



A “Well Ransom” Created a SWIM Opportunity

A “well ransom” was the reason that Rich Grant, SWIM board chair, made a quick mission trip to Mexico to try to help rescue the well and share chlorine producing units (CPUs) with the many missionaries there. These disciples of our Lord are loving God’s people in five countries, including the USA, with their home base at facilities north of Acapulco. Very few people spoke English, but Rich managed to remember enough of his high school Spanish to help communicate while there.

Following is a Q&A by Rich, sharing what happened on his trip.

Where did you go on your mission trip?

A rural area in Guerrero state, at the foothills of the Sierra Madres mountains, about 10 miles northwest of the city of Acapulco, Mexico.

What was the purpose of this mission trip?

There was a water emergency. The missionary family home base in this area was threatened with loss of the water well when a neighbor claimed the land where the well was constructed. The neighbor was demanding a huge dollar amount for purchase of the property with the water well. Productive water wells are uncommon in the fissured rock.

How did you find out about this mission trip? Who asked you to go to Mexico?

My wife, Kim, and I were asked to do a SWIM CPU “Build Event” at a youth group event in an impoverished area in downtown Grand Rapids, Michigan. It was fun! The youth were very motivated that evening – building enough CPUs to serve people in four villages with safe water!



At this event some of the adult volunteers were missionary nuns from the order *Las Consagradas del Santisimo Salvador* (Consecrated of the Most Holy Savior) in Mexico. They were on mission of joy helping out right here in the city of Grand Rapids, Michigan! In a conversation with Sister Faustina Marie, she shared with me about an emergency water situation they had and asked if I had any experience with water wells, finding new well locations, construction, pumps, and valves. After a couple of Zoom calls to figure out the details, the working visit was planned.

Who did you serve on this trip?

We served the Lord and the missionaries who call this place home. SWIM's work also indirectly served the communities that the sisters and brothers serve.

What do the nuns do at this place?

The sisters are very hard working! They typically spend half the year at the convent working and praying daily. They spend the other half on mission assignments in Mexico and other places worldwide (including Grand Rapids). Every year they will make temporary homes at mission locations for three months each to work, pray, worship, develop relationships with the people, and spread the Gospel. It's a joy-filled life of love and obedience to our Lord and Savior!



What were some of the highlights of the trip?

The sisters seem to enjoy every aspect of this mission life and we did too! I and two other helpers (Cerillo and Elpidio from Mexico) were able to be part of the prayers, chores, projects, worship, music, and meals that filled each day. We learned about their sustainable practices including the farm and animals, the bees and honey harvesting, and the crafts that bring income to help support the mission.



Please share the details of how you showed them how a CPU works (SWIM in action).

The sisters and visiting brothers, seminarians, and priests all expressed great interest in the SWIM CPU and safe water. Because of the well-known waterborne disease and microbes, they say that almost all people in Mexico buy their drinking water. That water is treated in a way that removes not only the microbes but also the minerals that are important for a body's health. SWIM team members and the missionaries drank "safe water" from the wells treated with SWIM chlorine. It was tasty and had just the right amount of calcium and magnesium.

We demonstrated chlorine production, read the Scripture referencing our table salt chemistry (2 Kings 2:19-32) and set up an automatic feed system that treats every liter used in the convent and seminary facilities. We also taught the rapid production method so that the convent team can become a production center and perhaps add another product to the sustainability of the mission.



What was your favorite part of this trip? What stood out the most to you?

My favorite part of this trip was meeting new friends, camaraderie, praying and worshipping together, and being welcomed into a peaceful life and home. The view and mountaintop breeze was pretty awesome too! On the final evening together, the sisters planned a visit to the beach at Acapulco, complete with coconut milk refreshments and soccer ("futbol") in the sand. The sunset and starlit evening were spectacular!



Please share the details of the "well ransom."

After many years of having a working relationship between the mission family (Convent and Seminary) and the neighboring household, suddenly the younger generation of the neighboring family challenged the ownership and made a decision to liquidate the property which included the life-sustaining water well. The amount of money demanded, the all-or-nothing terms, the immediacy, and the threat of loss (selling the well to another party) all felt like a "ransom," although the "captive" in this case was the water well.

Thankfully another productive well location was confirmed nearby with magnetic field "divining" process to identify water-bearing fissures in the rock. Although it's located on the property claimed by the neighbors, we are hopeful that the small piece of the land can be purchased and a new well can be developed for the mission facilities, leaving the current large well with that neighbor, for sale with their large property. It's now a two-well path forward!

How long were you gone?

The short-term mission trip for SWIM lasted just eight days, including all travel, pump and aquifer testing, property reviews, CPU demonstrations for two production centers, installation and training for the automatic chlorine injection system, repair of storage tank level indication, and lots of walking up and down hills!

THANK YOU!

Your support of SWIM allows us to help people like the sisters at the convent in Mexico. Sister Faustina Marie thanked the Lord for this new relationship with SWIM!

If you'd like to visit the mission personally, there is a trip being organized for mid-June 2023. Please email us!

If you choose to support us by sending a check, please mail it to:
SWIM, PO Box 227, New Sharon, IA 50207

If you'd like to make your gift online, visit: <http://swimforhim.org/donations/>.

Thank you for your generosity!

Rich Grant
SWIM Chairman of the Board