

Recycled Lives News

IN THE BEGINNING...

I have been serving in Guatemala for 10 years, leading 1 or 2 mission teams per year. Though the work was fulfilling, there was always a void in my heart as I wondered if a lasting impact outside of a better home for a family was really happening. I felt there needed to be connections and relationships in order to address the emotional and spiritual poverty I was witnessing. In 2011 God gave me the idea that if the mission teams I led constructed all future homes in the same general area, it would be easier to stay connected on return visits. This sounded like a simple solution to providing ongoing care and address these deeper needs. What I didn't realize was that I was planning too small...God had a bigger plan. At this same time, I kept having dreams about people working on trash dumps in Guatemala. I figured this was God's way of telling me to start planning a simple service project to distribute the clothing, shoes and hygiene kit donations that teams brought at a dump. Yet, another project God would soon reveal to me that I was planning too small.

In May of 2012, I found myself standing at the base of a massive garbage pile, witnessing a nightmarish scene. Women with infants strapped on their backs digging through trash in an environment laden with filth and toxic smoke. Children, barefoot and filthy, were playing amongst medical refuse, broken glass and mud holes where pigs were wallowing amongst the rotting refuse. Vultures & flies swarmed in the air. Teens were fighting to climb into garbage trucks entering the dump in order to be the first to get to the trash even before it was dumped out. Shacks comprised completely of discarded items were on top of the trash heap. This wasn't a place where people just came to work for the day and went home. It was a dangerous, filthy place where people lived and were hanging onto survival, looking for food amongst the trash. I was frightened when I realized that God was showing me the community where we were supposed to be carrying out the work of mission teams & it wasn't going to be a simple project.

I returned home & immediately began the work to found Recycled Lives. Brad & I implemented the start of a food distribution & in June of 2013 Recycled Lives formally became a nonprofit. We began constructing homes & carrying out ministry in this community as much as our time and mission team schedule allowed. In September of 2016, Brad & I "pulled up stakes" and moved away from our life as we knew it... to know, love and become more like Jesus by following Him where God was telling us to go. We are asking you, our brothers and sisters in Christ, to please pray for us. May you feel the blessings and joy that we do as we witness & share what can be done through God's grace in using "everyday people" like you and me to help decrease the suffering of persons living in physical, spiritual and emotional poverty throughout the world.

Shawn Johnson, Missionary & Founder of Recycled Lives



Recycled Lives Board of Directors

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Founder, Executive Director, Missionary

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Save the date!
Friday February 9th 2018

**Annual Sweet on
Guatemala Event!**

First Baptist Church, Cambridge
Life Act 2 Center

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

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.

Your Prayers Change Lives

- Praise God the Johnson's have survived their first year living in Guatemala! Praising God for the generosity and support of brothers and sisters in Christ here in the USA and the people God has blessed the Johnsons with in Guatemala to help comfort when lonely, help figure out life in a foreign country and different culture and have partnered in the ministry being carried out in San Gabriel Guatemala!
- Pray every person in the San Gabriel community is moved to begin or deepen their relationship with God. That those who do not know Jesus as their Savior, are reached in their own, God-designed way.
- Pray the future mission team members that God is calling to serve in Guatemala will step out in faith to serve.
- Pray for provision for the immense needs of the families receiving care from our programs and the many that are "in wait" of help. Pray that they truly feel and know the love of Father God as we serve them.
- Pray for God's blessing in provision to carry out the following programs:
 - Home Construction program
 - Bunk Bed program
 - Educational Assistance Program
 - Missionary Support
 - Food Distribution Program
 - Family Care Program
- Pray for Brad & Shawn Johnson, our missionaries in Guatemala and the Recycled Lives' board of directors and committee members. Please pray that God continue to be in the center of all we do.

For where two or more gather in my name, there I am with them. Matthew 18:20



The Man Behind the Scenes

Many of you may wonder what Brad does since Shawn is the "mouth" of Recycled Lives (meant in the kindest of ways) and the apparent force that drives the ministry. If you know Brad, he is a man of very few words and a bit shy. Don't let that fool you! He is the loyal partner and backbone to Shawn & the ministry of Recycled Lives. Behind this strong woman is a stronger man.

We want to share with you a bit about one of Brad's many skills. Carpentry! Brad has always been handy with wood, home remodeling projects and is a fix-it guy. He had a garage of tools to make every job easier and time efficient. A big sacrifice for him has been to leave many of those tools behind. Over the past few months he has explored how to make things with the limitation of not having the luxury of the power tools that make cutting & sanding easier and less time intensive. Welcome to Guatemala! Where one must learn that time is not money, life is slower paced and accomplishing tasks that should be simple and quick, are not. This has been a good experience for Brad to practice his patience and appreciation for the more basic & "old school" ways of creating & doing things.

He has succeeded in designing and constructing sturdy bunk beds that unstack for easier transport & future use/growth with the kids they are given to. He has also designed and created custom closets with shelving & drawers for a friend's home in Guatemala, the money he earned for this "hired job" helped make a payment on the mission home. Seeing the excitement on children's faces when they receive a bunk bed gives him an additional sense of purpose while serving in Guatemala. The work is light enough and allows him to take the breaks he needs for his bad back.

We are excited to see God use Brad's talent and skills in making bunk beds for kids as well tables for families to sit together for meals and game nights. We recently surveyed our 135 families that are on our food distribution list and at least 50 requested help with beds and various furniture items (tables, dressers). Now we have a cost effective and practical way to address those needs as we receive sponsors for the materials for the construction of these life changing items. Eventually, he may be able to justify the purchase of a table & miter box saws, wood clamps & router when the demand for furniture outweighs the time he has available. For now, his mouthy (um, we mean lovely wife helper), will help hold boards for him as he saws wood by hand.



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.