

# Recycled Lives News



## THANK YOU FOR MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN 2017!

This past October marked the one year anniversary of our move to full time ministry in Guatemala. Brad and I cannot do this without God's blessing and the financial & prayer support from the Body of Christ. We praise God with every victorious step forward in the ministry of caring for and loving others. We also do our best to praise God in the struggles, as we know we can use these difficult experiences as lessons to help increase our dependence upon Him and trust faithfully that our Father God's plans and timing is always perfect.

I wish to thank each individual that sacrificially gives of their finances in order to support the work Brad & I are called to do here in Guatemala. I feel blessed each day to use my heart and skills to work for Recycled Lives and be here giving of my heart to those that are suffering. I wish I could sufficiently share each one of the amazing, the heartbreaking and the joyous stories surrounding each of the amazing people we have been blessed to connect with and love on. Every day we witness firsthand the work God is doing in them (and us) through the little & big things we are blessed and called to do. God knows all of these stories and cares about each one of them.

We have learned so much and still have a lot more to learn about how things work in Guatemala and the San Gabriel community so we can continue to advocate for the right kind of help. We have succeeded in small ways to provide unique ways to empower the local persons to help their own community and church bodies. I have managed to learn enough Spanish to carry out many activities without the assistance of a translator as well as carry out basic conversations with individuals when in a familiar context. Brad and I will prayerfully continue to keep our hearts and minds open to areas of ministry that the Holy Spirit is leading us into.

On our website you can find my detailed report which shares 2017's ministry accomplishments. As you read it, I hope that you know your role is just as important as our role in Guatemala. We are walking this journey together- all for God's glory! We could do none of this without God and your generous response to help. I thank each and every one of you that joined in this vision and journey in some way. In Christ's love: Shawn Johnson, Missionary & Executive Director

Digital readers: [CLICK HERE](#) to read the Executive Director's full annual report.

## Recycled Lives Board of Directors

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*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come. The old has gone, the new is here! 2 Corinthians 5:17 [NIU]*

**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.

## THE CHRISTMAS AFTER PARTY

We met them as we were packing up to leave for the day and sweeping up the paper scraps and glitter off the floor from the 4 amazing craft stations that taught about the birth of Jesus. A very thin mother arrived with 5 kids in tow, each bearing streams of sweat that created streaks on their dirt stained foreheads and temples. They were out of breath from going as fast as Alondra (age 7), Ever (age 6) & Lester (age 10) giving Kevin (age 4) a piggy back ride could speed walk the 1 ½ mile trek on the rocky dirt road to the church. Mom, Marisol, carried & nursed her sleepy 5 month old, Marian. The look on Marisol's and her children's faces when our "bouncer" at the door informed them the activity was over crushed my heart more than the usual. In general, we have to stay firm with the boundaries we give for times of events, ages allowed to participate or chaos can quickly ensue and because we would never be able to pack up and go... the streams of people just keep coming. Turning people away is my least favorite thing about activities but I will admit, it doesn't hurt as bad when on occasion we are met with words of frustration, complaining and sometimes excessive rudeness. But Marisol's response was nothing less than complete grace, kindness and understanding. As she turned back for the long walk home, she began to explain to the kids she was so sorry they missed the party. (We later found out it was because she was working at the dump, couldn't get back home to retrieve the kids in enough time to walk the long trek to get to the party.) There are times where bending the plans or rules to prevent someone from breaking is necessary. God opens the flood gates to helping serve those most in need when we take the time to listen to His voice and put our own plans and agenda aside. God told me in that moment... "let them in, give them their own little party and show them My amazing love and compassion, tell them about the gift of Jesus." All of the volunteers were tired and looking forward to getting home, taking showers and having a really late lunch. When I asked who was willing to stay and help do some crafts and dig the homemade Christmas cookies and shoes back out of the boxes in order to serve our late guests, every one of them jumped into action in loving on and serving this family. Sophie scooped up baby Marian so mom could enjoy a snack and rest her weary arms and body, Marleni searched for the right size shoes for each child and the Castellanos girls each pulled out their lessons and crafts to teach & create. Even sweaty & tired Santa, whom had every reason to grumble and wanted to get out of his hot costume with a couch cushion for his belly as fast as possible, took the time to hear each of the Sanchez children's special requests.

The following week we made a social visit to this family. Their story is, unfortunately much the same as too many of the families in this community. They have some very desperate and urgent needs and no resources to tend to them. The children are frequently ill because of poor nutrition, dirt floors, lack of beds and lack of an area to cook. We immediately began the process to start getting them the help they need. We found donors for bunk beds, household supplies for cooking, eating and cleaning and a wood burning cook stove. They are presently squatting on a small piece of land with the landlord's permission in exchange for caretaking for his large piece of land by keeping the weeds cut down & keeping others from dumping trash or moving onto the land without permission. They have a good relationship with the landowner because they are a responsible, good and loving family that were hit with some very hard times causing them to become homeless. We encouraged the father, Migel, to speak with the landowner about a lease agreement so a home could possibly be constructed. Praise be to God, the landowner told the family he doesn't need the piece of land and said "I can't take the land with me when I die". So he is going to give this piece of land to the Sanchez family! This is a rare and precious gift that will now give this family the hope that a more permanent & safe home can be constructed.



*Recycled Lives is a registered 501(C)(3) nonprofit organization. Contributions are tax deductible and can be made by check or online. **Make a difference every month:** Monthly giving can be set up through our website or through your bank's autopay service.*

Digital readers: Please [CLICK HERE](#) to watch this family's story and see how supporting Recycled Lives makes an amazing difference for families in Guatemala. We need your help to meet the basic needs of the Sanchez family & many others.

*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.*