

Recycled Lives News



I had no idea what I was saying yes to when I decided I wanted to go to Guatemala when my husband and I met with Shawn and Brad Johnson a year ago. All I knew was that I kept hearing a whisper, a nudge, from Isaiah 6:8, "Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?' And I said, 'Here I am. Send me!'" There aren't many times when the audible voice of God has been heard by mankind. God has an "outside" voice, but too often we are listening to the voices of this world, rather than the Creator of the Universe. In Genesis, God whispered into the dust and Adam came to be. He whispered. And if you're seeking him, if you're listening, you'll hear Him whispering to you too, directing your next step even if you can't see the horizon. I'm excited that I said yes to going to Guatemala, and that Shawn has asked for my continued help with writing this newsletter.

Serving together,
Lexi Johnson

At a Glance: Events, Activities and Ways to Help

- **Mission Teams-** Contact us now if you are interested in being a part of a life changing mission team. We will help you plan your mission trip to Guatemala. **Reserve your travel dates for 2019 now!**
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#RecycledLives

Back to School

By: Lexi Johnson, Mission Team Member and
Recycled Lives Reporter/Photographer

Every fall, Liz Cheney leads a mission team to Guatemala. During the first part of November, a team of six will make up a mother/daughter team.

They will work together to distribute lamina (corrugated sheet metal used for shelter), bunk beds, cooking stoves, and community meals to the people of San Gabriel.

The team is also organizing children's activities for a VBS camp, and looking for ways to support victims of the Volcano Fuego disaster that happened earlier this year. A lofty goal of \$11,000 has been set to support these projects.

A collection of school supplies for the children in Guatemala is underway right now & through the end of September. Items can be dropped off at Immanuel Church, Tower, MN or Insurance Brokers Dave Wichman office, Isanti, MN (next to Isanti Subway)

School supplies needed include:

- Markers
- Regular & colored pencils
- Erasers
- Scissors
- Watercolor sets
- Sketch books
- Plastic folders
- Backpacks
- White t-shirts
- Navy blue sweatpants/athletic pants
- Navy blue uniform dress pants or skirts
- White short sleeve button up shirts
- White knee high socks for girls
- Basic black dress shoes- boys and girls youth sizes up through 5 adult



Choosing the Mountain

By: Dennis Troff, Recycled Lives Board of Director's Chair

There is a great story of Caleb, one of the Israelites sent to spy out the Promised Land, in Joshua 14: 6-15. Caleb's faith in God never wavered though everyone around him doubted. Now, in these verses, the Promised Land is being divided among the tribes of Israel. People were asking for the grassy plains and lush valleys. Caleb, though 85 years old and knowing that the enemies driven out now lived in the mountains, asked for a mountain. Caleb did not trust in his own strength, but in God's power. He chose a situation in which he knew he would have to trust God.

Shawn and Brad have chosen to go to a "mountain" believing and trusting in His presence and power to be witnesses for Christ in Guatemala. And good witnesses they have been by loving and giving light in a land of darkness. Homes have been built for the homeless, food has been distributed to the hungry, gifts have been provided for children and spiritual encouragement given to the poor, the needy, the widow and the fatherless.

We are so thankful for the generous financial and prayer support given by so many of you to this ministry. And now with recent volcanic eruption, the need is greater. We would like to build more homes and bunkbeds, distribute greater amounts of food and cover the mission expenses for gas, electricity, insurance, mission car repairs and the personal expenses that arise for Shawn and Brad.

We are very thankful for your support. And if you are able, please consider an additional gift this year for Recycled Lives.

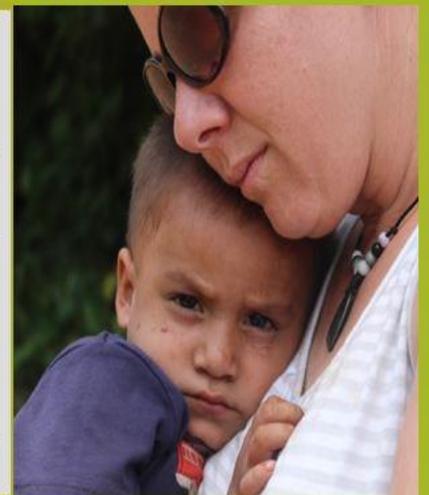
Dennis Troff

Like what we do? Join us!

PRAY! "For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them."
Matthew 18:20

GIVE! In the midst of a very severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability.
2 Corinthians 8:2-3

SO WE CAN KEEP GOING!
Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit
Matthew 28:19



By: Lexi Johnson, Mission Team Member and Recycled Lives Reporter/Photographer



The volcano Fuego was smoldering, but ash wasn't thick in the air. Doors were open to all the stores. Some looked more like concession stands, gated and window slots, for fear of robbery. Every building was a different color, many were bright yellow, faded red or aqua blue. Stray dogs lay in the middle of the road, but everyone drove around them.

This is Guatemala.

"And where are we going?" I asked.

Brad Johnson pointed up the steep hill to a yellow blob.

"That's Fernando's house. We helped build it, and it was hard to carry those materials up the hill," Brad chuckled. "I don't want to do that again."

Windows down we sat patiently, or impatiently, on a single lane road in our truck waiting for a car to back into the alley. It didn't take long for the driver to give up and keep going ahead of us.

"He's going to be disappointed when he realizes he's on a dead end rode and will have to turn around in a smaller area," Brad shook his head.

Brad and Shawn Johnson, founders of Recycled Lives, first met Fernando in January after receiving a petition for help for 15 children in a small village community. They shopped for each item on the 15 lists and had the privilege of handing each backpack filled with every necessary item for school to each child. There were no laces in his shoes, and his toes peaked through the front but they were the only ones he owned. He tried, but he couldn't keep up on the soccer field. To make matters worse, none of the kids wanted him on their soccer team because he couldn't run fast enough in his shoes.

After seeing Fernando, his dirty face and too small shoes and clothes would not leave Shawn's heart to rest. So she shopped for a few outfits for Fernando, 2 school uniforms, a pair of school and a pair of tennis shoes. She returned the next day with items in hand and a message to Fernando: that he is important and loved by Jesus Christ. They were also able to meet the rest of Fernando's family. At the time Fernando's mother, Olga, was 8 ½ months pregnant, and he also had a young brother, Diego. Olga's husband left because he didn't want a third child.

Now, it was summer, and we were hiking up a steep hill to throw a surprise birthday party for Fernando. Fernando is turning 11 and had never had a birthday party.

I can't remember the last time I've seen a kid so surprised, and literally have drool dripping down his face over a vanilla and strawberry cake. But, I also can't remember the last time I've seen a kid so excited to show someone their homework and their bedroom. Three little boys, their sweet mama, and her sisters and parents gathered together with us to celebrate the life of sweet Fernando. As is custom in Guatemala, Fernando did get his face smashed into the cake.

Little brother Diego wasn't bothered. He would have eaten the whole cake if it had been spilled in the dirt outside their house.

We sat laughing at the children's frosting covered face, and red tongues from the Atomic Fireball candies. We clapped as we gave Fernando his own soccer ball and jersey. The language barrier was real, but I think it's true when they say a smile speaks one thousand words.

Fernando is currently struggling in math and believes he is stupid. Olga has no job. She would like to start her own business, but it's hard being a single mom and living away from town up on a hill. Olga's sister is single – her husband left her because she can't have children.

There is hope in this story. Even though our team of six is back in Cambridge now, Shawn and Brad Johnson are still in Guatemala, making a difference, offering support and encouragement. The even better news is that Jesus Christ has always been there, waiting for His Beloved to come running into His strong, loving and nail-scarred arms.

Recycled Lives' Faith & Mission:

Recycled Lives is rooted and built upon the belief that faith in Jesus Christ renews and transforms broken or lost lives into something beautiful and purposeful - Jesus Recycles our Lives.

Our Purpose: Recycled Lives is a non-profit Christian organization dedicated to bettering the lives of people living in poverty through facilitating access to resources that are physical, spiritual and/or financial in nature. We are advocates for ceasing poverty for all of God's people throughout the world. Recycled Lives is focused on sharing the gospel through serving as the hands and feet of Christ in our communities and throughout the world. We will go forth into the world to bring positive change to lives through demonstrating the love of Christ so that we may bring praise and glory to God.

Missionary Update: Uffda!! What a summer it has been! We have been enjoying the company of mission teams and the joy they bring in serving alongside us. We enjoyed a friendly visit from Dave & Kelly W and had the pleasure of facilitating a pretty amazing reunion between Dave & little Jose. We have never laughed more while also accomplishing some really amazing ministry than we did with the First Baptist Church team (Ryan, Burke, Lexi, Tom, Romeo & Megan). Seriously, who raised & leads this Tom kid? I still cannot control my laughter at the sight of papaya, eggs and corn. We have never worked physically harder for more hours & days in a row in extreme heat to build the largest home to date with Michelle & Vanessa. I also know we haven't driven for more hours (too many to count) and miles (approx. 3,500 miles) in a 6 week period than we did with these teams. You see, the 25 mile drive to our primary ministry area that typically takes 1 hour (one way) has been extended to 50 miles & up to 4 hours on bad traffic days (most are) and 1 ¾ hours on a good day with minimal traffic (one way). The road we normally take was wiped out along with several villages & thousands of people when Volcano Fuego erupted on June 3. The government continues to state that there are only 112 dead & 200 missing, it is clearly not true. Hundreds of bodies have been dug up since the report & the number doesn't change. Many survivors each report up to 40 family members missing. It is a tragedy that the existence of human beings is being denied and the government is actively stopping people & volunteers from looking for lost loved ones while refusing to lend any sort of aid. Please pray that the hearts of the government officials be softened to allow for thousands of families to receive closure & also receive suitable places to live as the villages wiped out are deemed uninhabitable. There are over 4,000 people in shelters throughout the country as a result of the volcano disaster.

God's perfect timing and His love for each of us shown by caring for our needs in a special way is undeniable. He knew we needed a lot of laughter and funny memories which came as a welcome diversion for our minds and hearts as we struggle through some emotionally trying times here with the volcano disaster, extra-long work days and the distance from loved ones as they and we are hurting. As some of you may know, our daughter Jordon is pregnant with twins, a boy and girl. We devastatingly found out last month that around 22 weeks, baby boy Adonis Arthur passed away. Please pray for Jordon, her partner Donny and our families as we process through the loss of Adonis and what is sure to be a highly emotional time when Jordon delivers the babies in October.

Brad returned home last week to undergo testing and medical care to determine the best and available courses of treatment for his failing spine. His leg and back pain have been getting the best of him some days. Pray for wisdom, guidance and pain relief for his chronic back problem. He pushes through each day but it is tiring being in constant pain.

I have been working on getting displaced families into temporary housing with the items needed to start over again. I have been filling orders for medicines & supplies needed for shelters that are not receiving sufficient aid from the multitude of donations that are available-because the donations are under governmental control. We also have been aiding a local association formed of Guatemalans that are helping families to search for the remains of missing loved ones. I am diligently working to get things in order for volcano victim relief projects, as well as to complete a home rebuild for a neighbor family with a child that has been suffering severe asthma attacks. I am training in some temporary helpers that will cover some of my weekly family social visits & carry out some of the regular tasks that can't wait while I am away. Once these tasks are completed, I will be returning to the USA for about 2 months. Time back will be focused on speaking engagements, board meetings & family time. My siblings and I will have a memorial service for my mom on the anniversary of her death and I will also be with our daughter as we celebrate a birth and grieve a loss.

Thank you for your support in partnering with us in prayer and financial support as we work to share the gospel, ease burdens and meet people's basic needs wherever we are, both in Guatemala and while home. We recognize that we need to allow others to do the same for us as we come home for some hard stuff and also try to recharge the tank by appreciating the time we are blessed to share back home.

In Christ's abundant love,

Shawn Johnson

Missionary, Founder & Executive Director for Recycled Lives