

# Light of Esperanza

## 2014 ANNUAL REPORT

### **PROGRAMMING INFORMATION:**

In 2014, Light of Esperanza greatly expanded its influence in working with impoverished women and children in rural Honduras. Light of Esperanza is now working with seven different villages in the rural zone of the State of Copan, Honduras. These villages, all of which have extreme levels of poverty, are now able to access the resources and activities provided by Light of Esperanza. The villages that Light of Esperanza is now working with include: El Bosque, Joyas Galanas, Limon, Agua Buena, Vega Redonda, Candelaria, and Delicias.

Light of Esperanza's three main program areas – women's and children's health, education, and self-sufficient cooperative businesses – were all enhanced by new initiatives and exciting partnerships with individuals and organizations from both Honduras and the United States.

### **WOMEN'S AND CHILDREN'S HEALTH CARE:**

Light of Esperanza continued its commitment to providing rural youth in Honduras with access to dental care, delivering hundreds of dollars worth of dental supplies – toothbrushes, dental floss, and toothpaste – in 2014. For the majority of the youth in rural Honduras, this is their only opportunity to receive dental supplies. Light of Esperanza volunteers provided classes to the youth who received this donation on proper use and dental care.

In 2013, Light of Esperanza began a partnership with the San Francisco-based non-profit organization, Vitamin Angels. In addition to supporting Light of Esperanza's goal to increase access to the crucial vitamins that children and pregnant women are lacking in rural Honduras, in 2014, representatives from Light of Esperanza's Honduran Board received the opportunity to attend a special training provided by Vitamin Angels in La Ceiba, Honduras. This training offered Light of Esperanza volunteers, Danilo Madrid Lara and Maria Luisa Saavedra, a better understanding in the administration of Vitamin A supplements to youth.

During this past year, Light of Esperanza continued the implementation of its "Pride in My Village" initiative. Light of Esperanza organized the community in the village of Vega Redonda in an effort to clean up the garbage littered throughout the village and to take it to the nearest garbage dump. Every three months, Light of Esperanza coordinates these garbage cleanups. Thanks to a special sponsorship of this project, Light of Esperanza will be able to continue this initiative into the 2015 year, increasing the health and pride of the community members in Vega Redonda.

### **EDUCATION PROGRAMS**

#### **SCHOOL SUPPLIES**

As with the past three years, Light of Esperanza once again delivered over \$500 of donated school supplies to the youth in the village schools of rural Copan, Honduras. These supplies included notebooks, pens, pencils, crayons, calculators, and rulers. For most of the youth, this is their only opportunity to acquire school supplies. The youth are excited to learn, but lack the tools by which to do so. Light of Esperanza's school supply drive in the United States provides them with the tools to accomplish their academic goals.

## **COMPUTER CENTERS**

Light of Esperanza sponsored the establishment of four new computer centers in 2014. These computers centers were created in the villages of Limon, El Bosque, Joyas Galanas and Agua Buena. These new centers, in addition to the initial one created by Light of Esperanza in Vega Redonda in 2013, offer the youth of these villages their first opportunity to learn about computers, access basic computation comprehension classes, and begin the exciting exploration of the world of technology. Light of Esperanza was delighted to see that the computer center in Vega Redonda is now staffed with a local municipality-sponsored staff that is regularly teaching computation classes to the students from the village school.

## **SCHOLARSHIPS**

In order to address the lack of educational opportunities that are available for promising youth after the sixth grade (when free public education terminates in Honduras), Light of Esperanza has its academic scholarship program. In 2013, two students began studying at the neighboring middle school in Dulce Nombre, sponsored by a grant from the New York-based foundation, Jewish Helping Hands. With additional funding from other sources, Light of Esperanza was able to offer two other students in 2014 the chance to study. Light of Esperanza's four scholarship youth, Delmer, Melvin, Yadira, and Angelica, all demonstrated their immense potential for success, passing all of their classes this past year, and preparing for their third, and final year, of middle school in 2015.

Light of Esperanza is excited to announce that three new students will be joining our scholarship group in 2015. There will now be a total of seven youth that will be able to continue their education and have a promising future full of opportunities thanks to Light of Esperanza's Educational Scholarship Program.

## **GIRL'S SOCCER LEAGUE**

Light of Esperanza continued to expand its dedication to providing girls with the opportunity to play soccer in Honduras. Whereas previously, this very popular activity was only accessible by boys in the rural area where Light of Esperanza works, since 2013, Light of Esperanza has brought soccer shoes, uniforms, balls, and other necessary equipment, forming a special soccer league so that girls can have equal participation. Light of Esperanza now has three sponsored girls soccer teams in the villages of Vega Redonda, Dolores, and Limon, and hopes to continue expanding its league in the year to come. Watching the community cheer on their girls at Light of Esperanza's annual soccer tournament, filling them with a sense of pride and confidence, explains why this project is so important for the development of their self-esteem and their equality in the villages they live in.

## **CELEBRATION OF THE YOUTH**

For the fourth year, Light of Esperanza has provided the youth from the villages it works with in rural Honduras with a day full of fun and celebration through its annual "Celebration of Youth" party. Light of Esperanza volunteers brought piñatas full of sweets, cake, and cola to the youth of the villages of El Bosque, Joyas Galanas, Candelaria, Delicias, Vega Redonda, Limon and Agua Buena. Volunteers also handed out hundreds of toys to the youth. For most of the youth in these villages, this was their first time ever receiving a new gift.

## **COOPERATIVE BUSINESSES**

Light of Esperanza's Youth Corn Cooperative had a very successful year in 2014. The youth have progressed considerably in their understanding of successful harvesting techniques, as well as in their ability to manage their business. Each of the three harvests in the past year and a half have demonstrated an increased yield and earnings for the cooperative. Much of this success is due to an enhanced planting strategy. This success can also be attributed to a shift from producing corn for food products, such as tortillas, to corn that is consumed as corn-on-the-cob. This new production method allows for a faster harvest, and, with favorable market prices, an increase in profit. This shift in production method was a decision suggested by the members of the cooperative, demonstrating both their initiative and their growth in understanding on how to manage their business. As of the end of 2014, the cooperative is right on target for their financial goal of \$3000 in savings by the end of the third year of this project (2015). This goal will not only have doubled the initial investment of \$1500 in the project, giving each participant \$600 to begin a small private enterprise, but will also result in having produced five highly trained youth with three years of experience in managing their own business through the support and counsel provided by Light of Esperanza. The hard work and dedication of these young men have given Light of Esperanza, their village, and their families an inspirational example of hope, perseverance, and success.

## **VOLUNTEERS**

Light of Esperanza continues to be 100% volunteer organized and operated in the United States and in Honduras. Volunteers take on the responsibility of managing both Boards, the fundraising activities, the implementation and supervision of projects, and all other aspects of the organization. In 2014, Light of Esperanza Directors, Angela Madrid Lara and Shmuel Rubinstein traveled to Honduras to manage ongoing projects, as well as to plan for the coming year.

## **REGISTERING LIGHT OF ESPERANZA AS A NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION IN HONDURAS**

Light of Esperanza has continued to work with the Honduran government on its application for registering as a non-profit organization in Honduras. This goal will allow Light of Esperanza greater access to international support in its effort to work with the impoverished women and children in rural Honduras. It is expected that Light of Esperanza will be granted its status as a non-profit organization in 2015.

## **FINANCIAL INFORMATION FOR 2014:**

In total, Light of Esperanza raised \$7,859 in revenue for the 2014 fiscal year.

Light of Esperanza's total expenses for the 2014 fiscal year were \$8,006.

Of the total expenses in 2014, **88% was spent on projects** (\$7,007), 8% on fundraising (\$682), and 4% was spent on administration (\$317).

Additionally, Light of Esperanza received a contribution from Angela Madrid Lara and Shmuel Rubinstein of \$13,041 in operational costs during the 2014 fiscal year.