



San Lucas, Guatemala

Volume 2, Issue 1

April 2021

A'KALA Family Foundation

P.O. Box 52

Cologne, MN 55322

Prayer for the People of San Lucas

Loving God, you gave us the gift of life to serve You and Your children. We ask You, dear Lord, to help and bless the people of San Lucas, Guatemala!

Please grant them happiness and good health, love and safety, prosperity and justice.

May they know of Your love for them through our prayers and support, and may their faith in You grow every day. May they help us, O Lord, see You through their unconditional love and acceptance. May we see You in their eyes, hearts, and homes.

We pray this with Saint Luke, Blessed Stanley Rother, Father Greg Schaffer, and all the holy innocent souls of the people of San Lucas.



COVID-19's impact on Guatemala has been profound and devastating. Most disheartening is the fact that children – young children especially – are bearing the incredible burden of the pandemic. Guatemala has one of the highest child malnutrition rates in the world, with 72% of children in the highland regions experiencing moderate or acute malnutrition.

Before the pandemic, children would receive 1-2 meals a day through school health programs. Since the onset of Covid-19, jobs are scarce, schools have closed, and malnutrition is on the rise.

Recognizing the need to help families affected by the pandemic, the Instituto Mesoamericano de Permacultura - IMAP (Mesoamerican Permaculture Institute) has been delivering a nutritional complement in the form of a warm drink ("atol") made from amaranth to those who need it most. The protein content of amaranth is very high, and it is a good source of magnesium and phosphorus.

Producing the nutritional drink also provides employment for the farmers that grow amaranth, and for the team that processes it.

If you would like to help us supply the AKALA families with the 'atol' please let us know.



A'KALA ANNUAL REPORT: Sandra Ajcot our Director of Ministry in San Lucas, has written this annual report for you so you can see what has taken place in the past year.

A'KALA FAMILY FOUNDATION: Focuses on orphaned children and abandoned mothers with sons and daughters from the town of San Lucas Tolimán. These people are not tended to by society, whether it be private or governmental, due to their poverty.

The reason that these children may be considered orphaned could be because they lost their parents in an accident and do not have the financial resources to pay for hospital charges, or they might live in an environment with violence and the parents are killed. Parents also might be trying to obtain food and other necessities for their family and they find a means to pay for it that isn't ideal, due to a lack of jobs. Although there are certain government departments with programs that work to eradicate this type of violence in social environments, the government system does not bring justice.

Our foundation aims to bring opportunities to these children so that they can have a different future with access to education, nutrition, and a dignified life.

FOOD PORGRAM: For the last few years in Guatemala, there has been a food and economic crisis, affecting the majority of families in San Lucas.

With the pandemic, this crisis has made an even larger impact on the families—due to the measures from the government restricting work, travel, and the selling of products. The scarcity of products, rise of prices of food, and unemployment aggravated the problem as well. Our food program is helping the homes, because we know that food is so important for growth and development of families to prevent malnutrition of children.

Here, the factor that most influences a healthy diet in the home is family.

During the last 9 months, we gave out 670 bags of food, benefiting 80 families many meals. In Guatemala, each family has an average of 5 members. Judging by this average, we fed about 3,650 people within these 80 families a total of 10,000 meals.

SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM: In Guatemala, only 30% of children finish secondary school; only 3% finish high school.

The need to implement this sponsorship program comes from the fact that the mothers dedicate themselves to jobs such as washing clothing, tortilla making, selling herbs or fruit that come from their land, and/or working in the home. This kind of income is not sufficient to pay for the children's studies; it's only enough to feed them. Due to the lack of economic resources, the mothers either don't send their kids to school, or they start out in public school. A lot of families abandon education because it costs too much.

Since the start of this sponsorship program, we have supported 25 children with food, 17 are currently sponsored, receiving food and a financial incentive for school. The foundation mission desires every child to go to school (recognizing the importance that children be able to read and write), and that they can graduate so they can contribute to the development of their families and their cities.



Sandra Ajcot





Thank you so much for sponsoring a child through A’KALA Family Foundation! We are so excited to be on this journey with you. By sponsoring a child for one year, you provide them and their family with food and education opportunities. This includes monthly food distributions as well as costs for school tuition and supplies (such as uniforms, backpacks, etc.). See our website (www.akalaff.org) for more information on what your sponsorship covers

Here are some details regarding a sponsorship:

- * A donation of \$480 will sponsor a child for a year. You can choose to either pay this amount month to month or one time a year. We accept PayPal (via the website) and check payments. Please fill out the payment information below indicating how you would like to remit your payment and send either via mail in the enclosed envelope or by email (take a picture of the application or sacn) to j.cink@akalaff.org.
- * Yearly payments were due on January 31. If you want a A’KALA sponsorship, please let us know! We have extended our deadline to May 15th for the yearly sponsorship option.
- * Monthly payments of \$40 are payable via PayPal or check and are due on the first of each month.
- * We encourage continued communication between sponsors and the children/families. All correspondence from either party (letters, pictures, etc.) will be translated and shared via email. Our staff in Guatemala will ensure that these items are printed and given to the family.
- * If you have specific requests for gifts or donations (for birthdays, special events, etc.) please reach out to a board member and we will help make it happen.

Thank you again for partnering with us, and please contact us if you have any questions!

Indication of Payment

☐ Monthly payment of \$40.00-- due on 1st of the month

☐ Via check

☐ Via PayPal - you will receive invoices from PayPal

☐ Yearly payment of \$480.00 (If your sponsorship begins in the middle of the year, please pro-rate your yearly payment in your remittance- i.e. if your sponsorship begins in March, please remit the first year payment of 10 months x\$40 or \$400)

☐ Via check

☐ Via PayPal - you will receive invoices from PayPal

****Make checks payable to A’KALA Family Foundation (PO Box 52, Cologne, MN 55322)****



Many of us were fortunate to have known Father Greg and witness his ministry with the people of San Lucas. We have a treasured keep sake to share with you. We have reproductions of this painting that was created in honor of Father Greg. The print is 8x10 with a one-inch margin on all 4 sides. If you are interested in this print, please contact Father Brian Oestreich.

Contact information: Mallory Raymond- m.raymond@akalaff.org
Cody Schyma- c.schyma@akalaff.org Julie Cink- j.cink@akalaff.org
Meghan Stordahl - m.stordahl@akalaff.org Sydney Wittnebel- s.wittnebel@akalaff.org
Father Brian Oestreich- b.oestreich@akalaff.org or call 507-829-6667

A'KALA ANNUAL REPORT—continued

GARDEN PROGRAM: The garden project is a resource where kids learn to cultivate their own food, so that they can begin to value the earth. In the Mayan culture, there is a relationship between people or mortals and earth; our goal is to not lose that value, and at the same time, have the kids enjoy their fruits. It also means that the kids can experiment and socialize with each other because a lot of the children work hard to provide for their families. This serves as an occupational therapy where they can be together and at the same time enjoy their childhood. They also will put into practice what they've learned about healthy food to attempt to implement a little garden in their own homes, and they will be environmentally conscious.

Our foundation recognizes the importance of a diet to stay healthy, and for growth and development in families. The garden vegetables are indispensable foods that provide nutrients that can be difficult to find in other foods. Due to the pandemic, we are just working with the 25 children in the sponsorship program—they are harvesting foods that they then bring to their families. Knowing the situation of these children was what created this program. In the future we plan to incorporate more children and women to continue learning how to cultivate their own food.

HOUSE CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM: This program was created with those living in poverty in mind. 76.4% of the population lives in poverty and 27% of the population lives in extreme poverty. These are people that don't have access to an appropriate and clean house.

The people that submit a housing requests to our foundation are those families that have a low income. Others are renting their homes, Though they might possess a little piece of land from their parents (or if they bought it), they don't have the economic resources to build a house.

Many of these families consist of single mothers that fight for their children and don't have the resources to build a house. Some are families that spend a lot of time working in the fields, or as construction workers, etc.

Our foundation contributes and guarantees a betterment of the quality of life for these families so that they can have an adequate, dignified, and healthy home.



Here is the most recent family to get a house thanks to the work of A'KALA!

Marvine and Josefina have three children. Marvine is a laborer in the fields and hills, and also makes specialty ice-creams. Josephina works at home and weaves when they have money to purchase materials.

Their girls are 10 and 6 years old. They are raising their nephew Enderson, because his mother died in child birth with him 3 years ago.

If you would like to build a house for a family or help them in some way, please contact us and we will make arrangements for you. In the past year, A'KALA has built over 10 houses for families.



A'KALA Family Foundation Mission Statement

A'KALA is a Christian charity committed to embracing hope for children and families by providing and sustaining basic life needs, including food, pure water, clothing, housing, health care, education, and employment skills, principally in San Lucas, Tolimán, Guatemala.



Foundation Board of Directors

Father. Brian Oestreich ~ President ~ b.oestreich@akalaff.org ~ ph: 507-829-6667

Julie Cink ~ President Elect ~ jcink@akalaff.org

Mallory Raymond ~ Vice President ~ m.raymond@akalaff.org

Meghan Stordahl ~ Secretary ~ m.stordahl@akalaff.org

Sydney Wittnebel ~ Treasurer ~ s.wittnebel@akalaff.org

Cody Schyma ~ Board Member ~ cschyma@akalaff.org

Sandra Ajcot ~ Directory of Ministry ~ San Lucas, Guatemala