

Greetings from Mexico!

“I do not understand the mystery of grace -- only that it meets us where we are and does not leave us where it found us.” –Anne Lamott

As I write this newsletter, I am shocked that I have less than two more months living with my host community. But as I look around my room, I see that my shoes have holes in them, my clothes are becoming pretty ratty, and the words on my water bottle are getting harder to see. If it wasn't for these subtle reminders that I have been here for 8 months, I don't think I would realize that I am already in the month of May. I have commented on how fast the time has been going, and my host dad Salvador thinks that's a good thing. It means I'm happy here, he says. And he couldn't be more right. There have been days of tiredness and frustration with language and cultural differences, but the days of laughter and love have far overtaken the slow days. Between my host family, work community, and YAGMexico community, I have been shown nothing but grace here. While it's too hard to share every aspect of my life here, I've decided the best way to show is through some (very) short "stories" that display the radical hospitality and grace I have been shown this year.

Grace is when my 2.5 year old host niece says, “ven a jugar” (come to play) while looking at me.

Grace is being greeted by vendors as I walk up and down the beautiful streets of Tepoztlán.

Grace is making ice cream with some of the kids I work with after a long day.



Grace is hanging out on Sunday with my host family, and that usually includes watching soccer with the best view.

Grace is being invited to explore nearby areas with coworkers.

And sometimes grace even comes in the form of the devil. (Or perhaps my host niece Limny, who has become one of my best friends here!)



As the Anne Lamott quote above suggests, I will not be leaving Mexico the same as I arrived. I have met so many people here who have had a great impact on me. They have taken me as I am and have helped guide me. As I enter the last stretch of my YAGM year, I am continuously grateful for all the people here who have taken me in as their own. From the earliest days of helping me find the post office and patiently repeating themselves many times, to being invited for meals and trips, I am constantly humbled by the hospitality I have experienced and the grace I have felt.

I don't think I can talk about the grace I've been shown without thanking all of you from back home for the love and support you have shown me throughout the year! I've had some great reminders of home while in Mexico, including visits from my parents and sister, and many words of encouragement. Thank you for your thoughts and prayers while I continue this very formative year learning about humanity and justice and the importance of community. I am incredibly thankful for you all and looking forward to seeing you soon!

In Peace,
Catherine