

# Recycled Lives News



William, age 3. San Gabriel Guatemala / Photo Credit: #madisonspain



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**Recycled Lives is a registered 501(C)(3) organization. Contributions are tax deductible where allowed by law.**

## At a Glance: Events, Activities and Ways to Help

- **March Mission Team™** Contact us ASAP if you are interested in joining a life changing team that will be bringing the Easter message to Guatemala! Please be in prayer for those that are ministering as well as for God to be preparing the hearts of those that will receive the message. In the coming months, please keep an eye on our website, Facebook page or contact us for donation supplies that will be needed for this Easter ministry.
- **Fundraising for Homes & Monthly Food Program in Guatemala**  
Houses and food are always in need! Your contribution of any amount will help provide the funds necessary to carry out the monthly food distribution and build homes for the homeless!
- **Save the Date: Annual Sweet on Guatemala Event!** Saturday February 13<sup>th</sup>, 2016, 6-8:00 PM. See page 4 for details.

Photography by  
#madisonspain



## Three Days For Us, But A Lifetime For Them

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By: Savannah Spoor, Middle School Student ~Antigua International School, Guatemala

Imagine living in a shack made out of aluminum sheets and plastic. Imagine having no electricity. Imagine having, at most, one hour of water a day and the only time you could shower was when it was raining. This is how the people in the village of San Gabriel live.

This past November, Interact (an after-school club that provides service work for the community) visited a village in Escuintla called San Gabriel. We were working with an organization called Recycled Lives, a non-profit organization that builds homes for indigenous Guatemalans in need – and by “in need” we mean the poorest of the poor. We committed our time to Recycled Lives, to help build a house (a one-room, square building with one window and one door) for a single woman and her son, teen brother and blind father.

Our work consisted of three long and hard, but very rewarding days. There were ten of us, ranging from 7th graders to 9th graders. Every morning we would make the one hour drive from Antigua to Escuintla. We would leave cool, lush Antigua with our fleeces zipped up and by the time we arrived to hot, humid Escuintla we were down to our t-shirts and ready to work. The days were filled with mixing batches and batches of concrete, filling cracks, painting walls, nailing boards, digging trenches, and laying the floor. By the end of the first two workdays we were covered from head to toe in concrete dust and dirt. By the end of the third day, we were covered in paint. We were truly exhausted mentally and physically, our hands were cracked and blistered, but we each felt a sort of rewarding pride that only comes with genuine hard work.

This experience has really, truly stuck with me. I have done service work in poor communities before but this was by far the most impoverished community I have ever witnessed. It was nearly impossible for me to put myself in their place or imagine living under those circumstances. The opportunity to make this community even the tiniest bit better made me feel like I had accomplished something really important. It also made me realize how much need there is in the world. I am so fortunate to come from a loving family, healthy and secure with a roof over our heads. I wholeheartedly intend on doing more service work like this throughout my life to help make the reality of a dry, safe, and comfortable home possible for the millions of people who deserve it.

This experience not only made an impact on the family we built a home for, but it made an impact on me.

# POVERTY

By: Shawn Johnson, Recycled Lives Founder & ED

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What are some words that come to mind when you hear the word "POVERTY"? Close your eyes for a moment and think about it.

The most common responses are: hunger, homelessness, dirty, malnourished, lonely, unfortunate, sad, a lack of clothing, food, clean water and shelter. The majority of "first world" responses are focused on the lack of things that are material in nature.

When asking persons living in poverty this same question their responses are often quite different. Typical responses are of emotional and psychological connections: Lack of dignity, feeling inferior, having no voice, worthlessness, nothing, broken, frustrated, down, ashamed and degraded.

I share these differences in responses so that our hearts can be opened to some truths about poverty and to do something to change it. According to Merriam Webster's simple definition; poverty is defined as "a lack of something". "Something" is a big deep ocean of needs. Whether living in abundance or living on the streets, I am sure each of us can relate to lacking something. After all, we live in a fallen and broken world. The truth is, some form of physical, emotional and/or spiritual poverty touches each and every one of us. Poverty doesn't just come in the form of lacking "things" but poverty can exist in other ways; the lack of feeling sufficiently loved, the lack of being able to perform to the expectations of others, the lack of looking a certain way, the lack of just one more hug from a deceased loved one or the lack of a loving relationship with Jesus. The truth is, no matter what form of poverty one experiences, it is ugly and it hurts.

As we all know, working with persons living in poverty calls us to assist in helping to meet their basic needs for food, shelter, education, healthcare and prayer support. We at Recycled Lives also believe that working with the poor requires us to work in faithful and humble dependence upon God's will to care for these physical needs while we also introduce solutions for any spiritual and emotional poverty we encounter. He calls us to tell others of the reconciling power of a genuine relationship with Jesus. He is the source to ease our suffering and comfort us when we are drowning in that ocean of lacking with His never ending and perfect love.

Jesus provides us with many tools and opportunities to show people Him....and to ease their poverty. Often times this is through blessing us with sufficiency so that we have extra to care for the need that someone else has. The most important tool He gives us as a believer is the desire be intentional about choosing to delight in and honor Him by seeking ways to live generously in our words, thoughts, actions and material blessings. He blesses us with all sorts of abundance and our proper response should be that of generosity and thankfulness in caring for those suffering from poverty.

*Please take some time to pray about your response to poverty and to read & meditate on 2 Corinthians Chapter 8*



Photo Credit: #madisonspain

## *2 Corinthians 8:14*

*<sup>14</sup> At the present time  
your plenty will supply  
what they need, so that  
in turn their plenty will  
supply what you need.  
The goal is equality.*



Photo Credit: Caroline Mueller



*Sweet!*

## *Sweet on Guatemala!*

**A sweet evening supporting a sweeter cause!**

**Saturday, February 13<sup>th</sup>**

**6:00 – 8:00 PM**

*\*Program Starts at 6:30 PM*

**First Baptist Church, 304 Main St S, Cambridge, MN 55008**

**Please come join us for this 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Event!**

**Featuring: Our year in review, Prayer & Praise, Testimonies,  
Silent Auction and, of course, Dessert!**

## **¡FELIZ AÑO NUEVO! ~ HAPPY NEW YEAR!**

As 2015 draws to a close, I can't help but look back at the wonderful things that God has done at Recycled Lives and be in awe. This year brought about continued growth in reaching more persons in need. We had many opportunities to stretch our faithful dependence upon our Father God as we trusted Him for donor support to sustain our monthly food distribution, build houses, lead a mission team, install stoves and begin a school supply and chicken coop program. We also took a leap of faith and decided to partner with another nonprofit organization based out of Spain, Quesada Solidaria, which works with medical groups in Guatemala to start the construction of a clinic and activity center in the San Gabriel community where we have been ministering for the past 3 years. It is an answer to many years of prayer that we have found an established partner organization in Guatemala that allows us to utilize its trusted staff to carry out some of the work while we are not there. I can't even begin to tell you how much joy it brings me to feel things are up and operating smoothly as we celebrated our first official year of being an established nonprofit organization in September.

It excites me to finally feel that we are in a place that we can begin to grow our support base and outreach programs to help even more people living in poverty. I hope that you too are feeling a great sense of joy in seeing the work being carried out and knowing you helped make it happen through your financial and prayer support. No prayer is whispered too quietly for God to hear and no contribution large or small goes unnoticed! We stretch each gift as much as possible to help this beautiful community receive the help God desires for them to have. We are thankful for a great year, and excited about what this new year has in store for Recycled Lives! If you would like me to come speak at your church or a small group gathering I would welcome the opportunity. We pray that many homes are built, the clinic and activity center is completed and most importantly that many more lives are touched with the loving and saving relationship with Christ Jesus. We could do none of this without our loving Father God and your ongoing and generous support.

May you have a blessed New Year!



Shawn Johnson, Founder & Executive Director