



These are the faces of Mexico. They are young and old. They are poor and poorer. They live in places we would not even consider adequate. They drink water that is unclean. They are often defeated and yet.....

In the midst of all this there is hope. There is hospitality. There is a generosity of tangibles and more important a generosity of that which can not be counted except in one's heart. There are smiles and laughter. There is an unbelievable attitude of gratitude. I never once witnessed despair.



We served hundreds and hundreds of folks these last two weeks. Each and every one greeted us with smiles and appreciation. The kids in line would tease me about my "mas mal espanol" (my words). I would help them learn simple phrases or words in English and they would return the favor in helping me with the Spanish. There was never a complaint about wait time, or standing in the hot sun.

We saw faces that were familiar.



Faces that already had stories from ano de pasada. I got to see Cristian again. Although our time together was different it was still wonderful. This year I was able to visit with his sister, Joanna and his mother. The chimacos (Mexican teens who work with Goldi) were back and those relationships deepened as only happens when commitment is acted on and not just spoken of. We returned and that made all the difference. Alejandra became La Mirada the look she would give us Americans when she couldn't figure what the heck we were trying to say. And then she became Senorita de Rosada, because pink is her favorite color and she wears it all the time. Omar has gone off cooking school and we were blessed to have him serve us dinner on the lawn. Raul suffered my endless teasing of getting his name wrong all the time until it became a deliberate joke. Raul who is usual quiet, got me back on the last day but welcoming me to the center with a loud "Buenas Dias Goldi;" and laughed and laughed.



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Annette was an infant last year that we baptized and this year she is toddling around the center on her own. Rumulda is still cooking for us and her tacquitos are the best!



We met new faces that now have stories of their own. Eric was assigned to Marlene and I as our Mexican guide in Veracruz. Eric was wonderful. He made sure we were safe (I have this bad habit of stepping out into traffic!).



He made sure that we weren't over charged as Americans and that we got the right change. He even carried our bags for us. This shy, quiet boy was a delight. We discovered later that he was not in school because his family could not afford the tuition for public secondary school. That has now been taken care of and Eric couldn't have been



more thrilled! We met some new docs this year as well. La doctora Maythe and El doctor Gustavano. Talk about great people!



And countless other faces that have no name but an image that will last a lifetime.



The stories will go on. The memories will begin to fade. Time will do that. But the faces of Mexico are now deeply implanted in my being.

Once those faces become part of who you are, nothing will ever be the same again. Blessings, MM+ JUNE 2011

