

# Beulah

## Land News

### Making a Difference for Christ in Mexico

Eighteen years ago, a small group of men and women journeyed to Mexico to work with the poor. This year 87 people from northeast Tennessee followed in their footsteps. Central Baptist Church, along with several churches in the Tri Cities area, embarked on the largest and busiest Mexico Mission trip ever the week of February 18-25, 2006. Mission team members took time off from their jobs and paid their own way so that they could make a difference for Christ in Mexico.

A large crew of construction workers, led by two commercial builders from Tennessee, erected a building that will serve as a kitchen and dining room for an orphanage in Morelos. They were able to build the building in four days and two hours. As the construction crew worked against the clock, dental, vision and hearing clinics were being held in and around the Piedras Negras area.



Construction team members build a dining hall/kitchen for an orphanage in Morelos, Mexico

Several Tri Cities dentists and some of their staff went on this mission trip. Three dental clinics treated



Vision team member performing eye exam.

a total of 531 people in four days.

The vision clinic ministered to more than 350 people giving eye exams and checking for eye diseases and cataracts. They distributed more than 225 pairs of glasses.

The hearing clinic treated 126 people. Most were tested for a hearing loss and 13 hearing aids were dispensed. Several people had earwax flushed from their ears. A number of them came in with no hearing and left with completely normal hearing after this procedure.

In addition to all this, 800 pairs of shoes were given away.

The Mexico Mission trip of 2006 was able to impact more lives than ever before, and we were proud to be a part of it.



Ann & Nick Skipper with audiologist Mary Lee Bagwell (center) on Mexico mission trip.



Mexico Mission Trip 2006

## First Steps in Practicing Community Development – Part Two

In our last issue we discussed:

- I. What is community development?
- II. What do you and your organization think about people?
- III. What do you know about the territory and its people?

In Part Two, we discuss forming associations and networks, identifying areas of interest and agreeing to work together.

### IV. Get the people together to form associations and networks.

As you get to know the community, ask people what they are passionate about. You can begin to identify themes that concern several people. Often they may think they are the only people interested in an issue, and they feel unable to do anything about it. That's a helpless feeling, isn't it?

For example, there may be several people who are interested in low-cost housing. Ask them if they would be willing to get together with others who are interested in the same thing. Usually they will be willing to get together if they feel strongly about an issue.

Listening is a major strength of the person(s) putting the group together. Often people from different socioeconomic levels have not worked together. The community developer can serve as a facilitator to help people learn to listen to each other and exchange ideas.

When people get together, the first thing is NOT to establish an organization with officers, constitution and bylaws! The first thing is to talk about what the issues are. The group can organize around the work to be done. Ask whom they know outside the community who might contribute to addressing the issues.

### V. When people get together, they can identify and agree to work together on specific areas.

Begin "where the people are." This means starting to work on individual and group interests. For example, people may be interested in childcare, education, health, jobs and economic development. They can come together in small groups based on their interests. If there is enough interest, they may agree to work together. The group can address several issues at the same time. So the people interested in childcare work on that, while others work on health, etc.

After clarifying the issue, the people identify what work needs to be done to reach their goals. For example, how many people need child care, how many providers currently serve the community, what people are willing to pay, etc. They will need to know local and state regulations concerning childcare. They may want to find out how other communities handle the problem.

At this point, the work is divided among the group members. It is important to have a written list of the work that each person has agreed to, and a time line for when it will be done. The group then has a framework, a sense that "their" issue is getting addressed, and a time when they can measure progress.

People may have been discouraged in addressing issues in the past. Having a framework to "get the work done" helps them see when progress is made and encourages them to do their part.

If you have feedback about this article, contact the Skippers or Doris Littrell at [dlittrell3@centurytel.net](mailto:dlittrell3@centurytel.net).

We are indebted to Doris Litterell for this series of articles on Community Development.

—Nick and Ann Skipper

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## Old Skills Renewed



*Ann Skipper administers hearing test in Piedras Negras, Mexico.*

It's been a long time since I last administered a hearing test. 1978 to be exact. That was the year that I graduated from Middle Tennessee State University with a Bachelor of Science degree in

Speech and Hearing Therapy.

When I first signed up to go on the mission trip to Mexico (see page 1), I wasn't sure what I was going to do. I toyed with the idea of working with the construction team, but then I heard that there would be a hearing clinic as part of this trip, I offered to help in any way that I could. Turns out that audiologist, Mary Lee Bagwell and her husband, David, needed another person to do hearing tests. I informed them that my skills were rusty, but after some practice in their office at the East Tennessee Hearing Center in Johnson City, it all began to come back to me.

In Piedras Negras, we set up our clinic at the Primeria Iglesia Bautista which is also where the Vision clinic and one of the dental clinics were operating. We saw 126 people and fitted 12 people with solar powered hearing aids.

One elderly gentleman who received a hearing aid said that he had prayed the night before that someone would help him with his hearing. He broke down and cried. In English he said, "God bless you" to each of us as he left with his new hearing aid.

An 11 year old boy who had never heard speech before was given a hearing aid which enable him to hear speech for the first time. At present, he has no communication system—no speech or sign language. With the hearing aid, he has the possibility of being able to communicate and to attend a special school for the deaf. There is now hope where there was none.

I'm looking forward to going back next year.

—Ann Skipper



*Children's clothing for Warm Embrace*

## Warm Embrace

Hooded ponchos, hats, scarves, mittens, pullovers, sweaters—that's what I've been working on the past few months. Ever since I learned that some of the Lakota people on the reservations in South Dakota go through the winter without heat, I have tried in my own way to help.

Warm Embrace, a charitable organization which seeks to address the issues of poverty amongst the Native Americans in South Dakota, collects "comfort items" to help keep the Lakota warm during the harsh weather in their homeland. As I make enough items to fill a box, I ship them to Chris and Dayna Thompson, founders of Warm Embrace. Chris and Dayna have a heart for the Lakota people and are doing a great work among them to alleviate poverty by economic and community development. For more information on Warm Embrace, go to [www.warmembrace.org](http://www.warmembrace.org).

Some of you have seen the crocheted children's sweaters that I have been making for the past few years. I am making them for the Lakota children now. The directions for the sweaters are available on our website [www.blmm.com](http://www.blmm.com) if you would like to join in on this project. —Ann Skipper

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4

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## We Need You!



*Nick & Ann Skipper*

*In order for us to do the work that God has called us to do with Together for Hope we need your prayer support and your financial support. We ask you to partner with us as we serve in Partners in Hope.*

*Please designate your contribution for Nick & Ann Skipper's ministry and send it to:*

*Cooperative Baptist Fellowship  
P.O. Box 101699  
Atlanta, GA 30392-1699*



## *In His Word*

Dear Friend, you have always been faithful in helping other followers of the Lord, even the ones you didn't know before. They have told the church about your love. They say you were good enough to welcome them and to send them on their mission in a way that God's servants deserve. When they left to tell others about the Lord, they decided not to accept help from anyone who wasn't a follower. We must support people like them, so that we can take part in what they are doing to spread the truth. —3 John 5-8 CEV