



## *“Put love where it’s needed”*



Our newest parish social outreach leader is Susana Ramirez. She is a strong woman with two children: a son 17 just starting college and a daughter just starting high school. Both children used to be in private school and Susana was able to raise her children without having to work outside the home because her husband was a lawyer making a decent living. Three years ago, her husband died, and everything changed. The friends she had turned out to not be real friends, she had to find work, and her son had to drop out of school and take a job to help the family make ends meet. Also, Susana had been studying to be a lawyer so that she could join her

husband’s practice, but she had to drop out. Susana eventually started baking desserts from home so that she could spend more time caring for the family.

When a friend invited Susana to a SEARCH retreat for adults, she did not want to go. First, she was not wanting to attend because, even though it had been three years since her husband’s death, she was not ready. She was still wearing black. Susana says she was still confused and angry. However, the friend insisted so much, that she finally relented to go. Perhaps it was because the friend always seemed so happy. Her spirit was not open at first, and she found herself judging the speakers and just wanting to go home. But then came the time for the exposition of the Holy Eucharist when Susana says she saw her husband smiling at her.

She was overwhelmed by feelings of forgiveness and love. That is what led Susana to eventually take on the role of parish social outreach coordinator. She says her trials help her to understand what others are experiencing. She seems to be always smiling and looking for more ways to help others. She loves to recruit others to help her.

After her change in heart, her son attended a SEARCH retreat for youth. Now, Susana says they work as a team and the son has started college. She says he is always tired



but happy and is proud of his efforts. Susana is doing what she loves the most, serving God through helping others. Mother Teresa used to say “Put love where it’s needed”.

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*“If one person takes it to heart, all is worthwhile”*

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During this Christmas season, as has happened for many years, we receive visits from various people who love to bless and donate to people here in our area. This year we were able to give 400 food baskets to nearby families and another 300 to our volunteers who work hard all year.

First, we highlight two donors that help often, even though it

is a significant effort for them to make the journey to our Oblate parish. Even so, they live the Oblate saying of “give what you need” by always smiling and welcoming.

Many thanks to a group named “Misioneros Laicos De La Divina Misericordia” which comes from a parish in Los Angeles that makes the 6-hour border crossing journey. This December they brought 100 food baskets, toys, clothes, books, diapers, tortillas, and pizza (a favorite with the kids). Javier Bravo leads the group and shares that his favorite part is praying with the crowd, reading the gospel, and sharing a message of hope. While some people may come just to receive the food basket, we understand because sometimes hunger is more compelling than faith. Javier says, however, that if one person hears the message and takes it to heart, all is worthwhile.

A regular to our parish is Charles Abajian and his wife Rita with their group from St. Frances Xavier Cabrini Catholic Church in southern California. During normal times they come almost monthly and have been doing so for many years. With several vehicles they transport appliances, furniture, candy, clothes, toys, food baskets, and cereal (always a favorite). Chuck often asks what we need

and then rounds those things up for his next visit: wheelchairs, diapers, and tarps. Tarps are always in great demand as winter rains can wreak havoc.

Another group that visits from time to time is Colegio Familia, which is a Catholic school located here in Tijuana. The people from this school live better than most of those in eastern Tijuana, where our parish is located, so they share their blessings. Beyond bringing extra large food baskets, they like to visit families in their houses and learn more about their hardships. Even though they only live a matter of a few miles away, the living conditions are very different.



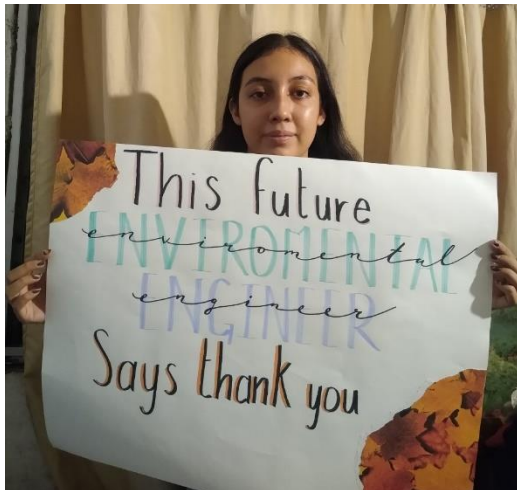
We have many donors and thank them for the help and trust. Those donations make a real difference in our community where so many move looking for a better life. We pray for your continued support and prayers. God bless you all and Merry Christmas.

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## *“Student of the week”*

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Paola Castro



Paola is studying environmental engineering, that career looks for solutions on the contamination problems, she volunteers on many different ministers including youth minister, liturgy, search retreat and the scholarship program.

Also she is a strong leader in one of our chapels where she helps the youth asking what the needs are.