

# MERGE

Where a vision for city impact meets a desire to serve San Diego

## IN THIS ISSUE



Memorial Day Outreach



Military Ministry Q&A



Summer Missionary Spotlight

Vision San Diego is a part of the North American Mission Board's Strategic Focus Cities initiative

## Upward Kicks Off in San Diego

As the second week of June rolled in, sodid Upward camps in San Diego. The first camp out of 13 this summer kicked off at San Miguel Community Church.

As an Upward camper was leaving one afternoon, he asked, "Mommy, how much do you think that the Upward people get paid to play with us?" His mom replied, "Well, these people don't get paid anything for being here. They've given their time, money, and effort to play with you all just because they love Jesus."

God is at work through the Upward camps in San Diego. People are hearing the Gospel and sharing Christ's love. Here are two great examples of how God is moving in the lives of people in San Diego...

### Meet Greg Rikel:

He's the Wellness and Recreation Associate Pastor at First Baptist Church of Woodstock, Georgia. Greg and four

others from Woodstock flew out to San Diego on June 14 to lead a week-long Upward sports camp at San Miguel Community Church in Chula Vista, CA. They teamed up with 11 others from First Baptist Church of McKenzie, Tennessee. Greg has led his church in Upward sports programs for the last 11 years, along with 8 years experience doing mission camps.

Talking with his son Andrew, who also came as part of the team, Greg explained, "Most of these people don't know about Jesus, and that's why we're here, to share His love with them. It's hard to live out your faith, but we're here to lead by example."

By the end of the week, a combined Upward team from GA and TN were challenged and stretched, but very encouraged as 70 children and families heard the presentation of the Gospel and as a fire for church growth and evangelism ignited for the San Miguel community. Through the ministry of Upward and hard-working volunteers, people are not only being introduced to Christ, but strengthened to multiply ministry as well. (See *Upward*, Page 2)



### Please pray for the churches involved in Upward sports camps 2008

San Miguel Community Church  
June 17-20

Fellowship of San Diego  
June 24-27

New Hope Community Church  
June 24-27

Carlton Hills SBC  
July 15-18

Integrity Christian Fellowship  
July 15-18

Pacific View Baptist Church  
July 15-18

Experiencing God Christian Fellowship  
July 29-August 1

Pathways Community Church  
July 29-August 1



# 7

## San Diego Military Stats

500,000 active duty military & dependants

8 military bases

San Diego is home to almost every possible class of ships

38 chaplains of all faiths

14 chapels

86,000 work on Camp Pendleton (the largest base in SD)

1/3 of the Marine Corps is in San Diego

For more information on military ministry in San Diego, email [elewis@visionsd.org](mailto:elewis@visionsd.org).

### Upward (From Page 1)

#### Meet Jerry Nichols:

He is a member of San Miguel Community Church. Since San Miguel launched nearly two years ago in December of 2006, Jerry has been a part of this church body and desired to see it grow. He volunteered and worked alongside the Upward mission team for



the week. Seeing how the ministry of Upward runs firsthand, with 70 campers participating each day, he has been encouraged in seeing how his church can continue to reach out.

Jerry explains his experience: "At most, only 5% of the children that are here are members of San Miguel, so this ministry is definitely introducing the people of this community to the church." Along with reaching more than double the number of children at San Miguel, double the numbers of families have also been reached. Through this experience, Jerry has been challenged to investigate how he can be a part of God's work and serve his church further. San Miguel's Pastor, Chuck Rheam, captured the impact of the week when he said,

"What Upward has done for us is simply build another bridge into the lives of people in the San Miguel community, to introduce them to Jesus' love, so we can help them come back over that bridge to be a part of the Kingdom's work."

To sum up the first week of Upward sports camps: Individuals were reached, a community touched and a church strengthened, all in the name of Jesus. For more information about Upward camps or other ways to serve, check out [www.visionsandiego.com](http://www.visionsandiego.com) or call us at 1.877.817.4777.

## Q and A

with Eric Lewis  
Military Ministry Leader

#### What is your key role with military ministry?

I have dual roles: I work for both Shadow Mountain Community Church (SMCC) and Vision San Diego. For SMCC, I help military families that are new in town get involved quickly at the church and then help them transition when they leave. For Vision SD, I train and motivate churches and pastors to have a similar strategy.

#### Why is it important for churches to have a strategy?

It's really hard for military families to be involved in churches because they change locations about every five years. The problem is that when you go to a new church, you have to start over.

#### When talking to churches about having a strategy, what are some of the challenges you face?

I try to help churches understand the need for a strategy for their military people. It doesn't take much to convince a church that they need a strategy for evangelism, youth, or small groups/Sunday School, but it's difficult convincing them of the need for a strategy for their military people.

One key reason churches don't have strategy is they're transitory, on average changing locations every five years. However, the average person changes churches every five years. Another reason is that the kind of fruit that comes from a military ministry is not growing a church, it's growing the Kingdom. When pastors change their attitudes from growing their own church to wanting to grow God's Church, God blesses their local church.

#### How can people in the military connect with churches that have strategies?

The Military Missions Network, comprised of evangelical churches, chaplains, and para-church ministries, has a growing network of churches around the world that

are military-friendly or have a focused military ministry. Many of these churches are strategically located where the military's migratory patterns always go through. Go to [militarymissionsnetwork.com](http://militarymissionsnetwork.com) to search for military friendly churches by location.

#### How can people pray for the military ministry in San Diego?

Pray for churches and church leaders to rise up that will look for ways to reach out to military families and individuals in their communities.

Pray that God will reveal 15-20 churches in San Diego County that are willing to create a military ministry plan.

Pray that God will open people's hearts and eyes, so they will see the military as a mission field, not just another occupation.

Ask God to reveal ways and opportunities to reach out to the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of the military community here in San Diego.

## 6th Annual Set Free Memorial Day Outreach

Monday, May 26 | Ocean Beach, CA



### "It's a church picnic that got out of control."

That's how J.D. Loveland describes Set Free Ministries' annual Memorial Day Outreach in San Diego's Ocean Beach. Loveland works with San Diego's chapter of Set Free, a ministry dedicated to reaching homeless and addicted populations in cities around the country.

Seven years ago, Set Free San Diego held its first Memorial Day BBQ in a small park next to the beach; this year, they served lunch to nearly 5,000 people who came to listen to live music and celebrate the holiday.

They were joined by volunteers from Ohio, Georgia and Mississippi, along with a large group from Los Angeles. Each volunteer came with one goal: Sharing the Gospel with the thousands of people on the beach and in the park.

Gwen Kelly from El Cajon, Ca., said her goal for the day

was simply to go where God would have her go, talking with those who came across her path about the change Jesus has made in her life.

"It's sharing your life, telling part of your story. I'm just here as the vessel."

D.D. Alexander coordinates the work of Los Angeles' Extreme Urban Center Initiative, an effort to unite churches in the city to share the love of Christ as they serve people in practical ways. His group of 45 volunteers were motivated to help on Memorial Day after Christians from San Diego came to LA earlier this year to help at a similar event.

"It's about following the movement of the Holy Spirit, and joining God where He's already at work," Alexander said.

And He is indeed at work in San Diego; on Memorial Day, more than 20 people made decisions to follow Christ.

To find out more about Set Free Ministries, log on to [www.setfreesd.org](http://www.setfreesd.org).



# Taking the Next Step

*In each issue, Merge features the story of someone whose life has been changed through a Greater San Diego church or ministry.*

On Monday morning, June 2, Tiffany Fox and 17 other student summer missionaries stepped off airplanes coming from all over the United States to join the ranks of the Vision San Diego team. Their mission: To reach Greater San Diego with the Gospel. A big task to tackle for sure, but as Scripture tells us in Matthew 19:26, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

With that mindset, and through strategies like sports camps, block parties, Bible studies and community service, ministering to San Diegans is the mission at hand for Tiffany and the other students serving here this summer.

As a junior at the University of Georgia studying Digital Media, Tiffany felt the Lord call her to give her summer to Him. She was born in Peru and lived there for 12 years while her family served with the International Mission Board, so Tiffany is familiar with the missions scene. With such life experience, she has the gift of speaking both English and Spanish fluently. Using those gifts and her



2008 Summer Missionaries | San Diego

passions for reaching Hispanics and helping build the church, Tiffany's prayers became reality when she was able to answer the call to be a part of Vision San Diego as a summer missionary, working alongside Hugo Campos, Director of Hispanic Ministry for Vision San Diego.

San Diego County is home to nearly one million Hispanics and is right across the border from Tijuana, Mexico, giving believers in this city an unique opportunity to reach

another culture with Christ. Working with the Hispanic ministry at Vision San Diego, Tiffany says, "I am most excited to see how God is going to use my call and my passions to fit what is He is doing here."

Like Tiffany's involvement with the Hispanic ministry, the mission for all of the students not only includes seeing how God is already at work in San Diego, but also being a part of what is ahead. Tiffany expresses well the desire of all the summer missionaries, "By the end of this experience, we want to be able to say, 'This is a life that God touched through me,' and that will be the true blessing in it."

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