



# Mission UpReach Newsletter

## Exciting plans set for Dulce Refugio

Our Dulce Refugio ministry is a home for girls who are 18 years old or older and come from backgrounds of abuse. It is a small ministry that we have often called a *life raft*, meaning that we “cannot save everyone that needs help to overcome abuse but we can at least save a few.” Sexual abuse is a serious matter in Honduras. Here are a couple of statistics from the website of the *Center for Gender and Refugee Studies* at [cgrs.uchastings.edu](http://cgrs.uchastings.edu):

- In July 2014 the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women noted that **violent deaths of women in Honduras** had increased 263.4 percent between 2005 and 2013. The Special Rapporteur noted scores of concerns regarding the high levels of domestic violence, femicide, and sexual violence.
- In Honduras, there is a **95 percent impunity rate** for sexual violence and femicide crimes. As noted by the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, “the lack of accountability for violations of human rights of women, is the norm rather than the exception.”

The Center for Gender and Refugee studies describes femicide as; “the systematic killing of girls and women with impunity.” They further state that in “Honduras –it is widespread.” *Isn’t that something that Christians everywhere should be concerned about? We think so!*

Mission UpReach is dreaming of the day when we can offer a larger scale project that includes both a place to live and psychological counseling for girls and young women who have been traumatized by abuse. It will take several million dollars to construct the proper facilities and to train and staff the home. Right now, we can only dream about having that amount of money to begin such a project. In the meantime, our hearts break from

the stories of some of the young girls that we come in contact with.

When we do reach the point of having the resources that we need we will need to be able to feed, house and educate these young girls. We will also need to be able to equip them to start and run small businesses. Many girls, especially if they are from villages, are not able to earn a

living because there are no paying jobs available. This often leads to a young girl living with a guy just because he is her income support. *Will you begin praying with us about the future of Dulce Refugio?* We need the resources to expand this ministry to reach the hundreds of young girls and women who suffer from abuse that most of us can only imagine.

## Meet Erlin

Erlin came to Dulce Refugio in early 2014. She had just turned 18 years old and had fled her home due to an abusive relationship with her biological father. When we met Erlin she was living temporarily with a family but she had nowhere to lay her head. She was working with an organization as a nanny at night and would take naps in a chair at the house where she was staying during the day. When she came for her first interview, she looked to be 30 or more years old. She was tired and weary. Erlin is one of the most humble young women on the face of the earth. She gladly accepted the invitation to live in the Dulce Refugio house and we began assisting her with some of her necessities, although she was earning some money each month working as a nanny.

When she was first interviewed, she explained that she had graduated from the sixth grade but didn’t think she would continue her education because she “wasn’t that smart.” One of the requirements of the program is that the young women must continue their education. We encouraged her to settle in, enjoy some stability, good sleep and nourishment and then we would reassess. Several months later, she enrolled in our 2-year CRESCO program (a Saturday Bible school for adults). This was an especially



bold move on her part because many of her classmates were men and she often had to make public presentations. Erlin graduated strong this past December from the CRESCO program. After the first year in CRESCO, she also enrolled in a weekend middle school program and is now completing her 8th grade year. Today, Erlin looks her age and has gained so much confidence. The most important thing she has gained is a personal relationship with our Lord. Erlin exemplifies the purpose and mission of Dulce Refugio; taking young women out of oppression and giving them the opportunity to grow personally, spiritually and emotionally.



# First Fruits from the Deaf Community

It has been more than a year and half since we began to have deaf people visit our church services regularly. During that time, there have been ten adults that almost never miss worship or Bible study. Matt and Hannah Bridges, Abbie Wilson and others have spent countless hours teaching and studying the Bible with each of these individuals. During the last two weeks of July, after hours and hours of study and discussion, five of these dear friends made their confession of faith and were baptized into Christ. The whole church was delighted to witness the event of each of their baptisms. We hope and pray that these are just the first fruits of a large “harvest” that God is preparing in the deaf community here.



## Evangelistic Campaign at the Barrio Belén Church

On July 10th we kicked off an evangelistic campaign in a very “dramatic” fashion. With the help of our DESEO team, Dakota Nowell and Caleb Gossett put on a one-act play about the lies that Satan is constantly trying to sell us. Over 300 people attended that night, a great start to the weeklong campaign. We invited Juan Meza, originally from Mexico but currently residing in Memphis, TN as our speaker for the week. Juan’s nightly lessons were based on the widely-known story of the prodigal son. Juan did an excellent job delving into the details of this already well-known parable. He helped the congregation understand that there are two types of people in this story; the oldest son, and the youngest. He explained that the attitude of the older son is just as bad (if not worse) than the sins of the younger.

Juan’s words, in conjunction with the work of the Church Planters, led to eight baptisms throughout the week. Three of the people who were baptized are members of our Deaf community and students at ESPERO, our school for the Deaf. Darlin, a 22-year-old ESPERO student, responded to a question that Juan had asked during his sermon to make the church reflect on their personal lives. In the middle of the sermon, Darlin told Abbie (the interpreter) “I want to be baptized”. “Ok we can do it later tonight,” responds Abbie. To which Darlin replies, “No, I want to be baptized right now, I am tired of living in sin and I need to come back to the Father”. So right then, in the middle of Juan’s lesson, the two left to prepare Darlin for his life-changing decision. We praise God for the success of yet another Evangelistic Campaign and we pray that we will continue to see the fruits.

## Minister to the deaf hired

Wow...how exciting it is about to become in the local church in Barrio Belén, Santa Rosa de Copán with the coming of Enrique Gonzalez Bizarro as our full-time minister to the deaf. Two years ago, Mission UpReach invited Renee Fleming, from Ft. Worth, to come and teach classes on signing. Renee spent a whole month with us at the time and that launched our deaf ministry in the local church. Matt Bridges, one of our AIMers, had taken sign language classes when he was preparing for his mission field experience at the Sunset International Biblical Institute in Lubbock, Texas. We asked him to lead the effort and he joined forces with Abbie Wilson, another of our AIM students who was already fluent in ASL, and together they began canvassing the neighborhoods to identify and get to know deaf men and women in the community.

God put more and more people in place to work in that fledgling ministry and if you fast forward two years, to present day, we now have a school for deaf adults who are learning to read and write. Most of them had never attended school at all. Only a few have ever attended school and even then only for a couple of years.

Enrique is a Mexican national that has just graduated from the Sunset International Bible Institute’s program for training deaf ministers. He has made a 5-year commitment to live and work in Santa Rosa de Copán as a Mission UpReach employee. We are delighted to have him as part of our MUR Team.





## VCOM Returns for Another Medical Outreach

The second VCOM (Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine) group of this year came in July to undertake another medical brigade. VCOM regularly brings a large group of medical students and staff from their different campuses to Santa Rosa de Copan. While here, the groups always do an amazing job attending to the residents of several communities. On this particular trip, they worked in three different villages and spent the last day of clinic attending to members of the local church of Christ in Barrio Belén. People who come into the clinic and are seen by VCOM students and preceptors are always so grateful for the level of care and attention they receive. Our partnership with VCOM is an example of the many ways God is creating opportunities for us to do his will and serve his people.

## Lexington Church of Christ visits Corquín

The Lexington Church blessed Mission UpReach in July by bringing a medical brigade to Corquín, the location of our newest church plant. Mike, Kris, and Kaylee Bridges moved to Corquín this past year to focus on that new effort. The Bridges are from the Lexington congregation so naturally the focus of their efforts was directed to that work. The brigade was a great success and we

were thrilled and amazed when the total number of people served was 1010. Being a part of the John 1010 generation, we are fond of that number. We praise God for the sacrifice and service the church at Lexington brought to Corquín.

## Disciple Trips Visits Santa Rosa

Each year we are privileged to host a group of people who join together from various locations under the direction of Disciple Trips. These groups come to serve in whatever capacity we need. This year, they were able to work in a few of our public schools, giving a VBS type experience to several hundred children. They spent their afternoons working at our Moses Project as well as taking an afternoon to serve hot soup, coffee and sweet bread to hundreds at the local public hospital. Everything that groups such as this do, in the name of Jesus, has a huge impact on our continual efforts to share His love with our community. Thank you, Disciple Trips!

## University Church of Christ Sends Two Groups

This year, we also had the privilege of hosting two separate groups from the University Church of Christ in Denver, CO. The first group was from their youth ministry and they did a fabulous job conducting a VBS to several hundred children that we serve weekly through our DESEO ministry. It is always energizing to witness the enthusiasm of youth and see how God works and moves in them as they encounter things here that they

## Brigades Update

might not ever encounter in their lives back home. The second group was an adult group who came to serve through a medical brigade. This year, they conducted their brigade in Belén, Lempira, where a new congregation has been planted by a brother named, Jesús Aquilar, along with his wife and daughters. This was the first time we have served that community with a medical brigade. It was well received by the 930 people served. Brother Jesús was so thankful because he believes it will open many new doors as he reaches out to that community with the gospel message. Thank you, University Church of Christ, for helping us build the John 1010 generation!



## Word of the Month

### "Inspire"

Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote, "Our chief want is someone who will inspire us to be what we know we could be." Inspiring others to see themselves as beloved by the Father who runs to embrace them is a core value in Mission UpReach's vision and mission. What better inspiration is there to move people from darkness to light or from oppression to freedom than to become a member of the John 1010 Generation?



## A note from Donna



June and July are our busiest months for brigades, although we host groups all year. In just the past two months, we have served around 4000 people with medical attention

and medications. Hundreds of children have experienced the gospel in the form of skits and activities performed by visiting teams, and much good labor has been exerted out at our Moses Project to further the efforts there. So many leave here saying things like, "It is amazing to see all that God is doing here," and "I could never have grasped what all God is doing here without having seen it firsthand."

As hard as we try to capture the many ways God is working through written articles, photos, and videos it is impossible. As with most of God's works, they must be experienced. We invite you to consider coming to visit. You

can join an already forming team, come for a personal visit, or gather a group from your church or among your friends and come! There is much meaningful work to do here with Mission UpReach. God will do His work in you as you serve. Send me an email today at [donna.w@missionupreach.org](mailto:donna.w@missionupreach.org) to explore the possibilities!



## 2017 Brigades/Visiting Teams

February 11-18 .....	Tusculum CofC .....	Medical and Construction
February 25-March 4 ....	LA Tech Student Ministry ...	Construction
March 11-18 .....	Southside CofC .....	Medical/VBS/Construction
April 8-15 .....	VCOM .....	Medical
May 27-June 3 .....	North Atlanta CofC .....	Marriage Seminar/ Preacher Training
June 17-24 .....	Pinetree CofC .....	Medical/VBS/Construction
June 24-July 1 .....	Burnt Hickory CofC .....	Medical/Construction
July 1-8 .....	Lexington CofC .....	Medical
July 8-15 .....	Disciple Trips .....	VBS/Construction
July 15-22 .....	University CofC Youth .....	VBS
July 22-29 .....	University CofC Youth .....	Medical
July 29-August 5 .....	Belton CofC .....	Construction
<b>Sept. 30-Oct. 7th .....</b>	<b>Open Group .....</b>	<b>Surgical Brigade</b>

## Mission UpReach Board Members

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## Other Giving

*Mission UpReach is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit. We can assist you to designate MUR in a corporations' matching gifts program, or giving through a United Way campaign, or as you prepare wills for your estate.*

## Please contact us:

*Our mailing address is as follows:*

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*Please send all checks, donations and correspondence to this address.*

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