



## August 24, 2021 Report from Oblate Youth Ministry in Tijuana.

Summer in Tijuana, as in pre-covid years, means sporting events at the parish. This year we had an event with 4 mixed volleyball, 4 women's soccer, and 6 men's soccer teams. These teams included ages ranging from youngster to mid-aged adults. The event commenced with prayer for our parish community and for safety during the games. The games were exciting to watch, and the fans seem to enjoy it as much as the players. Many of our office staff and friends participated including Eduardo (staff psychologist), Adriana (inclusive education administrator), Alejandra (scholarship coordinator), Ernesto (2018 migrant from El Salvador), Romeo (2018 migrant from Guatemala), Henry (visiting Oblate seminarian), and Alexis (videographer and commentator). A cheering contest was held, and it was fun to see the teams that had color coordinated cheering sections. The event also include a Taekwondo demonstration with some of the budding Bruce Lee's breaking boards and bricks.



This year our event was coordinated by Alan Juarez. Alan is in his second year at university studying to be a physical education teacher through the parish scholarship program. While Alan has been an altar server leader for a few years, he has never stepped out to lead an event, so this was exciting and nerve-racking for him. As the event drew closer, Alan was anxious and disappointed that it was not coming together the way he wanted. One night, while praying, he realized he just needed to let go and let God. The next day he got an overwhelming response via his Facebook posting with offers to referee, sell refreshments, and assist with setup and administration. Alan said that all he had to do was put it in God's hands. It was a great event to add to his resume. He says that now he knows a lot more about what it takes to coordinate an event and looks forward to helping others so the same in the future.



Luis Herrera, our leader of youth ministry, said: “It was a great event because since covid started most people have not had activities to do as families. Seeing them all together playing and having fun at the parish, maybe for the first time in 18 months, was really meaningful.”



TID (Transformation, Innovation, and Development) is a startup company that goes back about 2 years. One of our Oblate donors wanted to expand his support of the youth in Tijuana after reading and witnessing the success stories of the youth in our scholarship program. After a few discussions and meetings with Fr. Jesse OMI and Luis Zepeda (our resident engineer), our donor decided to offer some work experience in his company to a few Mechatronics engineers from our parish. The idea was born to create a company in Mexico for young engineers that would do contract work for companies in the US. Fr. Jesse OMI selected two young engineers from our parish to work with the donor company in the US and gain the experience necessary.



Javier Cruz (right) was one of the young engineers. Javier had been to a SEARCH retreat, and during a conversation with our priest had asked how he might support his community. Javier was already working as an engineer and making decent money. After a short work experience in this new venture, Javier decided to help lead the process of formulating the new consulting company.

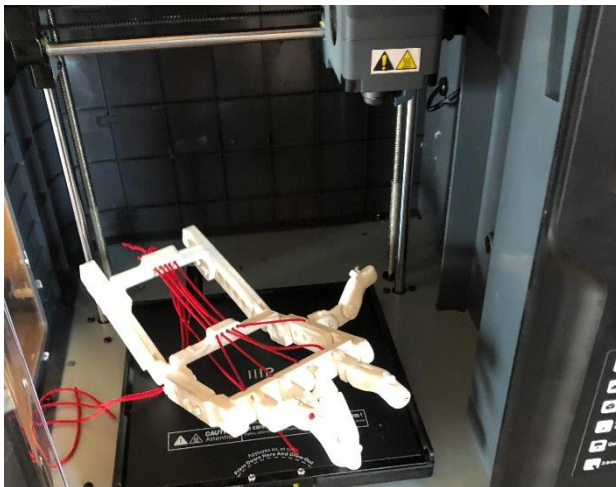
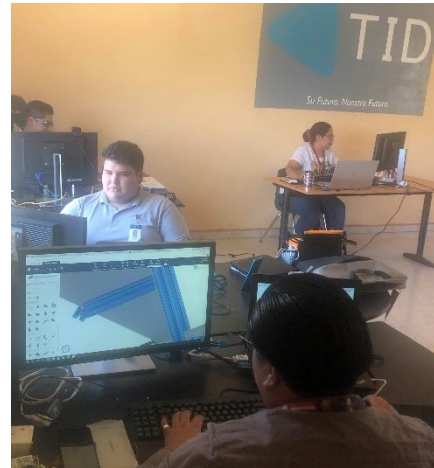


Four young engineers, including Javier and Luis Zepada formed the company with the support of the Oblates and the US donor. The Oblates were onboard with the project with the condition that the company would reinvest a portion of their earnings back into the community, give scholarships to other students, pay fair salaries, and help new engineering graduates. Javier wanted everything to be done correctly – no shortcuts. So, he filed all the required

paperwork and waded through the lawyers, government regulations, fees, and COVID delays to establish TID.

It took almost two years to go from the idea stage to the formation of the company. During this time, Javier had to live off his parents, which was humbling given he had been earning his own way for the prior two years. Javier prayed often and wondered if maybe he had stayed at his old job, he could be helping more people. Javier says that several times it came to him “This is bigger than you, keep going.”

Today the company has three working engineers, including Javier, one accountant and one secretary. The two other engineers (Miguel Hernandez and Christopher Molina) are recent mechatronics graduates from the Oblate scholarship program and are making better money than they would as intern engineers in a factory. The company has been given work by the original donor company and has turned that work around in half the time given. The donor company has been very pleased with the results. Javier says they need more work, but that they invest the slack time into developing new ideas and new capabilities.



One of the new ideas that will greatly benefit our community is the making of prosthetics with a 3D printer. They now have the printers and designs ready to launch this new project. There is a great need for prosthetics in Mexico, given the diabetes rate and resulting amputations. It is very exciting to see how these young engineers will impact our community with their ideas, innovation, motivation, and hard work. This is another success story of young people transforming our community. Please continue to pray and support our youth!