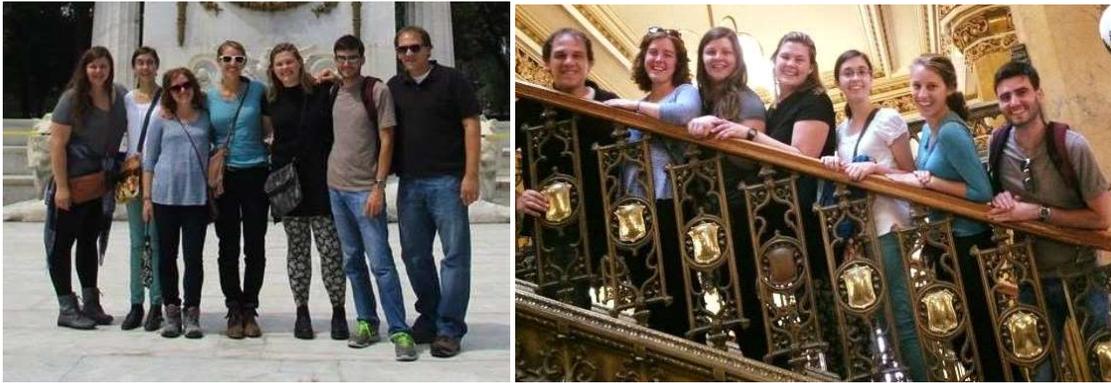


A Year in Mexico serving as a Young Adult in Global Mission



After a week of training in Chicago with all of the volunteers serving around the world, we arrived in Mexico City for our country specific training. We heard the story of the appearance of the Virgin of Guadalupe to Juan Diego making the Gospel message more palatable to people in a new world. We were taught to expect machismo, a strong or aggressive masculine pride. We received safety training after which I managed to get pickpocketed on the metro. We also survived a week of Spanish language training in the small town of Tepotzlán. Our group includes volunteers from Louisiana, Wisconsin, Georgia, North Carolina, and Minnesota.

My volunteer site is a shelter for mostly Central American migrants and refugees called Tochan Nuestra Casa located in Mexico City. It has been open for about five years and in that time has housed just over 500 residents for stays of a few days up to three months. There are twelve beds for men and two for women and we frequently have a few people sleeping on the floor. The majority of the residents are men from El Salvador or Honduras who are escaping gang violence in their countries. Some apply for documentation to stay in Mexico to work. Others have plans to continue north to the United States. Each resident has their task to contribute at the shelter, usually cooking or cleaning. We frequently have visiting groups from high schools and colleges or journalists who want to learn about the shelter or interview residents. Twice in my time here TV crews have come to interview the director. This is me attempting to introduce myself in Spanish to a visiting school group:



Because the shelter is so small it is very easy to get to know the residents. This is me with the other full-time volunteer from Germany and three residents.



I celebrated my 30th birthday in September with my host family. There are 23 people living in my house: Grandpa and Grandma, six of their children (the youngest of which is in his early thirties), six grandchildren, two great grandchildren, and a few other renters. The tradition in Mexico is that the person celebrating his birthday has to first put his face in the cake before everyone shares it! One of the great grandchildren celebrated his birthday the same weekend as I did and we got to break open an Angry Birds piñata. I am also pictured here horseback riding with my host Grandpa.





If you would like to support the ELCA's Young Adults in Global Mission program:

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