



San Lucas, Guatemala

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A'KALA Family Foundation

P.O. Box 52

Cologne, MN 55322

Dear A'KALA family and friends!

I love this photo! Ryan and his new buddy from San Lucas were all smiles when we distributed the clothes, new shoes, and food last month. It was a miraculous morning of seeing old friends, making new friends, hugs, unconditional love, and sharing your gifts with the A'KALA families!

The other reason I love this photo are Morgan and Mallory hamming it up in the background! Peace! What an incredible pair! We are so blessed to have outstanding people involved and committed to our A'KALA Family Foundation!

Our first visit back to San Lucas since Covid, was breath taking and filled with God's power and love. I was so worried that during Covid, the people would digress. But, to my amazement they have flourished during Covid! Building vegetable and flower gardens, working hard with their school work, and striving forward with their faith, family, and friends!

My thanks to all of you who make this possible! AKALA is a tremendous ministry but more than that, it is an experience! Bless you for being part of this with us!

Peace and Blessings,
Father Brian Oestreich
507-829-6667



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.

Our AKALA school was remodeled last July. We repaired the roof, installed electricity, hung new lights, painted the interior walls, and spent time with our students and their teacher Otto. In February we will be installing a wood burning - tile stove so they can have heat in the school. In an effort to help our students be more self-reliant, Chona will teach them how to cook on the stove. Cooking on the wood burning stove is much safer for them than at an open fire. We want them to learn life long skills, so when they are adults, they can cook and take care of themselves, preparing and eating healthy and nutritious meals.

Chona is feeling and doing great! Busy as ever and right in the midst of the ministry in San Lucas. She wants to thank everyone for your support and wants you to know that she prays for you every day. She is very proud of the vegetable and flower gardens that were built on her land. She has many gardens filled with medicinal plants to cure various ailments and aches.

Doctor Doug Soderberg and his son Ryan, joined us on our last visit to San Lucas. Doug is an OB-GYN, and spent countless hours almost every day seeing woman and children. The exam room was filled with love, laughter and great medical healing of all sorts!



Shari Stordahl also worked in the clinic seeing patients who were in need of medical care for their eyes. Shari is an Ophthalmic Technician in Minnesota. When asked who her most memorial patient was she responded, "a blind woman who had so much pain in her eye from exposure. Her daughter led her on a 4 hour walk to the clinic to seek help. Two days later, they walked back to San Lucas to say thank you for the relief from the pain and the care and love they received".

Our thanks to everyone who helped translate for our medical volunteers. It takes a team of dedicated volunteers to serve the needs of others, as they speak the language of love!



Some of the AKALA women have a new ministry! Sandra has taught them how to embroider. They are using their new knowledge to embroider dish towels so they can raise money to help feed their families and support themselves. Hundreds of towels are available for you. Each one is embroidered in San Lucas with love. A \$5.00 donation is suggested for each towel. Special orders are a possibility, please contact us for more information.



Please join us, and visit our friends in San Lucas. Our winter trip is planned for February 24th through March 3rd, 2023. The summer visit is scheduled for July 13th through the 21st, 2023. Please send a \$100.00 deposit and we will save you a seat. We are limited to around 20 people per visit. If you have frequent flyer miles or travel points, we invite you to use those, or we can book your air travel for you. The cost of your room,



ground transportation in Guatemala, and most meals is \$500.00 for the week, airfare is separate. If you have any questions about one of the upcoming trips, or would like to register, please contact Father Brian Oestreich at b.oestreich@hotmail.com or 507-829-6667.

Do you need an unique gift for a wedding, birthday, Christmas, or special event? May we suggest an A'KALA Gift Certificate! You can offer a donation of any amount. This will be used to purchase



We welcome Darrin Exsted to our A' KALA Board of Directors



The opportunity to join the A'KALA Family Foundation (AFF) Board of Directors is like a dream come true. After multiple trips to San Lucas, Toliman, it is truly remarkable to be able to see the first-hand efforts and accomplishments that have evolved within the Mayan community over the 20-year span in which I've been involved. The amazing part is that much of the efforts have been organized through smaller organizations within the Midwest, like AFF, which enables the Mayans to reinvest in themselves and their community.

Having close ties and extensive knowledge of the work in San Lucas, along with my background in global learning and development programming, I'm excited to apply my skillset in a way that grows and transforms the A'KALA nonprofit. During my downtime, you'll find me backpacking through the wilderness, paddle-boarding, mountain biking, and summiting mountains - always finding a way to connect with nature.

As I look back on my years of contribution, the Mayan community has certainly played a large part in shaping who I am today and the relationships that have been built. We can learn so much from them from their modesty to their laughter. I encourage anyone who has the slightest curiosity about the Mayan community to take that step, face the uncomfortable, and join us on a future volunteer trip to San Lucas. One trip can deliver a lifetime of experiences.

Foundation Board of Directors and Contact information:

Father Brian Oestreich ~ b.oestreich@hotmail.com ~ ph: 507-829-6667

Julie Cink ~ jcink@akalaff.org

Mallory Raymond ~ m.raymond@akalaff.org

Meghan Stordahl ~ m.stordahl@akalaff.org

Sydney Wittnebel ~ s.wittnebel@akalaff.org

Darrin Exsted ~ exstdar@akalaff.org

Sandra Ajcot ~ San Lucas, Guatemala



Child Sponsorship



Visiting the people of San Lucas Tolimán, Guatemala, this past July changed our lives in many ways! We were reminded of the abundance we have and the numerous needs of many families that lack life necessities like adequate housing, food, clothing, shoes, and medical care. We met a Guatemalan family with 4 children. We are so thankful to God for the opportunity to sponsor Heidy, one of their daughters with special needs, who just turned 14 at the end of August. Through A'KALA, a minimal monthly donation provides educational support as well as basic physical needs for Heidy.

Her mother, Anastacia, kindly expressed her gratefulness to us for this gift. Her husband works in the fields to provide for their family of 6 while she cares for her children at home. Much thanks to A'KALA for coordinating these opportunities to share what we can!

Armando, Jill, & Francisco Lara, Willmar, MN



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 scan) to j.cink@akalaff.org.
- * Yearly payments are due on January 31. If you want a A'KALA sponsorship, please let us know!
- * 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

☐

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)****

Sandra just sent a note with the new princes for food in San Lucas. She is asking if you can please help her purchase the needed food for this month's distribution?

A monthly food distribution, for each AKALA family, now costs Q125.00 or \$16.00. The items they usually receive from us include;

- Bath soap for the entire family
- Rice
- 2 bottles of vegetable oil for cooking
- Sugar
- Corn
- Black beans
- Noodles and pasta
- Laundry soap

Could you please help purchase pilas (sinks) for families in need? A new pila costs on average, Q400.00. In addition, delivering the pila to the house and hooking up the water costs, around Q70.00. Your donation of \$62.00 will help a family have a pila!

Our goal is to have tile wood burning stoves in all of our A'KALA homes. The tile stoves are much safer than the open bon fire families use for their cooking and heating. To purchase the needed items and construct each tile stove is around Q2,000 or \$260.00. Otto has asked if we could please build a tile stove in the school, so its warmer for the special needs children. If you would like to purchase the stove for our A'KALA school please contact Fr. Brian, as soon as possible.

Houses are very needed for our A'KALA families. Many still sleep on the ground each night. During the recent rains, many of our families slept on the roofs of buildings and other people's homes. This is very unsafe for the young children who fall off the roofs. The basis cinder block foundation, with wooded walls and steel roof house costs an average of \$4,000.00. Can you please help us build more homes?

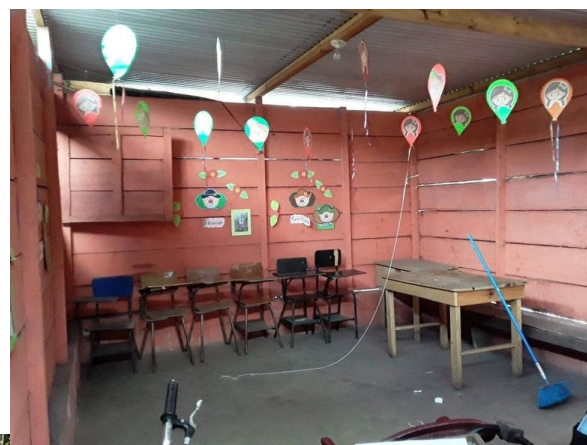
Sponsoring a child is an affirmation of faith, and love. Please consider sponsoring a child through A'KALA.



The blue pila is a great addition to this new house. The pila is used for washing dishes, clothes, children and many other daily tasks



One of our recent AKALA homes that was made thanks to our donors!



Our AKALA school!

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.



Support A'KALA Family Foundation while you shop!

AmazonSmile will donate 0.5% of the price of your eligible purchases to A'KALA Family Foundation. Simply shop at smile.amazon.com and choose "Akala Family Foundation" (no apostrophe) in the listing when you log in. Shop as you normally do and A'KALA Family Foundation will receive the benefits. What a great way to get your shopping done and support your favorite charity in the process!

address

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