

# MEXICO 2015

west vancouver united church





## WILL YOU JOIN US?

Are you feeling like you need to take that next step in your faith life? Consider joining us as we head down to Mexico for a fourth time! The best part? We're doing this one together - as one big family. Everyone is welcome - young and old! We are *so* excited to share with you all of what the teens of West Vancouver United Church have been talking about since 2011 as they use their hands and hearts to transform and be transformed.

## WHEN AND WHERE?

March 7 to 14, 2015 in Ensenada, Mexico and its surrounding community. Ensenada is 115 kms South of San Diego on the Pacific coast of Baja California. Once there, we will be working with YUGO Ministries (Youth Unlimited Gospel Outreach) at the Ensenada Outreach Centre (EOC). For more information on YUGO ministries, please visit [www.eocyugo.org](http://www.eocyugo.org).

## WHAT?

At the core of this trip is our desire to live out the Christian faith by serving and loving those whose paths we cross. We will be building a house or two (depending on numbers), while also participating in a community project called The Mix, through which participants will have the opportunity to work at various organizations. *Everyone* who wants to experience the house build will have the opportunity to do so. The house we build goes up from start to finish in one week, as we spend time with the family we are building for, their children, as well as with their community. The good news is that you don't need to be a skilled construction worker – just willing to learn and work!

When we're not building the house, we will have time to hang out as

a team, meet people from other churches, and experience Mexican culture by bartering at the local market and eating real Mexican tacos!

Please keep in mind that this is a faith-based trip, which means that everything we do will be framed within the Christian faith with morning and evening chapel times. There are many organizations out there who provide these kinds of opportunities; what YUGO does really well is helping us put all of this within the context of what it means to follow Jesus.

We fly from Bellingham to San Diego, stay overnight, and drive from San Diego down to Ensenada. Once in Ensenada, we stay at a safe and enclosed campus that includes hot showers, free internet, a cafe, and dining facilities where we are served 3 delicious meals a day. If you have special dietary needs, please let us know - poorer countries don't exactly specialize in these things!

## WHO CAN JOIN?

Everyone is welcome! Teens, adults, and families. Kids who are not yet 13 years old by March 2015 *must* be accompanied by a parent.

Depending on numbers, priority will be given based on involvement in the West Vancouver United Church community. Of course, friends are always welcome!



## WHY MEXICO?

I was recently asked what our church does for social justice. Admittedly, I drew a blank. We do important advocacy for seniors. Our teens are involved in the Downtown Eastside. But social justice?

We are very fortunate in British Columbia to live as we do. Yes, there is much work to be done in our own backyard, and our church is committed to its continued involvement in our neighbourhood and beyond.

That being said, as many of the people who have been on previous trips to Ensenada will attest, there is something profoundly eye-opening about experiencing the reality of how the majority of the world lives. It changes you. The work that we do in the Downtown Eastside is incredibly important, and it introduces us to poverty, mental illness, homelessness, addiction, and so on. What Mexico adds is a global

perspective for us, a community that has access to resources that can have a global impact. It is our hope to equip you with a wider understanding of the world we live in. What is God calling you to *now*?

## WHY ENSENADA?

Ensenada is a cruise ship destination. Perhaps you've been there. But have you ever wondered who lives behind that *façade*? It's the families we work alongside. In 2011, we built a house for a single mom whose husband was killed by a drunk driver. In 2012, we built a house for a family of 6 who had been sleeping in a van. When we returned the following year, they had landscaped their front yard, planted an orange tree, and tiled their kitchen! Of

course, opportunities like these exist all over the world. So why Ensenada? The answer to that question is another question: where is God calling us to use the resources we have been given for his kingdom?

Many of the surrounding communities around Ensenada are populated by Oaxacan Indian people, who migrated from Central Mexico with the hope of employment. Field workers earn 35 cents per hour, so to make ends meet, many families resort to sleeping in tents made of plastic tarps or in shacks made of scraps of metal and wood.

## WHY GO?

*We* are not going to change the world in one week. But EOC is making a big difference, one family at a time, and *that's* why we partner with the same organization every year - it's a relationship.

Their ultimate vision is to grow the

ministry to a point where it is sustainable, run by locals. As they work to that goal, they need support, and hands and feet.

In Mexico, you will be challenged by a simple way of life to rethink what is important to you. You will experience giving and receiving love in an entirely different culture, with people who speak another language.

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## IS IT SAFE?

Serving in most countries will pose some form of risk, which is why we invite participants to prayerfully weigh the balance between risk and calling - that balance will be different for each person.

All the potential risks are outlined at length in the Risk Assessment, which all participants are required to review and sign. Have a look at it, and if you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact Simon.



*"The first evening in Mexico can't be described. It was the most heart-breaking story I have ever heard and it gives me shivers just thinking about it. Here was this mother standing in front of a team of strangers after losing her husband a year earlier and thanking us for being there. We hadn't even built the house. Just seeing what she does inspired me. She was a single mom raising and providing for a young boy and, at the same time, providing for her parents. Doing that in North America is inspiring but doing that in Mexico deserves a whole new level of respect with the lack of opportunities for their citizens—especially women.*

*When our team handed over the key it really hit me just how important this home was for this family. It was going to provide them safety, better health, and a place to store their possessions. The Mexico mission trip was life changing - for them and for me."*

▶ Alex McCarter, 2011 team



## COSTS

### *Individual costs:*

\$1400 for participants over 13

\$1275 for participants under 13

This includes airfare, room and board, and other travel related costs.

### *Other costs (varies per person):*

You will be responsible for meals in transit (airport lunch for example). Souvenirs and extra snacks at the EOC Café are also your responsibility, so plan on bringing a personal amount of \$US money for these expenses.

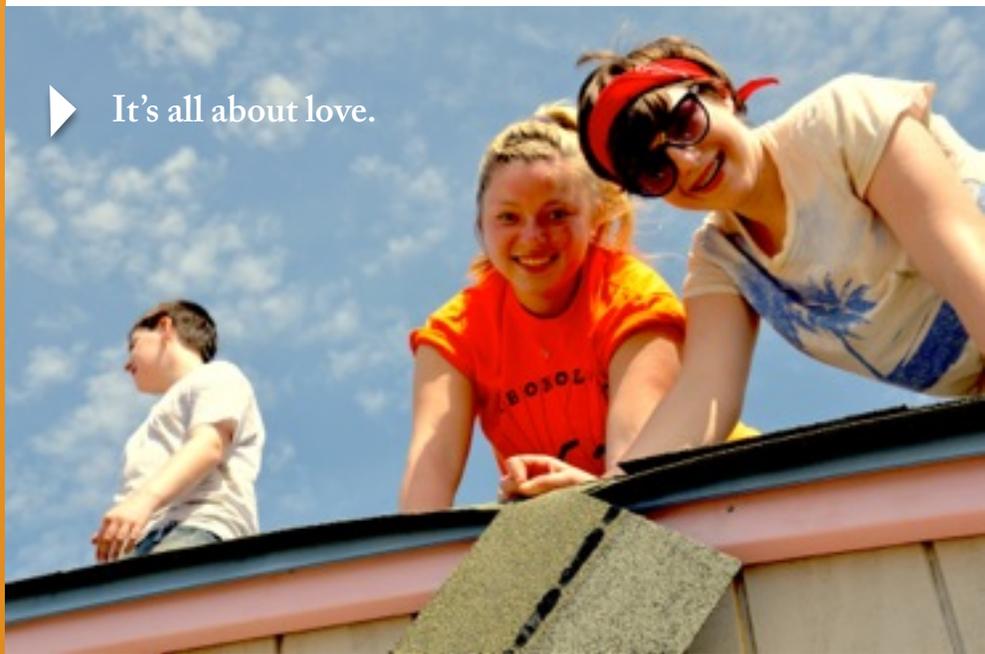
You will, of course, need a valid passport, and make sure you have up-to-date shots (Tetanus is mandatory, and Hep A and B shots are recommended).

## FUNDRAISING?

As a team, we must fundraise US\$4600 for each house we build to cover the cost of materials. In addition, an extra \$500 helps us turn the house into a home by providing mattresses, food baskets, curtains and bed sheets, and other items the family might need.

To help towards your individual costs, you will be given the opportunity to find sponsors who will receive tax receipts for their support.

Any money not used towards extra purchases for the house will go towards future West Vancouver United Church outreach projects.



▶ It's all about love.

Money may be an issue for some of you.

*Please don't let it be.*

If finances are a concern, talk to the team leaders and we'll see how we can help in a discreet manner.

Really.



► The 2012 team.

## CHALLENGES TO THINK ABOUT

The purpose of this trip is to serve and love within the framework of the Christian faith. Each of you will be challenged in your own way. For some, the chapel times at the beginning and end of each day will challenge your view of the world, of faith, or of yourself. For others, it is the language barriers and learning to communicate in new ways that will be difficult. But ultimately, the point of all this isn't even to build a house, but to love and be loved.

Prior to the trip, you will need to commit to team meetings, fundraising efforts, and praying for the trip. During the trip, you will need to commit to working hard as best you can in the various types of conditions (we work rain or shine!), be respectful of the culture, staff, and leadership teams, and make sure you participate fully in all of the program elements!

In the end, if you don't think this is for you, we would still appreciate your prayers!

## WHAT CAN YOU DO NOW?

- Think and pray! Is this the next faithful step for you?
- Talk to others who have been to Ensenada about their own experience.
- If you are interested, fill out the application at [westvanyouth.com/mexico2015](http://westvanyouth.com/mexico2015).
- Make sure your passport is valid and up-to-date. If not, get a new one.
- Get necessary shots (Tetanus is mandatory, Hep A & B are recommended).

## IMPORTANT DATES

May 3	Flea Market fundraiser
Sept. 1	Applications due with \$75 deposit
Nov. 1	Flea Market fundraiser
Nov.	Flight payments due
Dec.	Baked goods fundraiser
Jan.	Team meetings begin
March 7	MEXICO!



Register at [westvanyouth.com/mexico2015](http://westvanyouth.com/mexico2015)