

Hello friends!

I can't even count the number of times I've put off writing another update - not because I don't want to, just because I don't even know where to start most of the time. It's hard to gather my thoughts into one, semi-short, cohesive update when sometimes just one day is filled with enough excitement or craziness...or drama, haha, to fill up many pages. I guess it's better than not having any news, but sometimes a few "boring" weeks would actually be QUITE nice. ☺

Anyways, I'm just going to have to choose two main stories to put in here otherwise I'm never going to get an update sent off, so here goes...it's a mix of the good and the bad and the beautiful and the ugly but mostly I hope you see the good GOODNESS of God and the beautiful BEAUTY of Him who holds us all together and gives us purpose and strength every single day.



Rose

Lately we have been very involved in the life of our friend, Rose (all names changed for the sake of privacy) and her seven-year-old daughter, Lucy. Lucy has been coming to the Children's Center for a couple years now and while many of the other moms hardly ever make an appearance at the Center, Rose has become an extremely familiar face. And though we don't have a ton in common, I have come to love her to pieces.

She has significant mental and physical disabilities, has no family members who love or care for her or her daughter, has been abused all

her life, and basically was forced into prostitution at the age of thirteen. Now, at 29, she has almost no self-worth and frankly doesn't really know any other way of making a living than what she was forced into as a child. Awhile back, she told me about some of her more recent encounters with men. Her stories were so heart-breaking that I had to breathe deeply a couple times before turning again to look at her. My eyes filled with tears as I said, "Rose, you have GOT to stop selling yourself. You are WAY too valuable." She looked me right in the eyes and in a somewhat defeated, somewhat matter-of-fact way responded. "And how else am I going to put food on the table?" It was a legitimate question...I mean, no one hires her for a decent job because of her disabilities (she has tried countless times) and there has been a crazy economic crisis in Argentina for the past several years and everything is SO expensive right now (e.g. a gallon of milk is half a day's wage). All that, coupled with being abused since she was tiny, makes for a pretty desperate situation. I looked back at her and with tears now rolling down my cheeks said, "We will find a different way."

Easier said than done, but slowly we are making progress. The other day Rose met me at the Children's Center so I could take her to a meeting with social services. I think it's the first time I've ever accompanied someone to social services to help them KEEP their kid/s. Sadly, our visits are almost always to report abuse or neglect. But in Rose's case it's more of a mental disability which have made things rocky so we are trying to do what we can to help her keep her daughter. Rose was terrified of the meeting because she's so used to being treated awful and she gets easily confused when there is a lot of information. "Don't worry, they are nice people and I'll help you talk. Just make sure you tell the truth and to wear decent clothes to the meeting." Well, she arrived at the Center happy as a lark but she was wearing the SKIMPIEST clothes. "Rose, you can NOT go to your meeting like that." I tried not to sound like a mother but really?! She shrugged her shoulders and told me she didn't have any other clothes. "You don't have a single shirt that covers your midriff?" I asked (People who know me well tell me I am way bolder and feistier when I speak in Spanish than when I speak in English...? Weird). Rose shook her head sheepishly and I sighed...a little too loudly I'm sure. I ran down to our Children's Center mission barrel area and found three decent shirts. "Go try them on in the bathroom and choose which one you like best, ok?" Rose changed and then came out quickly wearing one of the shirts and a huge smile. "Thank you SO much. I love it" she said. "See Angelica, THESE are the kinds of clothes I WANT to wear." She added, gingerly touching the sleeve of the worn blouse I had found. I told her she looked great and we quickly left for her meeting.



The meeting went as well as could be expected, though nothing was truly resolved. Rose was simply told to go back the next day for a follow-up meeting. "I can't come in tomorrow so you're going to have to go on your own, ok?" I told her as we left. She looked at me and whispered, "Ok, but don't worry, I will wear this VERY same shirt again tomorrow, so that I look APPROPRIATE, just like you told me." Lol. Oh my word. She's literally the best. Also, we have GOT to go clothes shopping ASAP.



Rose's little daughter has enlarged adenoids and other things causing sleep apnea, problems speaking and breathing and needs surgery in the next month so that's a whole other facet to the story. We would love prayer for Rose and Lucy and for wisdom to know how to help them well. Sometimes I just want to jump ahead and figure out how to make everything better already and then God gently reminds me that that's His responsibility not mine. Mine is just to do what God asks of me each day...one day at a time. And sometimes that just means making a phone call. "No one ever calls me you know, so can you just call me sometimes?" Rose's straightforward question the other day made me smile and want to cry all at the same time.

Today I was home with our kids all day but I gave my friend a call and we chatted. Not anything mind-blowing or earth-shattering, just a phone call so that she knows she's not alone. I'm SO glad that God's got her and that HE is doing a work in her life. I'm also super glad He's allowed me to be her friend. I learn so very very much from her.

Orlando

Orlando is one of those kinds of people that if you see them once, you'll remember them forever. He's tall and lanky, has big ears and has the most awkward, and at the same time totally endearing, way about him. If we were to rate "bad-ness," Orlando probably comes from the "bad-est" family in the slum neighborhood we work in. In a previous update I wrote about his mother getting drunk and almost killing his baby sister...subsequently his four younger siblings were taken away from their parents and have since been adopted. At that time Orlando was 16 and was not adopted like his younger siblings because simply and tragically no one was on the list to adopt an older teenager carrying massive amounts of trauma. Orlando has been through it ALL but he loves the Lord, is super smart and might be the most resilient kid we've ever met.

He turned 18 a few weeks ago and asked if he could spend the day with us since, "I don't have anyone to spend it with." While we were hanging out, we pulled up a video interview Jeffrey had done with him eight years ago when he was only ten. In the video he says that he is so happy to be going to the Center and that one day he wants to get a degree and become a teacher. It's the cutest video clip ever. Orlando was half way embarrassed to watch the clip but he was grinning from ear to ear at the end. "So, is that still your dream Orlando? Do you still want to become a teacher?" I asked. "Oh yes, that is what I plan on studying!" He responded enthusiastically. 😊



Recently an amazing family that has a charitable foundation, accepted our grant proposal to start a micro loan program for small business start-ups. Our goal is to help the families that we work with get on their feet. A while ago, Jeffrey noticed that Orlando has a knack for selling things and has since been able to start him out as the first recipient of this micro loan! Jeffrey accompanies him to stores where he helps Orlando buy products that sell well and then Orlando re-sells the products at his high school and around town. He is doing SO well and is being able to pay for rent and food with what he is making. I kid you not when I say that Orlando seems to be in our office at the Center EVERY time I am there, pouring over his little notebook with Jeffrey where he keeps track of all his spendings and profits. I may or may not have to have an attitude check when I enter the office and realize that I'm going to have to wait a good hour until it's my turn to talk to my favorite guy...again. Lol. But really, I'm soooo thankful for my amazing husband who is using his business degree and giftings to help Orlando and others succeed. Also, he is probably the most patient, amazing, saintly man I know!



Family

In family news, we are all doing pretty well. It has been a rough winter with so many viruses and I feel like one of us is always sick, but spring is here and hopefully with that will come better health! We are helping Carlitos rent a studio apartment and over all, he is good...praise the LORD! He is working, going to church and youth group and has a solid group of friends. He turned 20 in July! Can't hardly believe it. Carlitos lives close to where my parents live and they have poured into his life a ton and we are so so thankful for them. Declan is growing like a weed and slowly chugging through kindergarten with me! It's the best thing ever getting to be his teacher. He is almost always happy, is an amazing big brother to Kian and says the FUNNIEST things every day. We are so thankful for our little sunshine boy. Kian turned 1 on September 21st! We gave in to peer pressure lol, and threw a huge South American birthday bash. It was so fun but Jeffrey says, "Never again." ☺ Kian is running all over and gets into every single thing. He gives the BEST, tightest hugs which melts our hearts, although I don't think our new guinea pigs are quite as appreciating. I'm surprised they are still alive. Lol. Kian is a solid tornado of cuteness and mischief and makes us laugh and smile and pull out our hair all at the same time. ☺

Thank you all so much for being on our team and for reading this far. ☺ We love and appreciate you all tons.
Much love,
Jeffrey, Angelica, Carlitos, Declan and Kian Roszhart



