



San Lucas, Guatemala

Volume 5, Issue 2 November 2024

A'KALA Family Foundation

P.O. Box 52

Cologne, MN 55322

Dear A'KALA friends,

This is a very exciting time for A'KALA Family Foundation! We are in the midst of raising funds needed to purchase more land for A'KALA families. In a few years, this land will be home for numerous children and families. Home is where your heart is! Thank you to everyone helping with this!

A few weeks ago, I asked Sandra, "since A'KALA began, how many construction projects have we accomplished around San Lucas" She emailed the following information.

- We have built;
 - ◇ 4 cinder block homes
 - ◇ 3 retaining walls to safe guard from mud slides
 - ◇ 44 ceramic wood burning stoves
 - ◇ 4 new bathrooms onto existing homes
 - ◇ 40 wooden houses, with bathrooms
 - ◇ 2 kitchens to existing homes
- Replaced 5 house roofs
- Added 4 rooms to existing homes
- Dug 4 wells
- A'KALA school
 - ◇ Reroofed our school
 - ◇ painted it
 - ◇ brought electricity to it
 - ◇ installed interior lights
 - ◇ made new tables
 - ◇ added windows
 - ◇ built a kitchen and a bathroom
 - ◇ most recently added a ramp from the street down to the dirt path for those who are mobility limited.



Thank you and bless you!
Father Brian Oestreich

JOIN US ON A MISSION TRIP

Have you ever been on a mission trip? Maybe you're scared or anxious about going. If you have never been on a mission trip, this is your chance! We have had all ages on these trips, from babies to 80s. It can be life-changing!

There is an upcoming trip on July 16-23, 2025.

Whatsoever You Do

I've wanted to go on a mission trip of some sort for as long as I can remember. I had even signed up to join others in my parish on a trip, and then had to cancel due to conflicts with the dates. So when my good friend mentioned going to Guatemala with A'kala in January of 2024, I didn't hesitate to say yes, knowing very little about what would happen, just knowing that I had the desire to go and help others.

I wanted to do something for the least of my brothers. Afterall, Jesus said, "Whatever you did to the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me" (Matthw 25:40). Little did I know that I would receive so much more than I gave. It is something that I will carry with me forever...and hopefully experience again on a return trip.

The first thing I encountered was the intense love the people had for each other, for us, and for Jesus.. It was impossible to go anywhere and not feel and see the love of Christ in the people of San Lucas. I saw love in those who created a school for disabled children, those who received food/cleaning supplies/clothing from us, those who met their sponsors for the first time, those who attended mass... everyone. It was awe inspiring to see people of all ages and abilities, (from school aged children to the elderly, from those who walked easily to those who dragged themselves on a mat) leave the church when the Blessed Eucharist was exposed walking backwards out of church. They do this because they never want to turn their backs on Jesus. I think about that every single time I leave church--every. single. time.

Another thing that struck me was how filled with joy everyone was. One of our group members made the comment, "These people have so little, and yet they live as though they are millionaires, as though they have everything." This quote couldn't be more true. Living conditions can vary from what we in the US would consider a small dirt floor shed, to cinder block homes sparsely furnished with only the bare necessities. And yet all of those we met were kind, and humble, and ever so grateful for our presence. These truly are the poorest of the poor, and yet they are happy, they are humble, and they may just be the sweetest souls one could ever meet on earth. Makes me think we could all benefit by simplifying our lives.

Guatemala has an intense history, much of which involves violence. Few people were untouched by this violence, which makes the joy they have seem so much more precious. Meeting people who gave first hand accounts of some of these acts of terror brought tears to even the toughest of men in our group. It made me realize all I take for granted living in the US--my home with more things and space than one needs, the safety of my family, plenty to eat, an education...the list goes on and on.

There is a saying that one hears when volunteering with A'Kala..."One life changed" I heard this for the first time when a little boy hugged his sponsor saying, "I love you so so much already." Cue the tears, and change that saying to "hundreds of lives changed...every day" While I went with the intention of "doing unto the least of my brothers", I returned with tenfold blessings.--a life forever changed.

Tammy Winter



This is a little boy picking up spilled corn. It is a testimony to how very important each and every single kernel was needed to feed his family in the upcoming Month.

A'KALA Sponsorships

Please consider sponsoring an A'KALA student! You can change their life!

Please contact Mallory Raymond m.raymond@akalaff.org.

Volume 5, Issue 2 San Lucas, Guatemala **Page 4**

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*Please don't forget, send your email to
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and ministry information from San Lucas!*

