

A trip to puerto penasco

Business



All sorts of sounds and noises are compiling in the air. Joined by cool breezes that blow the sand around, the hot sun shines down on everything causing a nice warm climate that isn't too hot or cold. Off in the distance is an abandoned boat with most of the paint scratched off that sits by itself with nowhere to sail to anymore.

Short and quick footsteps are running around, kicking up dust with every little stride. The sound of laughter and the feeling of joy is full in this place. Friends and family are joined together in unity and relationships are being formed. Cold water splashes and pours a tidal wave of refreshment to the people who are tired from playing or working. A kid sits in the sand and is digging a small circle in the sand that is a few inches deep, and in the center of it is a castle. Whoosh- out of nowhere, a deflated basketball flies' past into a net, and all the little one's yell " goal!!".

Genuine smiles are everywhere, and the truest form of pure happiness is amidst. I wish I could come here every day for the rest of my life. However, it is not the type of place you would expect when described with such positivity. If you thought it was a beach, you were slightly off. It might be fairly close to a beach, but this place has nothing to with swimming, tanning, or any other tourist commodities.

Rather, it is actually the build site of a house for the incredibly loving Lopez Santillanes family, who live in the barrios (ghetto) of Puerto Penasco. Not only that, but they make less money than most American high schoolers. Upon entering the build site, there are things going on everywhere you look. To the right an old rusty car that is missing wheels, lacking the capability to

ever be free on the road again. To the right is a huge pile of sand full of trash that is only half buried. There is a rusty blue and white trailer which the family originally lived in just near the ruined car, which is elevated off the ground by rocks and cinder blocks.

It is extremely small for four people, and I never got the chance to see the inside. The stairs leading up to the door of the trailer were a tire and a few rocks. Next to the entrance is a large plastic barrel full of dirty water, which is something the family depends on for cooking, cleaning, and drinking. The site may seem expansive - but in reality, everything is in very close proximity. In the final corner of the lot is a large concrete slab.

In forty-eight hours, this would be the location of a newly built house. In the center of this slab, there is a hole with a bible at the bottom, which the family requested we do - a symbol of god being their foundation. Not just the foundation of their home, but of their lives. Forty-six students and some adults are busy everywhere, all with individual jobs to do. Some of those students, me included, are running around having chicken fights with a few of the neighborhood kids - Brandon, Ryan and Linda in specific.

Across the road on the other side of the slab and trailer, there are a few more kiddos - all wearing old clothes that look years old - playing soccer with that dirt covered, deflated basketball mentioned earlier. The goalie net is a bunch of steel wires tied to a wooden box shaped structure. There are four main jobs people have. The first is the wall-building. Most of the people nail together large rectangular walls and the sound of hammering is something that would be heard all weekend long.

Beside the wall-building, there is a blue pop up that we brought with a few old saw horses underneath. This is where the wood for the walls was being sawed from long pieces into the sizes requested by those building the walls. Next to road, in between the slab and trailer, people are pouring concrete and dirt into piles, mixing them with their shovels. When this dry material is properly blended, it is lifted into wheel barrows and water is then poured in. It gets mixed into a smooth yet rough pool of dark grey, which could either be described as solid or liquid.

This is what would both be used for the completion of the concrete slab and for the stuccoing in the walls of the house. The final job that is occupying the workers time is smoothing the slab, which must be done with caution and precision. A long skinny piece of wood moves along the surface of the wet concrete substance, smoothing it out perfectly to a wooden frame that surrounds it. Because it hardens fast, we must smooth it out fast. “ Rapido, rapido!” the kids say, telling the students team to hurry in a joking manner. Although it simply sounds like a build site, this place is so much more.

It is a love-driven community filled with passion and the desire to serve the lowest of low. Last but not least, it is a beautiful representation of the good spirit which produces real, authentic relationships. Everyone is grateful for the experience being had, and many friends are being made. Despite the language barrier of Spanish and English, everything gets communicated well. The workers humble themselves as they see the situation the family is living in, and it inspires us.

It is somewhere I would like to do be all the time.