Mexico 2023**April 1 to 8, 2023**

**Important Dates for Mexico 2023**

March 29 7am-9pm Drop off luggage at MVPC

April 1, 8:00am Adult Advance Team departs to Mexico April 1, 10:30pm Student Teams at MVPC for departure April 8, 10:00pm Buses return to Miramonte HS parking lot April 12, 6:30-9:00pm Reunion Night dinner /celebration

April 16, 9:30am MEXICO SUNDAY in MVPC Sanctuary

Celebrating 30 Years of Building Hope with Amor Ministries!

Friends,

Because you’re reading this, you are more than likely sending a student to Mexico or you are attending yourself. We are so excited that we get to have our trip again. Each participant will experience things that can have a significant impact, and may be life-changing.

As a parent of a student who will be attending MVPC Mexico, you are in for an adventure as well. The emotions before and especially after the trip can be overwhelming for your child, and you. Thank you for the trust that you have placed in us at Moraga Valley Presbyterian Church to care for your child. We take that trust seriously!

This book will guide you through the practical steps of getting prepared for a week in Mexico. So read carefully!

Each participant will also be prayed for by other people here at Moraga Valley Presbyterian Church with help from the prayer card that your student filled in during registration. I encourage you to talk with your child about what they wrote so you can know how to be praying for them as well.

FOR Lamorinda,

David Ricketts

Associate Pastor, Family Ministries

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**A M O R M I N I S T R I E S –** 

**B A C K G R O U N D A N D H I S T O R Y**

MVPC began to work with Amor Ministries in 1990 and has built homes for over 300 families since we began this partnership.

**At least 800,000 Mexican families struggle without basic, secure homes.**

Martin and Carmen Brito were two of these people. Before receiving a home, their family of five had been living in one small room. Carmen, had been praying that her husband would come to faith in Christ. But as their living conditions became more difficult, Martin rejected his wife's faith.

"The day our family received this home," says Martin, "I understood the message of Jesus. He gave his love without receiving anything in return."

Martin and Carmen's experience embodies the mission of Amor. We are driven to touch the lives of families in Mexico at the point of their greatest need. Often, this means providing suitable shelter. Additionally, it could mean providing the family with enough food to get through the week, a backpack full of school supplies, warm clothes and Christmas presents during the winter season.

Our ministry is effective because of our highly interactive partnerships with pastors of local churches in Mexico, trip coordinators, and our National Advisory Board. We all share a common vision and purpose for building God's kingdom.

Pastors of local congregations in Mexico provide Amor with an awareness of the spiritual, social, cultural, and economic realities that influence their communities. Any family who owns or is in process of owning land within a community can be selected to receive an Amor home. These pastors evaluate potential home recipients and make recommendations to Amor, helping us prioritize the use of our resources and the placement of our ministry teams.

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**E M E R G E N C Y C O N T A C T I N F O R M A T I O N**

Amor Ministries headquarters is open **8:00 am - 5:00 pm, Monday through Thursday and 8:00 am - 4:00 pm on Friday.**

**The phone number in San Diego is (619) 662-1200.**

• In the event of an emergency, call the Amor Ministries office, and press ‘0’ for the operator.

• In the event of an emergency which takes place after hours, call the Amor Ministries office and the voice-mail system will offer an emergency feature. Leave a message and the system will begin paging the Amor Management staff to pick up the message. The Management staff will then forward the message to an AMOR staff member in Mexico and onto the group.

• **Dave’s cell (925) 899-0279** Works well in Mexico but please use for emergencies only. Text or voice call both work well.

• **Trip Blog:** 

**mvpcmexicotrip.wordpress.com**

Updated daily with pictures and

comments.

**8 G R E A T T I P S F O R A H E A L T H Y & S A F E M E X I C O E X P E R I E N C E**

1. Wash hands often! Especially before eating.

2. Drink lots of water. Bring your water bottle and drink 32oz/day more if it’s hot.

3. Use plenty of sunscreen & chapstick - don’t forget ears and back of neck.

4. Keep shower water out of eyes & mouth.

5. Wear work gloves & hard-soled shoes on job site. 6. Wear your hard hat on roofing days.

7. Stucco burns hurt!!! Keep stucco on the house.

8. The BEST WAY to prevent vomiting & diarrhea from spoiling your week is to eat & drink ONLY what is provided in camp. Be Smart!!

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**M E D I C A L T E A M R E M I N D E R**

In preparation for the MVPC Mexico Trip, we want to advise you of important medical information. According to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the listed vaccinations and TB test are **recommended** for people traveling to Mexico.

**1. Vaccinations prior to departure for Mexico:**

• Covid, Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B, Typhoid, Tetanus, Flu (incl. H1N1) **2. Testing after returning from Mexico**:

• Tuberculosis PPD skin test: Some pediatricians and Kaiser Permanente Health Plan recommend a follow-up PPD test 3 months after returning from Mexico.

• We have never experienced a case of TB in the past 30 years of this trip.

**3. Medical Forms and Follow-up**

• If your son or daughter will be taking medications while in Mexico, please contact our medical team leader, Dr. Brent Levenfeld with any questions or concerns you may have. Contact info listed below.

• If there is an emergency while on the trip, we will make every effort to contact parents.

• Any non-emergency illnesses will be discussed with you after returning home.

**Important reminder:** You may want to pack a second set of any prescription medication taken on a regular basis just in case one set is lost. For instance, students could pack one with their luggage and take the other with them on the bus in their backpack.

**Please talk with your son or daughter about your expectations for them taking their medication while in Mexico. We strongly recommend students and adults continue regular medication routines while in Mexico.**

**If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to contact Dr. Brent Levenfeld, Medical Team leader, by March 25 at (925) 324-7566 or email docbrent@comcast.net.**

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**S H A R I N G I N T H E E X P E R I E N C E**

Your child has decided to take part in a life-changing experience, and we want to equip you, the parent, with the tools necessary to partner in this trip as much as possible. The times before, during, and after an Amor Ministries' mission trip will bring new challenges, growth opportunities, and eye opening moments. One thing is for sure, your child will not re turn the same person who left, but this is a good thing.

Sunday: Today your child will cross the border into Mexico. An Amor representative will meet the group and escort them through the border crossing all the way to camp. Once over the border, the scenery changes dramatically. The pristine homes and American cleanliness give way to a different set of smells, sights and sounds. The eyes of the group are fixed upon what lies outside the windows. Your child will drive approxi mately 45 minutes to the secure Amor campground where he or she will set up camp, home for the next week.

Monday: Today your child will pile into a vehicle and drive to the group’s building site. The mood of the group is often one of nervous an ticipation. There is an excitement about what they are about to do and some reservation as to how they’ll build a house in such a short period of time. Once at the site that will hold the new home, the group will meet the family and begin to settle in to the house building pro cess. Soon your child is digging, leveling, mixing cement and taking part in some pretty tough manual labor. By the end of today, the group will hopefully finish the foundation to be ready for framing on day two.

Tuesday and Wednesday: Your child will 

wake up sore. There was a lot of mixing

cement, cutting of lumber and hammering

nails before! The cement slabs have hard

ened and the group can continue in the

building process. If you were to watch

these days, you’d see your child sawing,

hammering, measuring and becoming an

expert in the art of framing. By the end of

Wednesday, the walls and roof are together and positioned on the foun dation. There is a visible frame to the house and the project is taking on a shape that will lend to a sense of accomplishment.

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**S H A R I N G I N T H E E X P E R I E N C E**

Thursday: Your child is probably dreading a wake-up call by day four. They are tired, but excited for the day ahead. Time is flying by and your child is acclimated to his or her surroundings. The once intimidating poverty has become a part of daily expectations, and it’s now been a week without TV, iPhones, computers and life’s other distractions . . . and they are really enjoying themselves! Stress is sometimes high on this day as the reality of only one more day to build is at the forefront. With the walls standing and prepared for stucco, the roof completed and the door and windows installed, the final day will be left for two coats of stucco. The once empty lot is really taking on the form of a home that will keep a family together.

Friday: Today is filled with much emotion. The group knows it is the last time they will be with their Mexican families 

and they begin to realize that they will soon

have to re-enter into life back home. Your child

will go to the work site excited to finish up the

two coats of stucco and give the gift of a com

pleted home to their family.

The end of this day is an incredible moment: the group will gather the family together to express their love, but more importantly, the great love and grace of God. The key, a symbol of safety and stability for this fami ly, is given to the family along with a Spanish Bible, a framed picture of the team and several other housewarming gifts from members of MVPC such as curtains for the windows and pot holders.

Throughout the course of the week, your child has come to a place where, without thought, they have adjusted to seeing poverty, and in stead of being threatened, finds comfort in these new surroundings. They also begin to see change happening. There is an understanding that your child can make a difference, they have something to offer the world, and he or she has a role to play.

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**P A C K I N G L I S T**

**Packing Tips**

❑ Pack clothes for return home in a separate, sealed, plastic bag to keep them clean.

❑ You may want to line your duffle with a plastic trash bag to keep clothes/gear clean. You can then use this bag to pack wet/dirty clothes in for the trip home.

❑ Remember to pack warm clothes for evening. A light jacket over a sweatshirt is often enough but sometimes people have brought gloves, a warm hat, etc. All of our evening meetings are outdoors.

❑ Remember that this is meant to be a cross cultural experience and we don’t want to wear items that draw attention to our selves any more than necessary.

❑ Please no torn jeans or t-shirts with suggestive or inappropriate logos.

❑ No tank tops, spaghetti straps or cut off sleeves are al lowed (modesty is a huge cultural value in Mexico)

❑ Bring only clothes you don’t mind getting very dirty or destroyed.

**How To Pack**

You will need a day pack and duffle bags (preferable to suitcases for loading). Remember that you will need to be able to carry your own luggage across the border to the US so pack light.

**Please label each duffle with student’s name and team color.**

**What NOT To Bring**

Egg crate mattresses, cots, chairs, personal stereos, portable game systems, blow-dryers, pet reptiles, bad attitudes, non-prescription drugs (illegal), alcohol or tobacco.

**Any student caught in possession of illegal drugs or alcohol or purchasing such items while on the trip will be sent home at their parent’s expense.**

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**P A C K I N G L I S T**

**Day Pack** - To be carried on bus

❑ Pillow

❑ Sweatshirt or jacket

❑ Passport (handed to team leader prior to getting on bus) ❑ Cash:

❑ $ for 2 meals on the road (lunch and dinner on the way home)

❑ Tacos in camp are $1 each, churros are $2 per bag ❑ Blankets at camp store $20, hooded ponchos $15 ❑ Consider giving a donation to Amor Pastor Fund ❑ Snacks - for the bus ride.

**Clothes**

❑ Warm clothes for evening - jacket, warm hat, gloves ❑ Closed-toe shoes for campsite

❑ Flip flops/sandals for shower

❑ Rain gear - poncho or pants/jacket with hood

❑ Work clothes (NO shorts, dresses or tank tops/spaghetti straps.) T-shirts must have sleeves covering shoulders. ❑ At least 1 pair of sturdy work boots/shoes (boots are best!) ❑ Sun hat (something that will cover face and neck) ❑ Bathing suit for showering (modest please)

❑ Cover to wear to showers (may use towel if large enough) ❑ Long sleeve cotton shirt to protect against sunburn

**Personal Tools** \*\***LABELED WITH NAME\*\***

❑ Hammer (preferably sturdy for framing)

❑ Utility knife (with extra blades) ❑ Square (Speed Square or equivalent) ❑ Pencil

❑ Measuring Tape (25’ or 75’preferable) ❑ Work gloves

❑ A nail apron or tool belt

Moraga Hardware has a section for Mexico tools and offers a discount if you

mention you are with MVPC.

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**P A C K I N G L I S T**

**Gear**

❑ Air mattress with battery operated air pump or self-inflating mattress (check that batteries are new in air pump!) ❑ Warm sleeping bag (rated to at least 32 deg.)

❑ Pillow (may be brought on bus if desired)

❑ Personal medications (you may want to bring 2 sets just in case)

❑ Toiletries (toothbrush, toothpaste, hairbrush, soap, shampoo) ❑ Sun shower

❑ Towel/washcloth

❑ 2 rolls of toilet paper (bring one each day to work site) ❑ Flashlight or headlamp (recommend you put new batteries in just before we leave)

❑ Large, personal water bottle (32oz.)

❑ Sun hat

❑ Sunglasses

❑ Sunblock and lip balm with sunblock

❑ Bible/pen/journal

Optional:

• Camera , cell phone

• Frisbee, football other outdoor games (please label with your name)

• Wet wipes/antibacterial wipes

**Tent**

❑ Please plan to share a tent with others **(maximum of 4-5 peo ple in a tent)**. You will want to bring a sturdy tent that has a rain fly and metal stakes (MVPC has several metal stakes that students can use and return at the end of the trip if needed). • Keep in mind that we have experienced high winds (50+

mph) and heavy rain in the past. Your tent is the only thing keeping your stuff dry. A good tent is invaluable!

• Please only bring 1 tent for each group of students. We have limited space in camp.

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**M E X I C O F O L L O W - U P**

We work hard to provide activities and experinces that will enhance, deepen and will help cement some of the learning and personal growth that students experience in Mexico. We hope you will encourage your son/daughter to participate in these activities and will talk at length with them about their experiences and what they learned.

• **Reunion Night - Wednesday, April 12, 6:30 - 9:00 pm** The entire family is welcome to join us for an evening of BBQ and sharing. Students and adult leaders will have more time to share about their experiences and debrief the trip.

• **Mexico Sunday - Sunday, April 16 at 9:30am**

This is really important part of the trip and is a wonderful chance for students to share with the rest of MVPC some of the lessons learned on the trip. Students will have a chance to share during an open mic time during the service. Please remember to pick up any remaining gear that was taken on the trip.

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**Celebrating 30 Years of Building Hope with Amor Ministries!**

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