

# 2010 Keystone Group Company Trip to Mexico

## Making a Difference

A cornerstone of Keystone's culture is the desire to ***Make a Difference*** in the world around us. Since we all tend to get caught up in the routines of daily life, we have found that a company get-away helps give us a perspective on things other than our work and regular lives.

In February of 2010, we took the whole Keystone team for a long weekend to Mazatlan, Mexico. We worked with a group called Youth with a Mission (YWAM), to help build homes for two under-privileged families in need. The specific program we participated in was called Homes of Hope. As you would expect, the families – our “clients” of a different sort - were very appreciative to have our help, and the work provided valuable experiences and lessons for our folks as well.

Our trip began with a dinner and orientation by YWAM on Wednesday evening, preparing us for the next two intense days of work and immersion with our families. The YWAM staff explained how the work would unfold and shared with us tips on our clients' environments. We learned a bit about the technical aspects of the work, but more importantly, we were given tips about how to interact, local customs, etc.

In preparation for the next day we were given background on the families, including how the mothers in each family were sisters, and each family had two daughters. Their homes had recently been flooded, and our help would be vital to improving their living situation. We also learned how important it was for the “clients” to participate in the work. This was very much like a project kick-off we might do with a client, understanding the technical aspect of the work as well as human interaction side.

The next morning, we split into two teams and headed out to the work sites. Because the families were related, we built the houses side by side and were able to flex our teams as needed. It was humbling to see how our clients had been living especially compared to the living conditions we're accustomed to at home. While it was daunting to know we were going to build a home for them in less than two days, our YWAM project leaders were well-prepared and helped us see how we were going to succeed.

They had the jobs organized into smaller “buckets” of work and we assigned sub-teams to each key task. They outlined a basic project plan, expectations and rules of the road. They encouraged us all to participate, be positive and help each other. No matter what a person's construction skill set was, we all found ways to be productive, contribute and learn.

While there were many moments worthy of a comedy routine on Saturday Night Live, by Friday night, two new houses had been built. In a very moving ceremony, we turned over the keys to our “clients,” who were now our new friends. It was great to know that they would now be sleeping under a roof instead of just the stars and that their children would be safe at night. When the little girls walked into their houses for the first time, we heard a bunch of screams of excitement. Looking around the community, their humble little house we built looked like a mansion.



The Keystone team with the families after the ceremony and the finished homes.

We were glad to be able to provide these families with a roof, some new furnishings and a bit of hope for the future.

It's nice to know that, in some small way, we are able to help ***Make A Difference.***

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