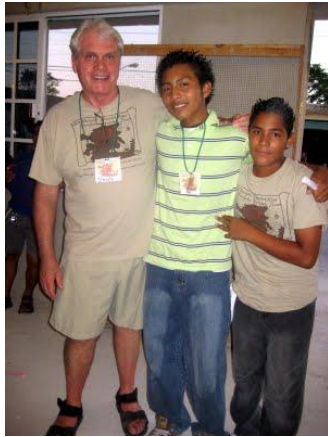


Second Presbyterian's 2009 trip to Nichte Ha
By Charles M. Clark, Jr.

Coming back to Nichte-Ha has become more like visiting old friends and family who have moved away. As soon as we got there we felt right at home. Our group from Second was smaller than usual; just ten of us, but six "old timers" were present including my nephew Charlie and grandson Alex, now rising high school freshmen. Karen Lang and her niece, Madeline also a rising high school freshman, were new as was the son of one of BJ's good friend, a North Central senior. Last year we noted that more teenagers attended VBS because Charlie and Alex were there. We even did better this year with our four teens. They were a definite addition. When we handed out the flyers on Sunday, many of the kids remember the boys by name, especially Alex with this mane of blond hair. Don Buckley (pictured on the left) introduced us to his new wife, Mary Grace, who is a Home Economics teacher at Pike. As always BJ had the crafts completely under control and this year Mary Grace's teaching skills were greatly appreciated.



We had a lovely lunch on Sunday at the church with the teachers and church leadership. Many of the same faces were present, demonstrating the stability of the leadership at Monte de los Olivos under Manases' leadership. It was Karen's birthday and she got a serenade and warm hugs from the congregation (and a lovely cake at our Tuesday dinner). Between the morning and evening services we passed out flyers for the VBS.



The week days started out with some construction by the teens, Jaylene and Karen on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. VBS was earlier this year, starting at 5:30. We had as many as 225 attendees at any one time and over 280 who attended at least once.

Greg Sipes, a physician at Lilly, and member of Zionsville Presbyterian Church, his wife and two boys came to see about setting up a medical mission parallel to the current dental mission in NQR. As part of the investigation of this possibility we visited our dear friend, Ramon Celis Gamboa at his Presbyterian Hospital in Cancun where we delivered surgical instruments collected by Bill Sando and his associates. As an aside my carrying a suitcase full of surgical instruments through customs did generate a conversation, but all were eventually allowed into the country.



The teens plus Karen and Jaylene conducted the games; Jaylene being one of the three Spanish speakers; Don and I are the other two. Duck, Duck, Goose was a big hit. BJ, Wil, Don and Mary Grace Buckley and I did the crafts. As always the párvulos (preschoolers) presented the biggest challenge both because of their age and because of their large number, 48-60 depending on the day, but the additional preparation for them prior to our coming made their projects go well. Thanks to BJ and her crew.



It was not all work and no play. In addition to the dinner at Nicté-Ha on Tuesday, we ate out on Saturday and Sunday. Sunday we celebrated Karen's birthday and gave her a genuine imitation Miro bag. Thursday the group returned to the Grand Cenote (a system of surface and underground rivers that stretches throughout Quintana Roo state) that was such a big hit last year. Friday we celebrated a successful week at an Argentine restaurant that had been recommended.

Don Buckley and I have attended every VBS beginning with assisting Tabernacle at Cozumel, the eventually unsuccessful venture at Akumal and our wonderful church at Nicté-Ha, Monte de los Olivos. We have made great friends along the way both from Second and from Mexico. We returned for the third time to Monte de los Olivos and see a mature plant. They will hopefully become chartered this year. They need sixty member; they have 46 and eight in the process of becoming members. We also look forward to Manases' ordination next year. (In the picture to the right, Manases receives a gift from Second Presbyterian).



We always return enriched and we hope that all of you would consider joining us during next year's joint activities. We are looking forward to Pastor Manases visiting Second the first two weeks of August.

Peace and love,

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