

Subject: Last Update from Chelsea & Edgardo

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To: <undisclosed-recipients;>

Category: MEA Accounts

We really wanted to try and write one more time before we leave Mexico, and here I am just two short days before we head out. We have been very busy for the last few weeks preparing to leave, however, we have really tried to keep our priorities in check. We knew there were many things to be done, packing, figuring out our route back to Canada, getting the vehicle and trailer ready to go, updating resumes, training people in our positions here and the list goes on. But, we didn't want to get lost in this list of things to be done, and instead choose to dedicate a lot of our time to the people we love here.

One of the most important things for me was to spend a weekend with Gloria (from the orphanage) going camping. We weren't sure if it was going to work out because there was only one possible weekend we could go, which happened to be just 7 days before our departure date. With Gloria struggling with math it also meant that in order for her to come she had to pass a math exam the day we were to leave, as well as to get permission from the social services here in Mexico. It wasn't looking very promising, but Friday at 5:15 it was finally decided that she could come camping with us, and we left just half an hour later. It was a wonderful last weekend to spend with our girl and we enjoyed every minute of having her with us. She was so grateful to be able to come with us.

Edgardo continued to meet with the teenage boys in the orphanage regularly all through the summer. Last night they, and some of the other staff, threw us a surprise going-away party with a Beach Volleyball theme. Edgardo's parents and brother are also people we have spent a lot of time with before we leave. We have also been helping them with the paperwork to come and visit in Canada, which is an extremely large amount of work. Who ever knew it was so hard to come visit Canada? They sure don't make it easy.

We are also thankful to have Lauren Christensen from Sherwood Park visiting us. The only visitors we've had since our wedding have been my mom and her friend Ann, so we were very happy to have Lauren even if it was right at the end of our time here. She's been with us for 3 weeks and we've enjoyed showing her around as well.

Just last week I had one of the most touching moments I've had here in a while. Gloria just started working shifts in the cuna (nursery) here at the orphanage taking care of the youngest little orphans we have. When the other lady left, I went in to be with Gloria so she didn't have to take care of 6 little kids alone (although by this time most of them were in their cribs). I was feeling nostalgic because I worked in the cuna many years ago, and haven't been able to spend much time in there since then, so it brought back a lot of memories, including caring for Gloria's youngest brother when he was a toddler. Anyways, most of the kids were asleep, but one girl had taken longer to fall asleep and console because she had just come brand-new to the orphanage a couple of hours earlier. My heart broke for her as she probably wondered where her family was, and felt bewildered in a strange new place. After finally getting her to sleep, only a 2 month old, Juan, was still awake with Gloria and I. As I was holding Juan, who was stiff as a board because he is a drug baby, I heard a soft knock at the door. I went to answer it, still holding Juan, and two shy children who I'd never seen before looked up at me. At first they looked like two little boys dressed up in girls clothing, but after looking closer I could tell that they were girls who had probably had their heads shaved because of lice. They told me that they had just arrived as brand new orphans, and that they were staying in one of the orphanage houses here. Next, they asked me if I was taking care of their littlest sister because they wanted to see her. I let them in and they were so happy to be reunited with their little sister. There we were, standing in the dark, surrounded by 6 other toddlers in cribs, and standing next to the crib of these girls' sister. The older girl, although probably only around 8 herself, was stroking the little girl's head and asking me questions of concern, like if I had changed her diaper and given her a bottle before bed. The middle sister just looked in the crib making no noise, but with tears running down her face. It's an image that will forever be with me, and as I watched these three sisters together, all the while still holding baby Juan, tears welled up in my eyes too. I felt like God was telling me that this is exactly where he wants me to be. It might seem like a weird thing to hear from God on the week that you are leaving, but it was clear and didn't feel like weird timing to me at all. I felt like it is a reminder to return to this place that God has called us to, and to care for "orphans" wherever we are. Where else would God want us, but to care for children that belong to no one else but Him. Of course it's hard to leave a place like this, where we have 85 orphans right out our front door, but we know that our time in Canada is a stepping-stone preparing us for something even greater.

When we think over the time that we have spent here, more than anything else the

word “blessed” just keeps coming over and over again. We both have felt more blessed in the last two years we have spent here than we ever have before. We have seen God move and work in our lives in such evident ways and are excited to see where he is taking us. We have also been so blessed by many of you, in the way that you have cared for us, prayed for us, or helped us with money while we lived in Mexico. We could never thank you enough!

For those of you who live in Sherwood Park, we are planning on arriving on August 26.

Chelsea & Edgardo