



## ---FUN DESTINATIONS---

October 2015

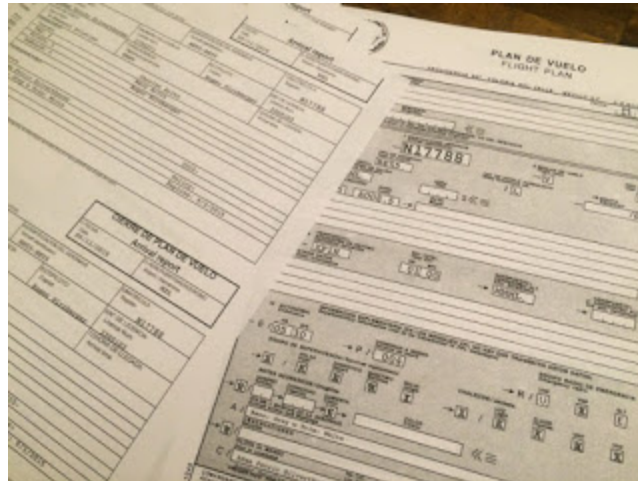
submitted for NRI Flying Club by Sean Calhoun

### **Flying Samaritans** by Adam Silverthorne

After some gentle prodding from Todd Makayama and Doug Wirzberger, last weekend I flew down to Mexico with the [Flying Samaritans](#). Since it was my first trip with the "Flying Sams", Doug rode with me and helped show me the ropes. The mission was to pickup dentists Charlie and his wife Mary at KRHV, head south and clear Mexican customs at Mexicali, then fly another hour south into Baja to a little ag-worker town called Los Pinos. This place would be difficult to get to by any other means other than light aircraft, but the strip is paved and about 4,000 ft long so it's quite an easy flight. Here we are in Mexicali.



The Baron made quick and comfortable work of the flight. Mexicali officials were friendly but if we think it's bureaucratic here, I had 35 pages of print outs just for the weekend trip to Mexico!



Fortunately the Flying Sams have a good website that generates all the forms you need to clear customs efficiently. I had all the forms printed and in a little folder, and Doug helped me through the process of knowing which form to hand to which official.

The town is essentially rows and rows of greenhouses and tomato orchards nestled along the gorgeous beaches of the pacific California peninsula.





But the real mission is a humanitarian one. The doctors and dentists we brought down provide critical medical and dental services to a very poor community with few if any other options for healthcare. The next day we got to work.



The doctors and dentists were amazing to watch. Sadly most of the dental work was tooth extractions. It's rare for a mother to breastfeed... either for lack of education or perhaps because the mother is working in the fields all day. Often also the kids are abandoned and raised by grandparents. Since the local people cannot afford formula or breast pumps, the kids end up drinking sugary water as a substitute and rotting out their teeth. It was really inspiring to see such a dedicated group of doctors and dentists helping out, and the people themselves were so sweet and friendly and thankful. The Flying Sams organization also gave out scholarships for school for the kids, clothing and sunglasses. Inspiring is the only word I can use to describe it.





Of course I have no medical skills whatsoever, but I learned to operate the eye refractor machine and was giving out eye exams and having a blast practicing my kindergarten level Spanish. I really need to practice more, and this is a great way to do it.

I had a really good time and it felt great to contribute. It was only a 4 hour flight but to a different world. We don't think twice about spending \$100 on dinner but it puts things in perspective when that same money pays for a child to go to school for a year. It was also just a great group of people to hang out with for a weekend. A finer group of generous, caring, good humored, fun people you will not find anywhere. I'll definitely be back.