

March 2024



Dear Family and Friends,

*“By faith Moses’ parents hid him for three months after he was born, because they could see he was no ordinary child...”*

Hebrews 11:23a

One morning, in a final desperate act, an unknown woman gave a child some money and put some things in his backpack. Then she instructed him to enter a hotel and check himself in. At eight years old the little boy went up to the desk and showed them the money. The hotel staff was glad to take it and in exchange, showed Mario his room. Later in the day, they watched him leave the hotel and cross the street to purchase a few tortillas and return to his room. All day long they never saw an adult. By nightfall the hotel staff realized the boy had been abandoned. They called the police and they delivered Mario to the juvenile authorities. That’s when they called us.

That night we received a call at 9:30 from the PGN (The government advocacy agency for children in need here in Guatemala). They said they needed an answer quickly or they would have to send the child to the national hospital. I told them we would call back within 30 minutes. We had to make a quick decision. There was a challenge, the boy was 100% deaf and mute. My thoughts quickly went to the ramifications of a long-term commitment for such a child and the additional financial costs we would incur. How would we educate him? How would we communicate with him? How would we know what he needed? How would we tell him we loved him? How would we share the Gospel with him? Our city offers almost no help for a child like this. Often children in this situation have serious behavioral challenges. I just didn’t know how we could help this one.

I asked the staff what they thought and consulted one of our board members who happened to be in Guatemala. Finally, I instructed Enocs, one of our staff parents, to call the PGN and tell them we would receive the child on a three day provisional basis provided they find another home immediately where they could help him more adequately. The government agreed and within an hour the child arrived.

Upon Mario’s arrival we logged his information in our official record. Next we took our traditional first photo. I reminded the PGN we would only shelter the child for three days while they found another home that could more adequately meet his needs. The little boy had a fresh hair cut and looked unharmed. He then began to pull out the contents of his backpack. First, he pulled out a little car, then an extra shirt, a plastic spoon, a small plastic turtle, \$3.80 in Quetzals, and a folded piece of paper. When I reached for the paper he drew it back to his chest in objection. It was obvious the paper was very important to him. He looked at the government worker and she nodded, yes. So, he slowly handed the paper to me. I gently took it from him and discovered it was a document so worn that it unfolded in pieces. To my surprise, it was a birth certificate. I was thankful the person who abandoned him at the hotel had sent this with him. Without it, we would not even have known his name was Mario.

Because his clothes were tattered and dirty, I began to search for some fresh ones. I didn’t think we had any clothes his size. We had not received a new boy this small in a long time. Just hoping, I went through several boxes of mismatched birthday and Christmas presents. To my surprise, I had some jeans that were perfect. Next, I found some beautiful Hush Puppy shoes that were exactly the right size. Then I found some shirts that fit him. I had discovered everything he needed. My heart was so moved, I began to tear up. I heard the Lord was saying, “See, you have everything you need. Just say yes.” And it was true. We were ready for tomorrow, so we put him to bed. He went right to sleep.

The next morning Mario watched the other children and did exactly what they did. He took a shower and cleaned his area, folded his clothes, and made his bed perfectly. Later in the morning he came up to me in the kitchen and looking up, he made a motion with his hands like he was rolling something up. He then put his hand behind him and pulled it up like he was wiping something. I thought, “Oh, he is asking for toilet paper.” I understood exactly what he needed. All day long he played with the other children. He got along with everyone. He seemed to me the happiest child I had ever seen in my life.

Quickly it became crystal clear that Mario was no ordinary child. Even though he is completely deaf, speaks no verbal language, and at that time had no formal sign language, his ability to understand what we were saying with hand gestures was uncanny. He had created his own pantomime language. His hands and facial expressions were more animated than a cartoon character. If you showed him anything one time, he instantly remembered it. He was not what I had experienced with special-needs children before. He was absolutely wonderful, obedient, and as happy as he could be. My fears quickly faded away. I began to think, “We can do this.” By three o'clock I told Enochs to call the government juvenile office and tell them they did not need to look for another home. We would care for Mario.



**Shane Sanderson**  
Executive Director  
Santa Cruz del Quiche Guatemala

That was seven years ago. Today Mario has learned formal sign language and is a fine young man. He continues to learn in our home school and has been able to transition through several grades. As part of his education, Mario is an apprentice at our construction site. He is learning to be a hard worker as well as gaining valuable construction trade skills. He has learned to make concrete and lay block. In the near future we want to teach him how to set a ceramic tile. These life skills will give him the confidence and ability to make a living and one day to provide for himself and a family. Mario also has an amazing understanding of electronics. He has started repairing the electronic toys of the other children when they break - and he is good at it. I recently purchased for his birthday a high-skill-level remote control robot. In just one day Mario had it fully assembled, wired, and programmed to operate. I could not have figured it out. He is amazing. God is doing wonderful things in his life.

**Mission Update:** This past month the ministry hosted Becky Moyer and her mission team assembled from all over the continental United States. The team had several objectives, all pointed at ministering to our children, sharing the love of Jesus, and the message of the Gospel. When Becky leads a team they get a lot done in a short time. This trip was no different. They built a beautiful, safe jungle gym for our children on the new property. They also planned and provided for the largest, blowout birthday celebration we have ever had. It was a lot of fun and the kids felt very special. Thank you to everyone who came to make these things happen.

**Helping the Needy:** The team visited the national hospital to pray with the sick, those suffering from auto accidents, and mothers with newborns. We prayed with a lot of hurting people in desperate situations. The team provided those we prayed for with a small gift bag to make their stay a little easier. Each bag included gospel literature so they would have a written copy of the Gospel to read and share with others. Many of the patients broke down and cried as we touched them and called out to the Lord on their behalf. One gentleman wept when we began to pray for him. He told us he had no family or friends who had visited him. It was heartbreaking, but God gave him a moment of comfort and hope. This outreach is not for the weak at heart, but is always very moving and beautiful.

**Touching Our Kids:** The team also gave special attention to our new little girl named Ashley. Ashley has been with us for just a few weeks. She has suffered greatly through physical and sexual abuse, neglect, and abandonment. She needs a lot of love. Becky and her team provided Ashley with a huge dose of the pure love of God. We are praying the Father will have mercy upon Ashley. Pray with us for her. Thank you Becky and team for being the visible hands and feet of Jesus.

**Construction Update:** One of our construction teams has completed their work on Phase One of the foundation of the Common House. They are now turning their attention to helping the second team complete their work. We have enough to pay off the workers finishing the foundation installation. We are now preparing for the next step for the Common House. The next phase includes raising the walls of the first floor up to their full height. Our estimated cost for supplies and labor is \$90,000. This will exclude the block, cement, some electrical, plumbing, conduit installation, and the labor cost to build it. We feel it is wise to raise these funds in full before we sign contracts with our construction partners. I know these are big numbers, but God has called us to trust him. Please join with us in prayer on this faith journey. Please consider sharing this need with others. If you would like to help us raise the walls on the Common House please send a check to Child Rescue and write "Common House Construction" in the memo line. Our US mailing address is 11201 Parallel Parkway, Kansas City, KS 66109. Or you can go online at [givetocasa.com](http://givetocasa.com) and click on "Give to Casa De Mi Padre." Then click on "Construction - Child Rescue."

It has been a full seven years since Mario came to live with us. Revisiting Mario's story and seeing where God has brought him, has been encouraging to me. We thank the Lord for all he is doing in our lives and the lives of our children. We are thankful for you. Thank you for sustaining us in prayer, provision, and encouragement. We will keep on loving our kids because we believe all of our children are "no ordinary children."

In His Power,

*Love  
Shane*

Joseph Shane Sanderson

*It is beautiful to  
know to The Father  
no child is ordinary.  
All are precious in his  
Sight.*