

Recycled Lives News



A few of the Recycled Lives' board members made a visit to the clinic & activity center construction site. March 2016, San Gabriel community, Guatemala.

Recycled Lives Board of Directors

Shawn Johnson

Founder & Executive Director

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Recycled Lives

At a Glance: Events, Activities and Ways to Help

- **Mission Teams & Family Vacations with a purpose~** Contact us now for plans and pricing if you are interested in being a part of or organizing your own life changing mission team or want to learn more about taking a mission vacation to Guatemala! **Reserve your travel dates for 2017 now!**
- **Support our Missionary Couple Brad & Shawn Johnson**
Big News inside! See article on page 2 & pledge card for details on how to help support our ongoing ministry work.
- **Save the Date** for the **Family Fun Fest BBQ Fundraiser!**
You won't want to miss this sure-to-be-amazing event! Saturday August 27th 2016-, 12-3pm, Cambridge. More details to come soon!
- **Malmborg's Spring Plant Fundraiser-** Just in time for Mother's Day! Use the enclosed flier at the Blaine or Roger's location to support Recycled Lives with your purchase. May 1- 7, 2016.

God moves mountains (and people) 2

By Shawn Johnson

Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken
Ecclesiastes 4:12



Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding
Proverbs 3:5

Each time I come back from Guatemala, I tend to purge the closets and cupboards of "unneeded" items and experience a greater desire to "live simply so that others may simply live". As many of you know, I dislike shopping of any sort because it involves spending money and wasting time trying to decide if I really NEED the item. In general I try to keep items to a minimum and use them for a long time until they wear out, no longer work or do not fit (or smell really bad in the case of footwear). This time as I begin the purging process, assessing all items as being essential or not has taken on a whole new perspective. The purge will have to take on the process of: Step 1. it must go, however if the item is absolutely necessary, move to; Step 2: Is it light and will it fit in a suitcase? If no, proceed back to Step 1. Do you see where I am going with this?

For a few years Brad & I have been discussing, praying and mulling over the call to spend extended periods of time ministering in Guatemala. We have been increasing our time & frequency in Guatemala to try meeting the call & vision we have had placed in our hearts. We have been able to make this travel/ministry set up work as best we can, however over the last year it has become clear to us that God is calling us to do more than can be accomplished in a 4 or 6 week trip a few times a year. He is also calling us to be ministering more together as a couple through Recycled Lives.

This past trip, as we prepared to serve, we went with the specific plan to pray and listen for God's clear will on what to do with our future and ministry together. We began the trip together with friends and team members, Kelly and Dave Wichman, by attending a couple's intercessional prayer retreat to assist us in prayerfully seeking God's will and listening for His voice among the, at times, deafening earthly pulls on our hearts. Following this retreat we spent the next 4 weeks continuing to pray and seeking God's guidance (and I admit I also spent a bit of that time wrestling with God and Brad over what we were hearing). Brad and I came to the decision the last week of our time in Guatemala that we should take a look at a few pieces of property that would perhaps fit the vision we were given for living & ministering in Guatemala. After just a few houses we walked into what we believe will be our new home (away from home). A complete sense of peace was felt and the Holy Spirit was clearly there.

With every step of the process, from talking to the owner about financing us, our financial limitations, our need to wait to buy until returning at a later time, etc....nothing was a problem! The owner even began to cry when we explained to her afterward that our purpose for the home would be for serving God and His glory. She obviously has been praying not just to simply sell her home that she built with love but that it would be sold to someone that would love it just the same and use it to serve a beautiful purpose. The home will allow us the ability to live simplistically while also allowing the space and set up necessary to host small mission teams and families. We will have the ability to minister in a variety of different ways outside of guests/teams including housing/hosting families on vacations with a mission, prayer groups, small group bible studies and perhaps even students. We are excited for the possibilities to serve God with this home!

Brad and I will be spending the next few months preparing for this big transition by selling possessions & fundraising to help acquire the funds needed to complete the purchase & furnish the home for our first mission team that is scheduled to arrive less than 3 weeks after we purchase it this October! We are asking that you would please continue to lift us up in prayer in all the needs that come with taking this step of faith. We are laying it all at God's feet and trusting Him no matter what (easier said than done of course!). Please contact us if God lays it on your heart to assist us in any certain way. As always, it is wonderful to hear your words of encouragement, prayers and have your consideration in committing to support us as we step out onto the water in faith.

If you are interested in discussing travel to Guatemala for mission or a vacation with a purpose, please let us know, we are already scheduling for 2017! We are praising God for answering your prayers for us over the past few years! We thank you and are so very blessed for all of your love and support.

By: Dave Wichman, March 2016 Mission Team Member



Last year had some tough moments for me. My Mom died in May and my brother committed suicide in July. I will explain why I am telling you this later.

The home we built this year was for a single mother, Miriam, and her 3 young children. I am going to focus my story on her son named Jose. He is seven years old but when he was five he found his father in their house after he killed himself.

Right away when you meet Jose your heart goes out towards him. He wants love and attention. He loved being around our team. One day when it started raining we had to put the tools away in the shelter they were living in. We found him sleeping on a scrap of carpet padding on the dirt floor of his house. It broke our hearts.

By the end of that week, he was living in a solidly constructed, clean, dry & bigger new home. When we set up his bunk bed, for the first time in his life, he was off the floor. He now gets to experience sleeping comfortably with a new comforter and pillow. Our hearts melted seeing his smile and experiencing his pure joy and excitement over the gift.

Now back to what I started this story with. One day while building, after carrying cement blocks up a hill. I was exhausted and feeling sorry for myself because I was so sore, so I plopped myself down on a cooler and sat there to rest. That is when it happened. Little Jose sat next to me on that cooler and put his arm around me. Well I did the same back to him. Even though I do not speak Spanish and he does not speak English, God was there and we were both healing. I love this boy and I know God picked this family, not just for them but also for me.

A Lot Can Happen !

By: Kelly Wichman, March 2016 Mission Team Member

The last time I was in San Gabriel was about 18 months ago. I am truly amazed to see how much God is at work here. I am in awe as we walk through the community and I see six new homes that have been built for families since the last time I was here. I walk through the clinic under construction that will be for the community and it seems surreal! So much continues to happen even without teams here! As we pull up to the church where the food distribution will take place, there is a long line of people waiting patiently in the sun for their monthly food package. Within a few moments all the food from the back of the truck is unloaded and set up. There are smiles, hugs, excitement to see familiar faces distributing the food this month as our team prepares to hand out the packages. Everyone listens to a message from Pastor Max and greetings from Shawn in Spanish. I am so proud of her! The distribution gets under way. My job is to pass out the beans. All the families that are on the list go through the line. At the end there was about 15 people standing around hoping we have extras to pass out. We had 11 extra packages so unfortunately we did not have enough extra. Numbers are drawn and the extra food is given out. We do praise God that as we put out a request for someone to sponsor the addition of 10 more families to the list, someone responded with a gift to do so! It is amazing to also think that the food distribution program started with 60 families, quickly grew in support to 100, then 120 now, 130 families in San Gabriel are benefiting from this program every single month! God is good!



The Reason for celebrating- He is Risen!



Semana Santa, Holy week, in Guatemala is certainly quite an experience. It's a time when people from all walks of life meld together in an ocean of people to celebrate something. We learned over the course of the week, that the "something" was not always to celebrate Our Savior Jesus. We witnessed several days of holy processions where an intricate float the size of a large boat is carried on the shoulders of up to 100 robed men throughout the city streets as they trample over the intricately created alfombras (carpets) of flowers, pine needles, fruits, vegetables and random other "offerings" that took up to 8 hours to create only to be trampled in 30 seconds. We saw people wrestle and fight for the trampled offerings from the alfombras that are left behind the procession. We were amazed at the sea of trash left on the street behind the processions. We were amazed at the sales creativity of mobile tiendas (stores) carried on the shoulders of people, selling balloons, popcorn, pizza, bubble guns, hats, sunglasses, cellphone cases, candy, you name it, it's for sale. It is like the Minnesota State fair x3 with people. The confusing part for me was the naïve idea that everyone was going to see the procession for the same reason as me. To worship and celebrate the life, death and resurrection of Jesus.

My breaking point one day was standing (anchoring myself to a light pole to avoid being swept away by the people) and taking in the beauty of the face of Jesus on the float that was passing by. I was worshipping Him and emotionally being taken to a place in my heart and mind where I was seeing myself on that float in character of the little, fuzzy, helpless sheep that was staring up at Jesus with sad eyes. Looking up at my Savior, my hope, praising and thanking Him for carrying that cross, my cross, for me. Fully knowing that cross was heavily laden with each and every one of my sins. My moment of worship and wonder was brought to an immediate halt by another cross stopping right in front of me, blocking my view of Jesus. It was a pvc pipe cross with bags of cotton candy dangling from it. A cotton candy vender decided to stop right in front of me blocking my view of Jesus while hollering the current deal he was offering on his product. I felt so much sadness sweep over me, all at the same time feeling anger which was quickly followed by seeing a vision of Jesus coming down from that float and tossing over all the "tables" selling things in His temple. The need for praying for people, for us, for His sheep amongst the religious celebrations was pierced heavily into my heart. For both the sheep that are following the Shepherd and those that are astray. It was a powerful experience that opened my eyes wide over the course the week the spiritual battle going down all around us. Everywhere. At home, in another country and even in the celebrations and traditions we perform in the idea it is celebrating Jesus. I began to consider my own traditions and ways of celebrating. What the heck? What exactly is the reason for Easter eggs? Wow, how easy it is for us as sheep to be led astray and away from worshipping and following Jesus.

As we shared some "American" Easter traditions as well as participated in (and led) a few Guatemalan traditions with our Guatemalan kiddos and friends, we made sure that we discussed the ways we can use that activity to praise Jesus and glorify God. Ways to keep our eyes and hearts on Jesus. For example, each time we used eggs for an activity (candy filled eggs or decorating hard boiled eggs) we taught the concept that eggs represent new life. We talked about the new lives offered to us through a saving relationship available through Christ's sacrifice. We talked about the empty egg being a symbol of the empty tomb. As we created our own alfombra we encouraged the kids to say thank you to Jesus for something they were thankful for as they placed each of their flowers in the carpet.

We are truly thankful to God for the opportunities He gave us over our time in Guatemala to share our faith and love. We pray that you too, are encouraged by this writing. We also pray that perhaps next Easter, God is calling a handful of you to join us in this experience in Guatemala.

In Christ's love, Brad & Shawn Johnson



And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love. 1 Corinthians 13:13

We are praying that the information & stories in this newsletter have touched your heart in some way to reach out to others in your family, community and world that are suffering from poverty. Poverty not only takes the shape of not having our basic needs being met (food, water, shelter) but also in the form of the poverty one may suffer having not experienced a saving relationship with Christ which often times starts with the simple gift of sharing His love.

Thanks for your consideration in supporting the ministries & mission work of Recycled Lives through prayer and financial gifts. We are committed to serving and following Jesus and being good stewards of the financial & material resources entrusted to us in order to help the poor and tell them about Jesus. Your financial gift supports the programs we operate to help the poor with meeting the basic human needs of food, shelter & love. Your donation also allows missionaries to share Christ's truth & love directly with the poor.

Please feel free to call me with any questions about what Recycled Lives is doing or to learn more about ways to become involved. We depend upon your prayers, words of encouragement and financial support. Giving can be done online at our website with a few easy steps or by check made out to "Recycled Lives" mailed to our PO Box. I am also happy to help over the phone with processing a donation via credit card or to set up an automatic monthly giving plan via credit card if you would like. Your gift is tax-deductible and year-end giving statements are provided in January. No matter what amount you may joyfully decide to give, please know that with it you are glorifying God & blessing others.

Serving & trusting in God's abundance,



Shawn Johnson
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Beginning in November 2016, we will begin hosting mission teams, family mission vacations and individuals at our new home base in Guatemala! If you are interested in personalized, meaningful, life-changing travel & planning services, please contact us to discuss dates and pricing.

Brad & Shawn Johnson
Recycled Lives' Mission Team Leaders

