

The Salesian Volunteer Program of the US West Province

TIJUANA, MEXICO

On a typical weekend, 200 to 300 young people gather at the San Jose Oratory where **Miriam Hernandez**, a Salesian Lay Missioner originally from St. Dominic Savio in Bellflower, Calif. starts her daily ministry. She has been assigned to volunteer at this Oratory located in Tijuana since August 2009.



Miriam Hernandez with children from the Oratory

Miriam's daily schedule is a bit extensive. She starts her day with morning prayers with the Salesian Community at 6:30AM. Then, she has breakfast at 7:00AM. From there she needs to rush to the Oratory which is about 20 minutes away. When she arrives there, she accompanies the kids all day.

In the middle of her day, at about 2:00PM, she shares a meal with a host family at their home. Different families provide and serve food to the volunteers each day. They are scheduled through the Oratory. This is also arranged with the different Oratories in the city. Miriam is also assigned with a volunteer from Austria. His name is **Lucas**.

Both of them, together with **Fr. Enrique Montoya Perez** are basically in charge of organizing, facilitating, scheduling activities in addition to, supervising the children at the oratory.

Then, at 9:30PM, Miriam and two other volunteers living at the same community come home at their central house. They will have dinner, then the Salesian Good Night at 10:00PM.

There are 6 Oratories in Tijuana. Each has an assigned Salesian Priest in charge and also each oratory has 1 or 2 volunteers to assist them. Generally, most volunteers come from Austria. However, we now have someone from our province working with them. Recently, last weekend, I accompanied a group of missionaries, who are from the Youth Ministry of St. Dominic Savio, to Tijuana. They came to work and ultimately visit Miriam. It is incredible to see how much of an asset she is to her assigned Oratory. Truthfully, without these volunteers, the missions and Oratories in Tijuana would not be able to function. It is our social responsibility that we, who are living in a globalized society, keep promoting volunteer/missioner vocations from our young people. If we continue sending them to the missions, we will make this world a better place.



When I asked Miriam how she was enjoying her stay and her ministry, she responded with a big smile: "From a scale of 1 to 10, 10 being the best, I give it 10! I really love it!" Tijuana needs more of us who can volunteer, like Miriam. Are any of you, young people, ready to take the challenge and make an impact? And, for those of us who accompany the young: Can we "animate" their missionary hearts? So that they can say "yes" to God's call and become future volunteers?

Juan Carlos Montenegro
Salesian Volunteer Coordinator!

