



*"The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel (God with us)."*

**-Matthew 1:23**

## Merry Christmas!

As we approach my favorite time of year, I wanted to thank you for your support over the years. I am sure when George and Betty first started Circle of Concern in 1989, they had no idea it would become such a blessing to so many. From the early days of helping with crisis pregnancies, at risk youth, and single moms to planting churches and bringing medical and outreach teams into Mexico for the past 25+ years.

### Ministering to the "Least of These."

I remember well our first outreach with the Durkins in El Capomo, Nayarit, Mexico over 15 years ago. Keith and Maya and their kids, AJ and Misha who were 6 and 4 at the time met us there and brought their guitar. We were in a small school, doing crafts and medical outreach, and the Durkin's jumped right in. The best part was they spoke Spanish! This turned into many, many ministry outreaches together. Now Circle is honored to partner with them in their amazing, yet challenging work in Zona Norte, TJ, where prostitutes, drug addicts, homeless people and refugees reside. Here they run a school for kids who aren't in a normal education system, feed 200 people a hot meal 3x a week, and share the love of Jesus with all. Circle is one of their largest supporters year over year and we are proud of that. This Christmas they are planning a festive Christmas dinner and evening for the street people and giving away 500 sweatshirts for the cold nights.



**Keith and Maya Durkin,  
Directors of Mexico Red**

## Jessie's Story

Recently, Maya shared a story that will stick with me forever.

*She shared that one morning Keith and her came to open up the school for the kids, and saw Jessie laying in front of the door. He was in bad shape, covered in sores. When they asked Jessie to move so they could open up the school, he replied he could not walk. So Keith and another person literally carried him across the street, while Maya started making phone calls to see who might be able to help Jessie. Maya found one shelter willing to take him and so they loaded Jessie into Keith's car, but when Keith got to the shelter and they saw him, they refused to take him. So Maya began making more calls.*

*Keith said, "How can I just drop him off out of my car and leave him on the streets?"*

*In Spanish, the name Jessie can translate to "Jesus," and here is the challenge Maya shared: "Sometimes when we have 'Jesus' in our car, it's inconvenient, it might even be stinky. How can we just put 'Jesus' out of our car?"*

*And so, after 3 hours of calls, and 3 hours of Keith having Jessie in his car, Maya found a place. It was a Mother Teresa's center in TJ. They received Jessie, and 3 weeks later when Maya visited, he had a big smile on his face. His sores almost completely healed and, still in a wheelchair, was getting stronger. He said to Maya, "Thank you so much for helping me. Now I can go and be with my family again."*



**Jessie shows  
his sores**

Wow, this story both blessed and challenged me. It would have been easy for many, including myself to “step over” Jessie and ignore him completely. Or simply to move him and say a prayer for him. Getting involved meant stopping everything the Durkin’s had on their list for the day, and making Jessie the priority.

As we celebrate Christmas this year, sharing our time and treasure with our loved ones, I hope each of us will remember all the “Jessie’s” of the world and help to make a difference. Maybe it’s giving to your local shelter or serving at one, there is never a shortage of opportunities to make a difference for those in need.

I pray peace, hope and more of Jesus to you in 2023,  
**Carol DeGraff**, Executive Director



*Maya visits Jessie  
3 weeks later*

## Day Trip to Zona Norte



**Saturday, January 28**

See first-hand what Keith and Maya are doing. We will feed the community and do some handyman projects in the Mexico Red building.

Sign up at  
[circleoc.com/tijuana](https://circleoc.com/tijuana)

## Tijuana Christmas Outreach

Let’s help the Durkins feed and clothe the “least of these” in Zona Norte this Christmas!

**Total amount needed:  
\$3,000**

To learn more or donate, scan the code or visit [circleoc.com/tjproject](https://circleoc.com/tjproject)



## A Note from the Circle of Concern Founder

Carol asked me to write a Christmas hello to our COC donors and team members. Little did I know that our first trip to Mexico almost 25 years ago would build to such a successful ministry. We have made a difference in so many ways in our ministry area of Nayarit and Jalisco. Many of you know that my last trip was this past June. I’m already missing the next one in November 2023. Our new site where we will stay is called Casa Villa del Sol in Bucerias and is so close to where we serve with our local partners. I am looking forward to helping Carol plan it! Sign up at [circleoc.com/bucerias](https://circleoc.com/bucerias) Space is limited. Thank you for making Christmas better for so many people less fortunate than many of us.

Merry Christmas!  
- George Wakeling • [george@circleoc.com](mailto:george@circleoc.com)

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