

## **LIGHT OF ESPERANZA 2020 ANNUAL REPORT**

### **PROGRAM SUMMARY**

2020 was a very challenging year for Light of Esperanza. We began the year with lots of ambitious goals. The Light of Esperanza U.S. Board of Directors, alongside the Honduran Board of Directors, decided that the primary program goal for the upcoming years of operation would shift towards a focus on a Bamboo Initiative in the State of Copan. However, after a careful and realistic analysis, it was decided that this goal should be postponed until the Coronavirus crisis had been contained. Additionally, Light of Esperanza had hoped to complete its registration as a non-profit organization in Honduras. Unfortunately, due to the frequent closings of the Honduran government offices, and the lack of mobility for Light of Esperanza volunteers due to the Coronavirus restrictions that extended for the duration of the 2020 year, this effort, likewise, was paused until further notice.

The Coronavirus crisis had devastating effects on the Honduran population, especially on those most vulnerable in the rural areas. Additionally, the two hurricanes this past year, and the subsequent flooding that followed, caused massive destruction in the areas in which Light of Esperanza works. All our projects were closed down permanently. The families and schools that Light of Esperanza had partnered with chose to sell their pigs and other resources from their businesses out of a necessity of basic survival for their families during this crisis.

While Light of Esperanza was devastated by the impact that the loss of life, income, and progress had on many in Honduras during the 2020 year, we are committed to starting afresh in 2021, planting the seeds to rebuild the efforts that we had previously made, and to continue to dedicate our energies to partner with the Honduran women and children in the villages of El Bosque, Joyas Galanas, Limon, Agua Buena, Vega Redonda, Candelaria, Delicias, Balsamo, Los Naranjos, and Concepcion.

As with previous years, Light of Esperanza continues to operate both in Honduras and in the U.S. as a 100% volunteer run and organized non-profit organization.

### **EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS**

Light of Esperanza sponsored four students this past year to receive a scholarship to continue their studies in school. Through Light of Esperanza's Scholarship program, youth receive a scholarship that provides them with all of the necessary supplies and resources to support their educational goals. This includes tuition, uniforms, books, backpacks, school supplies, and transportation from their village to the school throughout the year.

In 2020, the students Light of Esperanza sponsored were Ela Odili, Yecson Daniel, Emerita, and Mileina. Emerita was able to complete her final year of high school, celebrating her graduation this past year.

### **LIGHT OF ESPERANZA'S BAMBOO INITIATIVE**

In early 2020, Light of Esperanza's Board of Directors in the U.S. and in Honduras met to create a strategic five-year plan. The primary result of this conference was a decision to shift the majority of Light of Esperanza's efforts towards a major bamboo initiative.

The goal of this bamboo initiative is to create the infrastructure to provide lucrative alternatives to the current local economies for many of the women and children of the rural villages our organization works with. In addition to being a major environmentally friendly effort, combating climate change and disastrous landslides, this bamboo initiative has the potential to revolutionize the way people live and work in the mountains of Copan.

Light of Esperanza volunteers diligently engaged in extensive research during the early part of 2020 to begin to lay the foundation for this initiative. Volunteers in Honduras contacted local cultivators of bamboo, learning about the different types of species, as well as receiving tutorials in growing techniques. Volunteers in the U.S. met virtually with a variety of bamboo experts in Nicaragua, Mexico, and in the United States, learning about the economy of bamboo, as well as strategies and suggestions on how to begin this project.

A temporary budget and outline for a plan of action was drafted for 2020. It was decided that Light of Esperanza would plant two to three acres of bamboo that year, and for each subsequent year, plant another one or two acres. As the bamboo crop requires approximately three years to mature, the goal was to have between five and seven acres of bamboo growing within the five-year timeframe. Potential areas for constructing a factory and processing plant for the bamboo had also been identified.

Although the 2020 crisis caused these plans to immediately halt, Light of Esperanza continues to evaluate the potential to begin this initiative as soon as it is safe and possible to do so.

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

While Light of Esperanza is a registered 501(c)3 non-profit organization in the United States, Light of Esperanza continues to patiently wait for the Honduran government to progress in the application for registering the organization as a non-profit based in Honduras.

In early 2020, Light of Esperanza met with a number of lawyers in Honduras to explore how to expedite the process. Plans were established to fulfill the registration of Light of Esperanza in 2020. However, due to the Coronavirus crisis, these efforts have been paused until the country has returned back to normal.

### **VOLUNTEERS**

Light of Esperanza continues to operate both in the United States and in Honduras 100% volunteer-based. Volunteers are in charge of managing both Board of Directors – in the U.S.

and in Honduras, the fundraising activities, the administration, and in implementing, supervising, and advising all projects.

**FINANCIAL INFORMATION FOR 2020**

In total, Light of Esperanza raised \$1,477 in revenue for the 2020 fiscal year. Light of Esperanza's total expenses for the 2020 fiscal year were \$1,390. Additionally, Light of Esperanza received an in-kind financial contribution from Directors Angela Madrid Lara and Shmuel Rubinstein for operational costs during the 2020 fiscal year.