

Salesian Volunteer in Tijuana!



On June 1st 2007 Huong Nguyen a former student of Salesian High School, who is now studying in USF, went to Tijuana to live a summer volunteer experience in the midst of poor young people.

The first time Huong went to Tijuana was two years ago with the Tijuana Mission Trip project organized by St. Dominic Savio and St. John Bosco High School.

After this experience Huong confirmed her desire to help young people in some way. Her discernment process led her to look for new ways to answer God's call. A year after her experience Huong by providence got in contact with me and expressed her feelings about helping young people. I offered her the opportunity to become a summer volunteer in Tijuana and she accepted.

After this invitation the formation process moved along. We met at St. Dominic Savio for a weekend where Huong and Giovanni Garcia, a young adult who was going to volunteer in Ecuador for one year, got together and studied what it means to be a Salesian Volunteer.

Right after this retreat Huong was commissioned at the Sunday 5:30 Mass at Savio and immediately she went to Tijuana to start her summer volunteer vacation. I asked Huong how she felt when she just got to Tijuana. Her answer was "I was really afraid, but the commissioning mass helped me and gave me peace!"



Sunday Ministry Soccer Games!



Huong inviting the soccer players to mass



Students of Huong

Huong is a key element in the Summer Program of San Jose Obrero oratory. She and Joan a Volunteer from Austria are the persons who help in the religious education program with everything that is needed. They wake up at 6:00 AM, join the morning prayers with the community of Tijuana (8 priest and 9 volunteers) and then go to their oratory San Jose Obrero. During last two weeks they had to take a taxi to go to their oratory because the priest in charge is in formation. She told me that every morning they travel over 1 hour to get to their oratory.

Once she gets there, she takes care of the kids, opens the offices, cleans the place and does anything that is needed to care for these young people. Every day she eats in a family home where she has encountered the reality of the poor families in Tijuana. Around 8 PM she takes another taxi to go back home where she eats and has some community life with the rest of volunteers and priests. At 10 PM she joins the Salesian Good night and after that she stays with other volunteers chatting and building community.



On July 12th, I visited her and she looked so happy, I asked her how she felt and she told me “I am glad that I am here. I don’t want to imagine what I would be doing if I didn’t come probably just studying... Tijuana is not what other people say about it... I am glad that I can witness this reality. I thank the Salesians for their invitation”

When I asked the Salesians how they felt about her, Fr. Raul told me “We thank you for sending young people like her to our program, she has brought energy, love and care for the young people. She is a great volunteer”

I think this is what the volunteer program is all about. I can see that we are opening new frontiers as we were asked by the 26th General Chapter. I ask the communities to pray for these volunteers and to keep inviting young people to join us in this beautiful Salesian Volunteer Movement.

If you are interested in joining us in a Mission Trip to Tijuana please do not hesitate to contact me.

In Bosco

Juan Carlos Montenegro

