Viva La Mexico! Me and Nacho arrived in Leon late Thursday night. My first impression of Mexico was the smell of rain. It smelled so good and so fresh. We were greeted by members of the CHOICE Mexico staff and they drove us to the CHOICE Center in Irapuato. It has lot of dogs and the giant tree has about 1 million birds.

We saw the amazing aquaponics project that is located at the CHOICE Center. It is an amazing way they harvest lettuce and other produce using water pipes. It’s crazy cool and it works! They have a lot of pigs and goats and the land is maintained by Jose Luiz. He gave me and Nacho a tour. The team is so dialed in and so very welcoming. I can’t wait to get to work in the village with the other CHOICE Volunteers.

Mucho Amore, Sarita!
The first night, we got to see where we will be sleeping. We have 3 separate cement rooms, open doorways, and one bathroom for 8 of us where we pour water into the toilet. It was a freezing cold night and it was raining. As we got ready for bed, we got to know the kids. Asking many questions in Spanish. As we got bundled up, a storm came in with hail and lightening. The night was mucho frio. We had an adventurous night of dogs barking, roosters all hours of the night. So many dogs all over the village. Needless to say, it was an adventurous first night. Excited to see what the week holds.

Emily Bloch

Oh, My. Chocolata. Dogs barking in the night. Rain storms. A confused rooster. All some wonderful puzzle pieces to the big puzzle that is Mexico. The people here are so beautiful and this village is amazing. There was a beautiful welcome ceremony and we got to see some of the things that the villagers make to see. Sleeping was very interesting. Much cold! Much rain. Much dog barking. We started to work today and build the water cisterns. So far so good. The people here are wonderful. There is a sweet 77 year old lady who we got to talk to last night at dinner. She's basically a princess and I want to adopt her. We have lunch now and after we will get back to doing more work! THE END!

Love, Jenny
Last night we were kicked out of our room by 3 giant spiders! We were lying in bed and I saw moving spots on the ceiling and walls. We turned on the light and saw them crawling around. Of course, sleep had fled from us. At the same time, we had about 500 dogs in the neighborhood starting barking. Then a rooster starting crowing. It was 11:30 pm. What a crazy mixed up rooster. By this time Sarah and Emily were awake and so Liz asked if we could move our cots into their room. They got up out of their warm beds into the cold night air and moved over so Liz and I could be in the middle. It was a very long night!

Liz and Marilyn!

REFLECTIONS.

We arrived in the village. It never ceases to amaze me how kind and humble the Mexican people are. They came to meet us and danced for us. They sang songs and even though I could not understand all of the words (some), I felt so loved. I was very moved by meeting a large group of women in the village who are single mothers and who have just graduated from high school. Boo Yeah, So Empowering. YOU GO GIRLS! Juan is a delight, Nacho is amazing. The total group is small but very willing and able and fun!

The first night was very cold. I was serenaded by dogs barking, the rain, the roosters. We are sleeping on cots in the home of Luz Maria. I made a clothes line because my clothes were so wet! Dialed in. Un-plugged. Cold. Happy. CHOICE EXPEDITIONS. The love affair goes on.

Mucho Amore, Sarita

HOLA! Wow, we’ve been in the village for almost 3 days now. The weather is CRAZY but awesome too. I am so in love with the village and the people in it. Unfortunately, I was sick this morning, so that part was rough but Luz Maria invited me into her home during the huge rainstorm. The thunder and lightning was insane and it was so beautiful to watch. I loved the scenery here. We are right near some beautiful mountains and the people are so welcoming. Only 1 full day left here. Gotta make the most of it. Oh! Super Sweet! The lady who is staying next to the house we are gave Christian a doll to give to me, for free. It’s one of those beautiful ones for sale at the market. It was so nice.

Adios,
Jenny
Saw a Turkey mating today, check that off the list. Failed my encore of a magic trick. #Inferior. No, I just teasing around. It's actually been a super great experience. The village has been great, our group is so fun and my legs are turning into legs of steel. Ha! We literally walk miles upon miles every day. The work has been tough but worthwhile. Seeing the projects build up is so great. I love working with concrete and seeing the progress. The people have been so kind. I wish I was a little better at communicating in Spanish. It's been a blast, so many adventures. I appreciate the bond me and my family have here. So many great stories. #thankfulfortheopportunity.

Christian Hirschi.
An inspirational Poem shared to the group in the village

A smile is infectious, you catch it like the flu. When someone smiled at me today, I started smiling too.
I passed it around the corner, and someone saw my grin. And suddenly I realized, I had passed it on to him.
I thought about that smile and all that it was worth. And realized that a smile like mine, could travel around the earth.
So, if you feel a smile come on, don’t leave it undetected.

Let’s start an epidemic quick and get the world infected!

The week flew by. What a fantastic experience learning about La Concepcion! As a leader, I was reminded what it means to rediscover real poverty as well as put in sack the blessings that I have. It’s easy to get down in life despite having an abundance. I learned this week from villagers as well as our team how to brighten other’s day and I’ve a more meaningful life.

I would like to thank the expeditioners for putting themselves out there, for being real, being curious, and for putting time and resources into improving lives.

Nacho.
THINGS I LOVE:
Christians fabulous morning hair.
Amy’s work ethic.
Jenny’s comments of dying and her cat whispering skills.
Sarah’s songs, especially her rap skills.
Liz’s laugh. It’s contagious. Her happy spirit.
Marilyn’s ability to be good at everything.
Nacho’s ability to communicate and he is super sweet too.
David’s kind heart. He is hard working and adorable.
Edson’s yummy food and his basketball skills.
Laura’s great smile and hot couple of the year award.
Margarita’s amazing photos and sharing every moment.
Quirino is inspiring and amazing.
Juan’s happy heart and is joyful like Santa Claus.
Emily’s sweet, kind, and pure soul.
Teresa is smart, funny and beautiful.
The Villagers- I love how welcoming and loving and sincere they are! They are as well as super hard working. I can honestly say I probably have never physically worked this hard ever!
Love “Pooped” aka Crystal Hirschi.

Last Day
I will miss this place and miss this people! The trolley ride to the town was totally amazing. Such a beautiful place. I love the colorful culture here.
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About CHOICE

Proven methods. Over 35 years of impact.


CHOICE Humanitarian is a non-profit leadership organization that ends extreme poverty in rural villages around the world. Strong local leadership means communities can develop their own vision out of poverty. Our holistic approach integrates 5 core areas through a learn-by-doing model in economic development, health, education, environment, and culture preservation.

University professor Dr. James B. Mayfield co-founded CHOICE in 1982. With nearly forty years experience in international development, he plays a key role in defining and developing CHOICE's unique approach to ending poverty.

What makes CHOICE different?

Village Driven
No handouts. All projects are village identified and village driven, using local resources. We use simple and appropriate technologies. When repairs and problems arise, villagers have the knowledge and skills to solve them. Our native in-country staff provide the magic of the CHOICE model. These experts have insider knowledge and are sensitive to local culture. As locals themselves, they can overcome obstacles outside leadership generally encounter.

Leverage
We multiply donations. We turn your $1 into $5. The village contributes labor and resources. The local government and partner organizations contribute additional funds, materials, training and skills. Such investments culminate in extreme efficiency and link communities to all available resources. Your dollars do more with us.

Local leadership
People in poverty are driven to change their circumstances. Oftentimes they lack the tools and resources to do so. CHOICE has the tools, resources and knowledge to walk an entire village through the process of becoming self-reliant. By incorporating principles of good governance and transparency, locally elected leaders are trained in project management and community mobilization, ready to execute on any poverty alleviation project. skills to solve them.