

Changing communities one child at a time through Christian education.



Looking back over twelve years of work with children here in Guatemala I realize that much has been accomplished and am so blessed that we have made this journey with you. The difficult economic times are forcing us to consider sending families who have fallen behind in tuition payments to the public schools so we can reduce staff by combining classrooms. Before we take such action, I told the parents I would tell their story. Where their children have come from, what they are going through and the future they have. This newsletter is dedicated to them and the struggles they face. It is graphic, but please take time to read this letter and give the extra copy we have included, to someone like yourself that has a heart to help our children reach their dreams. I have chosen to not include pictures below because of the content. We invite you to see our website where we have included many pictures of our ministry.

The times are difficult where we live. I want to share with you what it is like for our children who attend our school here in San Lucas so you may see their courage and know how to pray for them. While I was giving a public safety class to the sixth graders and asked them how many had been held up by knife or at gunpoint, everyone in the classroom including the teacher raised their hand. Our teachers (we have 5 teachers) while walking to and from work have been robbed from over eight times over the years. I recently watched as a ten year old drug his mother across the street by one hand. She had passed out from too much to drink. Her clothes were torn and soiled, when I went to help, I was told there was nothing I could do. The bottles of rubbing alcohol lined the street as testimony to other victims that alcohol had claimed on that street. I prayed to God that day to help me make a difference so that the children of our school would not have to live the horror I saw in that ten year olds eyes. Gangs, and the violence they produce are problems that our children face everyday. Many of our parents have had to pay extortion money so that members of their family will not be killed. Two weeks ago (from the time of writing this) along the path that some of our children use to come to school was a beautiful family, a single mother of four children. Gangs demanded money from the mother or they said they would kill her children. They lived in a tin room building that continually leaked, they were extremely poor the money could not be raised. Three of the daughters were brutally raped and killed. They were seven, eight and ten years old. A large angry crowd upon hearing the news of their deaths, surrounded the mayors office here in San Lucas demanding action. Finally an arrest was made. Last week many persons from different churches joined together to console the mother. What a tragedy! I remember talking to one gang member about accepting the Lord, but his mind had been so damaged by drugs he could not hold a line of thought. He walked away and later killed two youth that I had come to know and become friends with. Ninety eight percent of the murders are not investigated which causes the families of our school to live in constant fear. These same gangs recently (last week upon writing this) shot and killed a twelve year old boy as a way of intimidating a family to move out of their house. Inside the public schools the situation is not any better. Most of the students are under constant attack to steal for gangs, or be stolen from. One of the fathers I talked with removed their son from the public school after attending just two days, He told me, "Everything from his son's backpack was stolen" he told me shaking his hands in anger and frustration. "The teachers response was, I am not paid to correct the children, I am just paid to teach them". Most of our children come from single parent homes divided because of physical, emotional or sexual abuse the mother or children receive. One child I will call Maria, ten years old has yet to talk to her teacher after five months of classes. We found out that she had been the silent victim of physical and sexual abuse. She is currently seeing a psychologist but her family is poor and has to make the difficult decisions of what to go without to make the counseling payments. Many parents open their heart to us in times of counseling at our school. I have heard the story time and time again how adultery is tolerated in this macho society because women have no means of supporting their family. A good friend and missionary Steve Osborn recently made the news because of taking to heart cases of women whose children had been stolen, but were ridiculed and told to be quiet by many including Government officials because they were indigenous non-Spanish speaking women. Before their hunger strike on the porch of the federal building ended, many mothers joined their cause with similar stories. They were finally heard, but the cases will be tied up for years in a corrupt judicial system. I went on to ask the children of our school how many have had a family member shot and killed by gangs or kidnapped and many raised their hands. This is the backdrop for our students who attend our school. Most will take a lifetime to sort out their feelings of

how to deal with such heartache. With out the Lord most would be swallowed by the bitterness of playing into the Devils hand of seeking revenge. So how do I keep going after seeing such tragedy, and how can you and I help make a lasting difference in such a corrupt system? Inside our school we offer a haven of rest to battered and torn apart families. We restore, and mend the brokenhearted through Gods word. We not only speak out against the violence but teach righteous living with perseverance, patience, and faith in Jesus Christ to the children and their families. We spend many hours with our students and their parents in marital, family, and financial counseling. The results of seeing Gods work keeps us fresh, energetic and ready to preserver everyday. I see many of the students that have graduated from our school, and they are far ahead of the national statistics of only graduating the third grade and having four children before the age of eighteen. Many of them are leaders in their church, song leaders or deacons, some work for the government and others are attending the university to become architects, engineers or hold down good paying jobs. Some have made a stand against the violence in their day even though it cost them their life. Everyone in the last two graduating sixth grade classes had made a personal commitments to Jesus Christ. The grandfather of two of the children that graduated last years was so grateful, he asked if he could help out our school. I sent him a letter of things we needed but could not afford. I soon found out he worked as the assistant to the mayor of our small town. To my surprise he sent a truck loaded with fifty two new desks for our students. These stories of success shine in incredible contrast against their dark setting where they live. Perhaps you remember Nancy (not her real name) a twelve year old who graduated five years ago. We moved the entire family and rented them a place to live secretly, using donations you provided because her father was sexually abusing her. While the mother was working she was raped by her uncle. Our school helped provide counseling to the family and helped in the testimony that put the uncle in prison. Nancy is dealing with her scars and will be graduating soon as a bi-lingual executive secretary. Her brother and sister are now at our school but are in need of financial help. These children and many others that I do not have space to tell their story, but they have hope because you have given of your prayers and financial

support. The cost for them to attend our school is the lowest in the area however unemployment is over thirty percent. Many parents hold jobs that are very low paying incomes for their families. Others are hindered by not being able to read or write, while others find work selling produce, occasional construction work, selling eggs, cleaning houses, or as security guards. All are hoping that their children will one day have a better life than they did. Over half of the parents whose children attend our school are unable to pay tuition of twenty one dollars per month. I pray you would consider taking on the responsibility of giving a monthly gift to cover the cost of their tuition so that their children may continue to receive a Christ filled education. Perhaps you would consider taking an extra copy of our newsletter to your church or local bible study group. Thank you for prayerfully considering how you can help.

Thank you Saint Matthews Lutheran Church in North Dakota who donated money for our school in San Lucas. We knew exactly how to us the money. Our school we are renting is a



Our students from the 4th and 5th grade wanted to say thank you for the new bathrooms

renovated house with only two bathroom and very limited space. With over one hundred students and many who come to school sick every day because of parasite problems we were desperate for another

bathroom. We looked into renting portable bathrooms but the price made it out of the question. We used the space in a patio that was recently turned into a classroom and now our school has four bathrooms. Thank you !

Our website www.midianministries.com is online. You can read about why we chose the name of Midian Ministries for our web page, view many photos of our school in San Lucas, view photos of our project in Balcones de Palin, as well as Make online donations to support our school and regular on site missionary expenses, meet our board members as well as learn about how to take part in a team visit. We hope you will use the web site as a tool to stay closer in touch with what the Lord is doing in Guatemala through His House Incorporated.

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