



# Juice in Mexico 2010

By Alex Somos

I had the privilege of doing **good** in the world by travelling to [Vicente Guerrero](#), Mexico where we spent a week building a house for a deserving family. They were in sore need of additional room, with nine people living in an old trailer that had seen better days. The couple moving into the house work as missionaries at a daycare in a rough part of town, serving the poorest families in the area.

## *Juice Inc.'s Values:*

- *Be **real** and get great **results***
- *Create **simplicity** and **ease***
- ***Love** our customers, **love** ourselves*
- *Do **good** in the world.*

Our group spanned generations with the youngest being my son Sam at 12 years old and the oldest being in his late fifties. I cannot describe to you the unbridled camaraderie and teamwork we all felt. We worked from early morning till late afternoon at various tasks from cooking, to cutting to hammering. Everyone felt important in the process. Many folks in this group were new to mission and construction work and everybody took to laboring for this family with great enthusiasm and joy.

During the evenings visited migrant farmer compounds and gave away food staples we bought, and distributed four large duffel bags of clothes and toys to the women and children that had been donated to us. Many of our first-timers wept tears from seeing the living conditions of these people. They saw families living in one room with dirt floors and windows that did not close (it gets pretty cold at night and the wind is a constant companion). Mitch, a friend who came on the trip said in an e mail to a mutual friend "If I were a parent, would I ever want to have to choose between buying medicine for a sick child at the cost of being able to feed the others? Man, I hope not. The visits to the migrant camps will leave a lasting impression."

One of the most rewarding stories is of the genuine love and care each one of our group felt for the people in this area. One evening, we were packing up to leave one of the compounds when a young man asked one of our organizers, Aaron if we had any sleeping bags. He had just arrived from another province and had not anticipated the cold. I could see Aaron shake a sad no; the young man's shoulders slumped. Then I saw Aaron engage the man. Looking at him intently, he said to him, "You look to be about my size. Here take my sweater." Without hesitation, off came his sweater. The surprised young man did not vacillate and donned the warm sweater proudly. I could swear the young man walked taller as he left.

The other story I relish is about Larry, who came with his son because he felt it would be good father and son bonding time. He is a very driven man and this trip was all about his son. Having just disembarked at a compound Larry seemed a bit distant, tentative and withdrawn. He later described the unexpected challenge he faced; the smell of human waste and whatever scraps are on the floor that are sometimes quite present. As usual, the children are the first to greet you. They mob you with their smiles and demands. Some approached Larry, dirty from a day surrounded by earth and sweat, pleading for attention.

In the cacophony of noise and activity and demands for translation I turned away. Minutes later I saw some of the men running in the camp giving piggy back rides to the children who cried with glee "mas rapido" (faster, faster) and the one with the most on his back was Larry. He would later describe this as a defining moment for him on this trip, where he had to choose human kindness and compassion over his need for sterility.

On our return to Canada, everybody lingered even after the luggage was collected; no one willing for this enriching experience to end.

A special thank you goes to my wife Mary who organizes these trips with Aaron. This was her seventh trip and the sixth house she has helped build.

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