

Mission News – December



Howard and Connie Waller

Sunday, December 5, 9:00am or 10:30am in Room 205

Come hear from Howard and Connie about their ministries and discover how you can get involved!

Vision Puerto Rico

Our mission is to share Christ while building partnerships with the people and churches of Puerto Rico. We believe we should engage, equip, and encourage local pastors to grow their churches and plant new ones through teaching, VBS, women's conferences and much more!

Straight Ahead Ministries

Straight Ahead Colorado offers weekly youth Bible Studies in detention centers in Colorado, and provide Special Programs throughout the year including camp experiences. We also match adult volunteers with youth to mentor.

www.straightahead.org

Mission98 Christmas Outreach

BEGINS THIS SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 21

Make a difference in the lives of children in our multi-housing communities by picking up one or more tags with gift suggestions from the Connection Point counter. Gifts are due **by Sunday, December 5.**

If you prefer to donate, we will shop for you. Write a check to Mission 98 with Christmas in the memo line. \$25.00 buys one gift. Bring to the Connection Point counter or donate online at www.mission98.org

"Save the Date"

LifeKeys: An Interactive Study to Discover What God is Calling YOU to Do!

Join us for this fun and interactive 7-week course as we take a closer look at the specific gifts, talents and abilities God gave you. The course will be based on the principles outlined in the book LifeKeys and will guide you through **discovering who you are, why you are here and what you do best.**

Find out more about what this course is all about at a no obligation introductory session on **Sunday, January 16th at 9:00 a.m.** Feel free to come and learn more about the class, the instructors (Pastor Rich and Melissa Taylor) and how the class supports the strategic vision for Bear Valley Church in 2022.

For more information or to secure your spot, contact Pastor Rich at rpeterson@bvchurch.org

Stories from the Field

October 2021 saw Bear Valley Church back in action regarding the sending of Short Term Mission Teams to the field after a long pause caused by COVID. A Team to Kenya and another

to Puerto Rico engaged in a variety of missions activities over the course of a couple of weeks in early October. The following are a few of the stories from those experiences:

Kenya Trip 2021

By Jenn Beckett

Praise be to God! He worked out all the details for our team to return to Kenya on October 1st after a year and a half delay. As we know everything is perfect in God's timing and I would have to say this trip was worth the wait!

It is always a great joy for me to be back in Kenya. The we got to see God at work through us, and we can't thank you enough for your prayers. Each trip to Kenya is special and unique, but this trip was a true blessing for me. Let me show you just a little glimpse of how I was used by God to share His love.

Thanks to the support of Bear Valley Church our team along with Moses & Jaime, directors of Inspiration Center, took 60 kids from the Mathare slums down to the coast for Art Camp. This year's theme was "Sifa" which means "Praise" in Swahili. Each day at camp we spent time talking to our classes about how we can praise God while also teaching the kids various forms of art (dance, singing, culinary etc.). We were also able to enjoy time with the kids, getting to know them and building/deepening relationships with them. Whether in class, playing in the ocean, or engaging in conversation, we were investing time and attention in these sweet kids

This trip was different for me as God used my time there to stretch me and to use me in new ways. I was asked to lead one of the morning devotions, not something I am always comfortable with, but God gave me the words to say and put me at ease as I shared them with the kids. I was also able to have some meaningful conversations throughout the week with a couple of the young adults that God has placed in my life over my last several trips. It was an honor to be used by God in this way and a special week with special kids!

While in Nairobi we take time to tour the Mathare slums. This is a densely populated area of three-square miles with over 600,000 people. 95% of these people live below the poverty line,

hence the lack of the basic needs. Walking through the slums is never easy, the sights, sounds, and smells can be so overwhelming. It's hard to walk through the trash and waste and realize the kids I have grown to love live here. But these kids are not without hope. God is doing some amazing things for the people of Mathare through Moses & Jaime and Inspiration Center. These people have next to nothing and yet their faces shine with joy. When I am with my them, I can't help but also be filled with this same pure joy.

This trip I was asked to do something for the women of Inspiration Center. This was different for me because I know a lot of the kids from camp, but I don't know very many of the moms/women. I prepared for this day and was excited to do something for these ladies. As we got closer to the trip and then to the day of the event the details continued to change. It was a bit frustrating as I wasn't sure what the day would end up looking like, but as I was talking to another teammate I said, "Whatever happens it is in God's hands, and I just want to be a vessel for him." Well, the day ended up being a fantastic day! We took 27 ladies to visit Giraffe Center where we all got to feed some giraffes. (My favorite!) This was the first time for many of these ladies to see a giraffe up close in person! Then we went back to Inspiration Center for lunch and a time for me to share with them what God had laid on my heart. The women had a wonderful day and were so open to what I shared with them. They were so thankful for the day, for my being there with them, and for my words. It was truly a humbling experience for me.

This is only a glimpse of my time in Kenya, and there are so many other stories and moments I wish I could share with you. I am so thankful for the opportunity to continue to build on the relationships that were formed each year and to create new friendships. On this trip God really showed me the importance of being ready and available to be his hands and feet to these people by leading a devotional at camp, lending an ear to listen, giving advice or just spending time with the women of Inspiration Center. A true blessing! God has given me a love for this place and the people there, and I can't wait to return next year!

For more information about Moses & Jamie Okonji or Inspiration Center visit them at inspirationcentermathare.wordpress.com/ or facebook.com/Inspiration-Centre-

[183437321767058](#)

Puerto Rico Trip 2021

"What Example Are You Setting?"

By Elizabeth Smith

We create a wake. This was the starting point for the talk on "Influence" that I delivered at the conferences we presented at three churches in Puerto Rico. To influence others, we need to first be aware that we are leaving a trail (an example) for others, and then work to strengthen our walk with the Lord so that there is something good to follow!

Our team included Pastor Rich Peterson, Maureen Lord, Benita Howell, myself, and others from other churches. The pastors gave a one-day conference to pastors (three different locations), and the women presented a women's conference simultaneously. Additionally, the trip also included presenting at a school, and some painting, roofing, cleaning, and handing out Spanish Action Bibles to some very happy boys on the beach!

This was only possible because of the work Bear Valley's mission partners, Howard and Connie Waller, have already done creating the relationships with the churches and school we were able to serve. May the ripples that were begun be long lasting and extend far!

Pastor's Conference 2021

By Pastor Bart Poole

Sounds pretty formal at face value. We like formal. Many times, it seems like pomp and circumstance means more than value and practicality. This was our initial venture into a Pastor's conference aimed at giving pastors much needed encouragement. The life of most pastors is lived in solitude. What I mean by that is we seek God. We strive to care for our people. We make mistakes and in those mistakes, we learn. Many times it's easy in the pastorate to look down the street and 'assume' The First Church of our city doesn't have the

struggles, personal doubt and needs that our church has. It's a fallacy that many pastors face every day of their lives.

What if, for a few hours, someone would be honest enough, transparent enough to let their guard down and speak specifically to the needs faced in ministry without condemning and speak with compassion because they know the battle we all face? Would that even be possible? Not only was that possible, that was the goal of those who spoke at the Pastor's Conference in Puerto Rico.

Four men (Pastors Rich, Bart, Brad and Howard), full of ministry experience, in humility, shared their hearts, their mistakes, their counsel and their encouragement with Puerto Rican pastors. God worked in and through each meeting. Men were encouraged. Friendships were established and honesty spoke directly to hungry hearts. As one pastor commented, "Thanks for not flaunting your credentials and for being one of us. We felt loved and encouraged because you didn't come here looking down on us. You came here as one of us and encouraged us in ministry."