

Here's a pic of the donations from just the RCBC family alone. 'One man's trash is another man's treasure' is a fitting caption.

From a parent's perspective, you might see it as a bunch of old, worn out equipment that's outlived its useful lives for our kids; destined for the dumpster.

But from the perspective of the kids we visited down there, this was a gold mine.



Our goodwill trip unexpectedly started soon after we landed in Managua, when we stopped at the Olympic training center on our way to the village we were planning to visit. The training center was hosting what is our equivalent of 'Districts' and our host's son, Franklin, was playing for a 14U team in it.



We met Franklin's teammates and coach after their game and the coach showed us their 'team equipment bag' which was an old burlap potato sack that contained exactly two team helmets, catcher's gear, a few badly beat up baseballs, and one team bat (if you look closely in the pic, you'll see the bat had all the paint chipped off and a big quarter sized gouge/hole in it).



So we ended up giving the team a few helmets and some Mako bats - they were so appreciative (the coach spoke to us the next day to let us know his players were so amazed, **they were already hitting nukes with their new bats!**).

We stayed in a small, rural town called Villa del Carmen, where Cesar's parents live, and managed to host over 80 local youths for a fun weekend of baseball.

It turns out that most of these kids have full time jobs working the fields and don't go to school, so it was a rewarding feeling to give them some joy and happiness, albeit only a few hours' worth, and some donated baseball equipment, that they'll hopefully cherish for a lifetime.



We also conducted some pitching clinics for the kids and coaches...and handed out over 100 pairs of baseball pants....



This little lefty caught our attention during the trip. If you look closely, you'll notice he is a lefty thrower using a RHT mitt on his catching hand.

It was a sight to see but the kid actually made some nice catches in the field as a first baseman and right fielder.

I told my son that the valuable lesson here is these kids make do with whatever life gives them. He understood.

And the good news story here is that Cesar remembered seeing a LHT first baseman's glove in the donation pile back at his mom's house and made sure the kid got it (thank you Scarfone family- I think this may have been Joe's old 1B mitt????)

To top off the weekend, Cesar's mom and aunts cooked and provided everyone a nice meal of chicken, bread and rice which, as we learned, was a special treat for the kids since many of them only get a chance to eat meat maybe a couple times a year like at Christmas.



And with bellies full, the teams boarded their 'team buses' for the ride back to their normal lives, back to their home villages.

Before our flight back to the U.S. on Monday, we managed to visit a local public school to donate some baseball and soccer equipment for their school teams to use. The school covered grades K thru 12 and had an enrollment number of over 2,000 kids.



Overall the trip was a clear success: Cesar, Jayson and I managed to connect with, both directly and indirectly, over 2,000 youths in a foreign country over the course of a weekend and hopefully made some sort of difference in their lives.