



# BUILT TO LOVE

Life Stories of Travis & Roberta Sanders  
Serving with:



Casas por Cristo

Spring 2014

## MAKING A COMEBACK

Roberta and I are very excited to announce that we are once again joining the mission field with Casas Por Cristo. Back in 2011 Casas found itself in an unwanted position. By 2011, Casas had struggled for several years with the impact of the violent Drug Cartel turf wars. Everyone on staff was still completely sold out for the work we were doing in México. However, the public's perception was making it more and more difficult for us to convince our volunteer groups that our work was worth the slight risks that were involved. After seeing our home numbers diminish from 400 or

more a year to below 150 homes per year, Casas was forced to downsize. That downsize happened to come within a perfect window for Roberta & I to move back to our hometown, Mt. Carmel, IL. During that time we decided that due to our circumstances we'd be two of the voluntary layoffs, and moved back to Mt. Carmel.

Over the past three years here our love for Casas has never waned, and each year we found our selves desiring more and more to return to the work we loved so much. After much prayer and thought from

both us and Casas, it seems as if that perfect window of opportunity has risen again. Therefore, in June of this year we will be moving back to El Paso, TX and reuniting with our friends at Casas.

Roberta will be stepping back into her familiar role as Team Coordinator. She will be assisting with scheduling, ensuring that teams are prepared for their experience, and making sure that everything runs smoothly.

I will be working in the Juárez field office, visiting families with their sponsoring pastor, as well as assisting with the day to day tasks in the Casas headquarters. Roberta will get to go on builds with me on occasion, but I will be our primary builder. I will be building roughly 15-20 homes per year between all of our locations.

Once again we will be raising the bulk of our own salaries. If you would like to help us please read the "Partner With Us" section on the second page.

## MORE TINY, BUT BIG NEWS

We are also equally excited to inform everyone that at the end of October we are expecting to introduce a tiny little human into the world. I'm guessing this could come as a slight shock to some; as so far our most common response when we share the news is "What... I had given up all hope in you." Needless to say we are excited and slightly terrified about entering this stage of our lives. We are looking forward to seeing what God will teach us through this, and look forward to sharing our stories about it with you. Please keep us in your prayers as we adjust to our new lives as parents and missionaries.

TRUE STORY!

# PARTNER WITH US

As part of this transition back to being missionaries we are looking for people who are willing to partner with us. As full time staff we must raise our own salary. However, financial support is only a small part of what we truly desire. We are in need of people willing to buy into being a part of something bigger than all of us. We are looking for people to pray for and partner with us. Finally, and the most fun of all we are looking for groups to team up with us to build homes, and quite possibly change a family tree. Please prayerfully consider partnering with us in this adventure. If you would like to give financially for this cause please simply return the enclosed donation card or donate online at [www.casasporcristo.org](http://www.casasporcristo.org). Anything you can give will be a huge blessing, especially as we make this transition. Also, if you are willing, we truly desire monthly supporters. This will allow us to have a much better idea of what our budget needs to look like. If you have any questions, or would like more information about how you can come serve along side us please contact us using the contact information at the bottom of the inside page. Thank you for being a part of our ministry and lives!!

## THE ROAD TO HAPPINESS

We are told our entire lives to follow our dreams. To do what you love and you'll never work a day in your life. That God will give you the desires of your heart. We all spend our days searching for and striving to achieve these dreams of happiness. But what happens when you examine your life and see you have the best spouse you could ever imagine, wonderful families, friends, good jobs, a church family that sincerely aims to love God and His people, a beautiful house, and really no wants....but you feel deepy dissatisfied with life. As harsh as this sounds, it is where Roberta and I have found ourselves the past couple of years. By every logical reason we should be happy and content in our lives here, but at the end of the day it just feels as if something deep down is missing. It is these feelings that initiated serious talks about a return to Casas Por Cristo.

We've missed working at Casas from the time we left three years ago, but for me the desire to truly pack up and go back began on a trip to Juárez in March of 2013. I'm always super hesitant and generally avoid saying that God told me this or that. God has been blamed for some really dumb and heinous things through the years, and I

find it truly difficult to distinguish between "God told me this," and "This is what I wanted God to tell me." But for us that trip was as much of a sign as I believe we can get. From the moment our plane was within sight of the beautiful city lights of El Paso and Juárez, Roberta and I both had this weird sense of extreme peace and a sense that we were home.

In Psalms David says, "Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart." I feel like in our case it has been more of a case of our hearts being changed. From our first trip with Casas, we were changed in ways we would have never imagined. To us it feels as if this is what we were created for. Our love for Casas and the people we get to serve and with the unique skill set that Roberta and I have been given makes it feel as if Casas is our road to true happiness. God has gifted each of us with a unique set of talents and passions. We are not all called to be move and be missionaries in a foreign land. We are however all called to be missionaries where we are, using those gifts we've been given to love others. I encourage each of you to find that passion, use that gift, and strive to figure out just where your road should lead.





# 30 ... Casas POR CRISTO ... HOW DOES IT WORK?

## IN THE BEGINNING..

While working with another multi-location home building ministry, Wesley & Mary Bell began to see a need to change the way they did ministry, and to adapt to the particular needs of the churches and people of Juárez. It was this desire that led to the birth of Casas Por Cristo, Spanish for Homes because of Christ. In November of 1993 Casas constructed its first home, and has continued to share the incredible gift of God's grace and love through providing families with adequate housing ever since. To date, Casas, with the help of thousands of volunteers, has given over 4,000 families homes and hope. Casas has also expanded to Acuña, México, San Raimundo, Guatemala, and is preparing to establish its fourth location in the Dominican Republic.

## CHOOSING THE FAMILIES

One of the most wonderful aspects of Casas Por Cristo is our Pastor's Committee. Casas has nearly 150 pastors on these committees with each community having its own Pastor's Board. Not being native to these cultures we are aware of our limitations, and this is where our Pastors come in. These pastors are the heart behind our ministry. They grew up in these communities, they know the needs, and they are the ones who get to share in everyday life with the families we build for. This is why they are also the ones who choose who receives a home. Every month these pastors meet and wade through applications and decide who should receive a home. The accepted applications are then given to us and go into our scheduling system to be built. With teams only having a few days for their trip, these Pastors are what allow Casas Por Cristo to have a lasting, meaningful impact in these communities.

## WHO BUILDS THE HOME ?

Casas has eighteen full time missionaries on staff. Each of these staff are tasked with all the leg work that goes into preparing for a home to be built. We rely on volunteer groups to provide the funds and labor for each home. We work with groups of all sizes and skill levels, leading them through every step of the home building process. Many volunteers have little to no construction knowledge or experience prior to their trip. However, in just a few days they are presenting a family with keys to their new home. Many times the weeks are tough. The best quote I have heard is "It was the most difficult, miserable, magical week of my life." We sincerely believe that most of the time, the experience a team member receives is as life changing for them as it is for the family who receives the home. Working with nearly 7,000 volunteers a year we have seen countless lives altered because of just three days in México or Guatemala. This holds true for us as well. Casas was our first ever missions experience. It completely altered the way we see the world. It altered everything from the way we spend our time, our money, to what it means to love. We would absolutely love to be able to share this experience with each one of you. Please contact us for more information on how.



## THE FAMILIES

The families that we serve earn an average of around \$60 per week.

Due to their lack of resources many families will live with their extended families in a one or two room shack. These shacks are typically made with wooden pallets, box springs, tarps, blankets, plywood, or any other scrap material they can find lying around. Typical employment for many for these family members is factory, cleaning, construction, or making fire works where they work 10-12 hour days 6-7 days a week. The families we build for have many struggles in life, but they are some of the most gracious, sweet people we have come across. Many times the families will insist on preparing a meal for the group. This can

easily cost them up to a week's earnings. It is such an honor seeing a family receive such an incredible blessing, and knowing the impact that it can possibly have on their future. For instance, once they have adequate shelter they can spend their money on other items such as education for their children, or transportation cost allowing them to accept a better job, or simply being able to provide their children with enough food. Many times we never truly know the impact that receiving a home will have upon a family, but what we do know is that receiving a home could be the most real, tangible example of Christ's love that they have experienced.



## THE HOUSES...

Each Country that Casas builds in has its own unique design. This is due to the different climates and the availability and cost of materials. The houses we build range from around 220 to about 500 square feet. While this seems small, many times this is the biggest a house could possibly be and still fit on the family's land. Every home that we

build begins with a solid, concrete foundation, stick built walls, and electricity. After this the houses are quite different. In México, we insulate and drywall on the interior. On the exterior we black board, stucco, and roof, using osb decking and rolled roofing. In Guatemala and the Dominican Republic the insides are finished with plywood and the exteriors have treated wood siding and a tin roof. Homes in each location can be constructed within three to four workdays. The feeling of completing the home and handing the keys over to the family is virtually unanimous as every volunteer's favorite part of their experience with us. It is so special leaving a work site knowing that the next rain shower or cold snap with not leave the family in despair.



## THE COST:

San Raimundo, Guatemala: \$8,000 plus \$125/person lodging, Team Casas: \$675  
Juárez & Acuña México: Single: \$5,000 Double: \$7,000 Team Casas (Individual Trip): \$500

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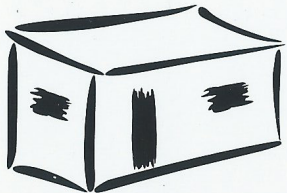
TRAVIS & ROBERTA SANDERS



Casas por Cristo

Please pray as we serve in  
México & Guatamala

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# Casas por Cristo

short term missions

800.819.8014

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