



# A Slice of the Action

## Letter from the Director

Hola Acción Family,

Another year has passed by, and the Lord has allowed us to continue to serve the Mayan people in Yucatán, Mexico.

As I reflect and all that we have accomplished last year, these words come to mind “good and faithful servant.” See, I am a second-generation pastor and missionary. The Lord has used us, Acción, and the many churches as mere instruments of His Glory.

Shoulder to shoulder as partners we have completed 500 construction projects (churches, houses, annexes, concrete patios, multipurpose courts) through the years. We have also helped educate around 250 Mayan children, young men and women. Today they have high school and college degrees because of your donations.



Maya Dorantes, right, with St. Luke's Presbyterian Church team near Valladolid.

Now I understand when my seminary professor asked me, “What is going to be your mark in life?” We as partners are leaving a mark in the lives of many Mayan families as we serve throughout the years.

As Patty and I go out in the field and see my son (Andre) and my daughter (Maya), a third generation serving the Mayan people, my heart is full with joy. As I see them sweat, sing, pray, build, translate. I know we have not worked in vain. We are building His kingdom. But even though we help build His kingdom and serve His people, the only thing I aspire is to be called by Jesus Christ is “good and faithful servant” (Matthew 25:23)

May this year be full of His Grace and His peace.

To Him be the Glory,  
Oscar R. Dorantes, Executive Director



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## 2016 Work Teams



### The Concrete Story

Have you ever wondered why Acción volunteers build so many roofs and floors?

Acción forges partnerships between our American volunteers and our Mayan communities with ownership of the projects. Building block walls and other parts of construction can be done piecemeal with fewer people, so locals can often do that part themselves. Poured concrete is the most expensive and labor intensive part of construction, so that's where our volunteers can help the most.

15 volunteers from First Lutheran Church from Fargo, ND went to San Simon, Yucatan and built homes for families.

11 volunteers from First Presbyterian Church

in Hickory, NC also went to San Simon, Yucatan and built homes for families.

21 volunteers from Northminster and St. Andrews Presbyterian Churches in Tucson AZ went to La Guadalupana in the outskirts of Merida, Yucatan and built a new roof for the local church.

18 adult volunteers from Covenant Presbyterian Church in Charlotte, NC went to Kaua, Yucatan and built a new roof for a church there.



34 volunteers from First Presbyterian Church in Charlotte, NC went to the Mayan Children's Village in Quintana Roo and made great progress building the new dining hall for students living there.

23 high school and adult volunteers from Covenant

Presbyterian Church in Charlotte, NC went to a Christian retreat camp in San Crisanto, Yucatan and built a new multipurpose court for campers to use for games and gatherings.

22 volunteers from Westminster Presbyterian Church in Greensboro, NC went to Akil, Yucatan and helped construct a large church roof.

27 volunteers from Vienna Presbyterian Church in Vienna, VA went to Blanca Flor, Campeche and built a church roof.

19 volunteers from St. Luke's Presbyterian Church in Dunwoody, GA went to Valladolid, Yucatan and built roofs and floors on homes for needy families.

13 volunteers from Gettysburg Presbyterian Church in Gettysburg, PA went to Akil, Yucatan. They finished roof construction on the local church and ran an eyeglasses ministry for the people of Akil.



Above: Kathi Saunders' daughter, Kelsey (right) with a new friend in Akil. Below: the Covenant team hauls buckets of concrete to pour on the roof.



## Top 10 Reasons I Loved Going on the Yucatan Mission Trip

by Kathi Saunders (Westminster Presbyterian Church, Greensboro NC)

10. Eating Mark Brainerd's homemade guacamole dip before dinner using Michele's recipe – amazing!
9. Watching Philip connect easily with the Mayan workers time and time again because of his amazing fluency in Spanish and easy-going nature.
8. Seeing teenagers who sleep until 10 a.m. at home get up at 6:30 a.m. every morning on their vacation to head out to hours of hot, hard work without a single complaint.
7. Feeding apples to the mama pigs out back and being laughed at by a Mayan for thinking one pig was actually in labor... not!
6. The giggles and waves we constantly got from the local kids who had never seen a "gringo"!
5. The fun and fellowship shared with team members as we played the hilarious game of Pterodactyl. Laughing hysterically at and with one another bonds you together.
4. The incredible sense of accomplishment from working hard and seeing the fruits of our labor ... filling pails with sand and rocks, mixing concrete, hauling buckets – but a roof and a floor appear!
3. Watching the children come to VBS – each day more excited as they ran up to the team member they had connected with the day before. Lots of hugs, laughter, tic tac toe and football matches.
2. The tears in the eyes of both Mayans and team members as we prayed the last night together, sharing our mutual gratitude and love for one another.
1. The amazing kinship we felt with the Mayans as we sang and worshipped the same God together – surely a picture of heaven.

## Board Member Spotlight: Nik Van Nort

I was born and raised in Tucson, AZ and attended Southern Methodist University in Dallas, TX where I met my wife Kathryn. We have two children, Caroline (14) and James (12), and a dog named Shelby. Kathryn is a life long member of Covenant Presbyterian Church and I officially joined Covenant in 2006.

Since joining Covenant I quickly found my passion for mission and outreach. As an Elder I have served in many different capacities, but participating in mission trips is by far my favorite. My first mission trip experience was in 2008 to Reynosa, Mexico. Since 2008 I have been on nine mission trips, four of those trips to the Yucatan (Piste twice, Cacalchen, and Kaua) with Accion Ministries. Those trips have given me a deep love for the Mayan people, their amazing culture, and their strong commitment to family, community, and faith.

Being a Friends of Accion board member gives me a way to give back and say thank you to the Mayan people for all they have taught me about my faith. It is also a way to help continue and be part of the amazing partnership between Covenant and Accion Ministries that goes back 26 years.

## Planned Giving

### Did You Know?

Friends of Accion has a brokerage account whereby we can receive gifts of stock. A gift of stock may in some cases result in significant tax savings in addition to benefitting our friends in the Yucatan. Shares of stock, bonds, or mutual funds can be transferred during your lifetime or as a part of planned giving.



Planned giving is the terminology applied to gifts made to a charitable institution generally, but not necessarily, at the time of death. It ensures that your stewardship continues to help the mission of Accion Ministries.

### Questions?

Please email Leigh Hutchinson at: [c.leigh.hutchinson@gmail.com](mailto:c.leigh.hutchinson@gmail.com)

*Below: Nik (left) with members of the church in Cacalchen and Kipo, Accion's master mason, in the middle.*



## Help from Home

In addition to our Work Teams ministry, Friends of Accion provides year-round access to education for 31 students.

We believe education provides the best path out of poverty. Mexico offers public schools from elementary through university. However, schools are not accessible in rural areas and students are not offered transportation, books, or uniforms. As a result, many children from small villages cannot attend school.

*“Thanks to the sacrifice of good people in another country, my parents will have food to eat and fewer worries.”*

*- Jose Chel Kumul*

But this story has a hopeful ending thanks to you! At Acción’s “homes for education” students can live at no cost so they can continue their education.



You can help from home! Please consider a gift for this ministry in the enclosed envelope.

## Student Spotlight: José Alberto Chel Kumul

*José (photo right) is a new student at the Mayan Children’s Village (Villa Infantil Maya, VIM). He is 15 years old and came to VIM in August 2016 to attend middle school.*

“My parents cannot afford to send all of us kids to school, so they’ve had to choose one at a time. Sometimes we’ve cried because of our extreme poverty. But my father heard that there was a place that offered help and so he came to see the VIM Director, Isaac. With tears in his eyes, my father heard that my little sister and I had been invited to live there and achieve the dream of becoming someone in life.”

“It’s hard to believe that I now have this opportunity to live in this incredible place and know that my father can use his small income to take care of my mother and other family at home. Thanks to the sacrifice of good people in another country who we don’t even know, my parents will have food to eat and fewer worries.”

“I plan to study a lot and become an architect. I want to keep going now that I don’t have an excuse not to become the best person I can be. I will do this for VIM, for my parents, and for Christ. I will follow the example of Christ and my family, to love and to give.”



### Friends of Accion, Inc.

Acción Ministries embodies the vision of its founder, Rev. Oscar Dorantes, Sr., who brought Americans to partner with Mexican villages and Presbyterian Churches to meet the physical and spiritual needs of the Mayan people.

Friends of Accion, Inc. supports the charitable activities of Acción Ministries in the Yucatan Peninsula of Mexico. Friends of Accion is a U.S. 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization, so your donations are tax deductible.

## Stretching Our Faith

The theme for our mission trip was stretching our faith, and there is no doubt that was accomplished in many different ways by spending time with the children, breaking down language barriers with those of all ages, and putting in hard work

every day despite the weather conditions. Our last day was full of laughter and affirmations of each others' skills and abilities and we will no doubt never forget this trip. Not only has our faith been stretched but it will continue to be stretched into our everyday lives at home.

- Members of Charlotte, NC First Presbyterian Church who helped build the Mayan Children's Village dining hall



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Friends of Accion, Inc., supporting

**Acción Ministries**  
Improving lives in Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula