



A report from the Venice Deanery mission to the Dominican Republic~

The Venice Deanery mission team had 19 members. We actually were three teams, one for painting, one for (Vacation) Bible School (school was still in session and the lessons were about the Resurrection) and one for repairing furniture. The furniture repair group (3 strong) worked at the site of last year's project. The team had 4 members from St. Marks, One from Mary Magdalene (Bradenton) 2 from Jacksonville, 5 from Good Shepherd, Venice, 6 from St James, Englewood and Bob Stevens, DDG director.

We expected to see a small building as we were lead to believe that was all that had been built. When we arrived we found a completed building which included 7 rooms and 4 bathrooms. The kitchen was not yet finished but all the walls were up. The walls will eventually be tiled. The bathrooms were being tiled by Dominican tile workers. The painting crew along with many Dominicans painted the entire building inside and out with two coats of paint. Most of the ceilings were done by a professional Dominican painter. Along with many local Dominicans, including numerous teens, the painting progressed rapidly. Our main problem was lack of rollers and paint brushes.

There was a Dominican construction crew on site doing all sorts of work including hand mixing and 'pouring' a concrete patio in front of the building. The concrete was mixed on the ground one bag of cement at a time. The sand was hand sifted. The construction crew also was working on the roof of the church to repair some leaks. The cement was lifted one small bucket at a time to the roof, using a pulley and knotted rope. Individual cement blocks were also lifted to the roof in the same manner.

The Bible School had at least 80 children ages about 5 to 9. The children were broken down into 5 groups (by age). Each day they gathered in the church for some singing and then off to their individual classes. They gathered again in the church for final songs and a 'treat'. Each child received a glass of juice, a package of cookies and a package of crackers.

Many of the construction workers had poor or no shoes. I observed one man working bare-footed. Many others worked with flip flops or paper thin crocs. On the last day of work, before the team returned to the hotel, many members of the team removed their shoes and gave them to the construction workers. There were many happy faces, dances, hugs and gracias. Old flip flops were rapidly thrown away when new sturdy shoes replaced them. The need for shoes is so great among all ages that the team members from St. Marks would like to have a one day shoe drive. Shoes do not have to be new, just in pretty good condition. We will ship them to the Dominican Republic via Agape Flights from the Venice Airport. Money donations towards shipping costs would also be appreciated.

Please take a minute to view the pictures on the following pages.

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Dominican Development
Venice Deanery Coordinator



Why we share...



No task too big!



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...and lasting friendships.

