:20
2nd	Karen Beck	Warrenton	26:32
3rd	Riley Graham (tie)	Scio	31:01
3rd	Haley Guest (tie)	Scio	31:01



Many thanks to the volunteers who made the event day a success: Madeleine Gendron, Celia Gendron, Yolande Gendron, Tom Hoerauf, Toby Finzel, Sandy Welch, Penny Costley and Kelli Schulte, as well as local paper photographers Scott Laird & Noni Anderson.

Sponsorship for the event came from local community businesses in the form of cash donations for the event. Event day snacks and prizes were provided by Sentry, The Black Bear coffee shop and Jazzercise.

Columbia County Rider- Gets You Where You Need to Go

Staff Article

The cars, vans and buses from the Columbia County Rider transportation service are all over Columbia County. Based out of St. Helens, but with drivers operating in Vernonia, Clatskanie, Scappoose, and Rainier, they offer regular scheduled service through the Highway 30 corridor to Portland. But more importantly, they offer on-demand service, including rides in and around Vernonia, for those who need help getting to an appointment, a ride to the grocery store, or a trip to visit family and friends.

For as little as one dollar, you can call and schedule a one-way ride locally. Trips from Vernonia to Hillsboro or Columbia County cost eight dollars, and trips to Portland are ten dollars. Best of all, this service is

not just for senior citizens - anyone can use it.

The Columbia County Rider is run by Columbia County, managed by Metro West Ambulance, and overseen by Janet Wright, the Economic Development Manager for the County.

Columbia County Rider currently offers six round trips daily, Monday through Friday, from St.



Helens to Portland; starting at 6:30 a.m., it runs every two hours with the last return trip leaving Portland at 5:30 p.m. Due to demand, there is an added express that leaves St. Helens at 7 a.m. and a return express at 6 p.m. Also offered is round trip service from St. Helens/Scappoose to Portland Community College's Rock Creek campus.

So if you are in need of a ride, give the Columbia County Rider a call.

For information about the Columbia County Rider go to co.columbia.or.us/links or call 888-462-6526.