

# CommonCall: God transforms Juárez one child at a time

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Julio Carrillo wants to see Juárez—a Mexican border city known for its drug violence—transformed by God.

Carrillo insists the example and support he received from Alliance Church in Lubbock and the service he sees from his Aunt Guadalupe in Juárez helped him hear the call God gave him.

Carrillo's aunt hosts a mission of Primera Iglesia Bautista of Juárez every Saturday in Anapra, one of the city's most impoverished neighborhoods. Every week, ministers lead Bible studies on his aunt's property—outdoors because of lack of space indoors. Carrillo knew he could help.

"My aunt first told me what was going on, and then God called me and my family to start doing this," he said.

Along with other members of Alliance, Carrillo collected jackets, books, backpacks and other school supplies to take for the children in Juárez, he noted.

Since he started supporting the ministry a year ago, Carrillo said, the group of children has grown from 25 to more than 40.

To provide a better setting for Primera Iglesia Bautista in Juárez to teach children the Bible, Carrillo led a group to build a room with space to accommodate about 100 children, he said.

# Offering children a better future

The poverty children face in Juárez not only impacts their current well-being, but also their futures, Carrillo explained. Their clothes are worn out, and sometimes they go without enough food to eat.



Children in Anapra, one of the poorest neighborhoods in Juárez, learn about God’s love through the ministry of Primera Iglesia Bautista in Juárez, with support from Alliance Church in Lubbock. (Photo courtesy of Julio Carrillo)

When the children talk about what they want to be in the future, some say they want to be drug lords—the only people they have seen rising out of poverty, he said.

“It is pretty rough to see what is going on,” Carrillo said. “But to see what the church there is doing over there is very hopeful.”

Violence in Juárez has diminished somewhat from its peak a few years ago, but God is the only one who can bring lasting peace to the city, Carrillo

said.

God's transforming power is evident in the lives of children who learn about Jesus and commit their lives to follow him, he noted.

"You have to see them and know with better kids there is also a better city," he said. "What you are giving to these kids and what they are learning they will remember for the rest of their lives."

While there are risks associated with serving in Juárez, Carrillo said, the God who called him there is bigger than any danger.

Carrillo recognizes he needs to respond to that calling.

"The look in the faces of those kids, without even telling you, you know they care for you," he said. "Maybe some of them only thought their parents cared for them, but now they know we care for them, and they are learning God cares for them."

As children in Juárez learn about the love of God, Carrillo said, transformation begins in their lives.

"That seed is being planted, and we know God will use it to give fruit," he said.

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