

# Mission UpReach Newsletter

## Immigration impact on children

By: Phil Waldron  
CEO, Mission UpReach

The most heart wrenching pictures I've seen in regard to the border crisis are photos of children. Although we have noted the effects of families left behind as parents make the trek to the United States, we haven't discussed what happens when children make the journey or what happens when they are returned from their journey.

There has been a huge increase in unaccompanied minors making this very dangerous journey in order to arrive at a place they believe will offer them many more opportunities. According to an article in Time Magazine titled "What to Know about What's Happening to Unaccompanied Minors at the Border," the Department of Homeland Security decided that it would "no longer expel unaccompanied migrant children under Title 42 if they were from a country other than Mexico (single adults and family units would continue to be expelled except in cases where Mexico's shelter capacity was full)." The vast majority of unaccompanied children are from Central America, according to MPI. "Very quickly," it notes, "the number of unaccompanied children needing to be processed into the U.S. increased."

We can clearly see that the narrative being understood here in Honduras is that children are the ticket in, which has

caused children to be put in extremely dangerous situations.

Thousands of these unaccompanied minors are found at the US/Mexico border every month, but many more are found and turned back at other borders before even reaching the United States.



Being situated close to the Honduran-Guatemalan border where the caravans pass through, we have had the unique experience of seeing the police vehicles full of mostly teenage boys driving down the highway to the emergency care centers in our town. These centers are often full of immigration cases trying to provide the best temporary care possible

as child services locates their families. After each caravan starts its trek, these centers must prepare to provide care to a number way above what they actually have room for, and the pandemic makes it all the more challenging to do this in a safe way. In fact, one center

is preparing to open a house exclusively for immigration cases in order to meet that growing need.

But where are these boys being sent back to after they leave these centers? They're being sent back to gang violence, homelessness, and poverty. Maybe some do end up back safely with

family, but without the employment opportunities that they went in search of across the border to begin with, what will their future be?

Our Moses Project focuses on exactly that. If these teenage boys were given opportunities for a future in Honduras, they would be able to make a difference for this and future generations of young people. The teenage boys in our program are completing their education, learning a trade, and gaining leadership experience in order to lift themselves, their family and their community out of poverty, giving them a hope for the future. Change needs to happen in the home country of these children and teenagers before they leave in caravans in search of a better life. Consider how you could help us make a difference here in the lives of Hondurans.

# MUR Employee Spotlight

Meet **Bethany Fisher**. Bethany, age 22, became a part of the Mission UpReach team as a missionary intern with AIM (Adventures in Missions) in 2019. When her time with AIM was complete, we invited her to stay on as a part of our DESEO team. Bethany will transition to our ESPERO team (school for the deaf) this coming year.

Bethany is full of life and learned to “go with the flow” since early in life. Adopted as an infant, she was raised by a single mother who sadly passed away when Bethany was 13 years old. Bethany then moved to Camp Wood, TX to live with her mother’s sister and family until she graduated from high school. In high school Bethany was a basketball and track star and held a state record for goat wrangling. Despite those accomplishments and their subsequent scholarship opportunities, Bethany decided to go to AIM in Lubbock, Texas.

Bethany fell in love with the Lord at a young age and was a part of the Nueces Canyon Church of Christ in Camp Wood, TX for her teen years. They have loved and supported her during her AIM experience as well as the



years she has served with Mission UpReach. Bethany says, “Working with Mission UpReach brings out the best in me. I get the privilege of helping others grow closer to God. I love putting smiles on people’s faces. All of this reminds me of why I became a missionary.”

## ESPERO reopens amidst challenges

The Pandemic challenges continue to plague us as we strive to keep our deaf students in school. We had begun the school year with an altered schedule that would safely have less than 10 students at school each evening. That



was going well until the government decided all schools must shut down again due to a Covid surge.

We sought special permission from the education department, taking into consideration our ability to socially distance and the fact that our school is made up of adults. We were told we could, but unfortunately, no one was willing to sign a written permission, which would put us at risk with the government.

After 60 days of closure, we are happy to announce that we are back in-person, with limited numbers. And fortunately our staff as well as our students have all received at least the first of the Covid vaccines. Meeting in-person is so important to our deaf students. Amazingly, they have done very well with online classes and one on one tutoring, but hands down meeting in-person is superior. Our school year runs through the end of October, and it is our hope that we can finish this school year out with in-person meetings.



# Is your life of service intentional or emotional?



By: Anny Tabora  
DESEO team member

A few months after the pandemic began, the word ‘intentionality’ began to echo within me and since then I have realized how many things require this focus. Even though the Bible doesn’t mention the word ‘intentionality’ there are many verses that talk about the concept. One of my favorites is: *“Don’t burn out; keep yourselves fueled and aflame. Be alert servants of the Master, cheerfully expectant. Don’t quit in hard times; pray all the harder. Help needy Christians;*

*be inventive in hospitality,”*  
*Romans 12:11–13 (MSG)*

There is no better example of intentionality than Jesus. During his life here on earth he showed us how to be intentional in the way we live and relate. What was just an echo within me, got real this year. I know you understand what it feels like to have a clear vision of what you will do and suddenly everything takes a 180-degree turn.

That’s what our DESEO team faced. At the beginning of this year, it was a huge challenge creating a new plan to keep in touch with the children in our program because of all the Covid restrictions. When we finally got it up and running, the schools were closed again indefinitely. It was very easy at that time to give up and just accept our limitations, but thankfully we did not. This new challenge called us to be more intentional as we developed a new plan.

We decided to go house to house and start working with small groups of children and now we are tutoring

113 children each week, helping them stay in school. It hasn’t been easy: long walks to find the children, fear of being infected, fatigue, and doubts about whether it would work or not.

Through this new plan of ‘tutoring at home’ we know the children and their families better. It has really impacted me to see the challenges they face daily, and yet they keep believing for a better future. To see their gratitude toward us for teaching their children has been special. After some weeks we also discovered that many of the children have never had a birthday celebration. So, we planned to have a whole week to celebrate all the birthday children of June and July. It was amazing to see them happy and excited about their first birthday party.

Our team has learned a lot this year about being intentional and stepping out on faith and trusting God to provide. Please pray for the children of Honduras. It is estimated that 1.4 million of them have dropped out of school because of their lack of access to education due to the pandemic. And pray for our team as we continue to step out on faith to do all we can to help them.

## Fundraising Highlight Amazon Smile

**Did you know that your Amazon purchases can benefit Mission UpReach?**

There are a few easy steps:

**1.** Go to [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) and sign in with your usual Amazon account.

**2.** Select Mission UpReach, Inc. as your charity.

**3.** And then start shopping.

By choosing Mission UpReach as the nonprofit you want to support, Amazon will donate 0.5% of your purchase price directly to us! ***That little bit can add up quickly!***



## A note from Donna

Phil and I spent the month of July stateside. The first several days we helped Hayley with Harrison while her parents took a much-needed vacation. Spending one-on-one time with them is such a blessing. Their faith and perseverance are an honor to witness. We then relieved my sister and stayed with my mom for a week. That was also a blessing, giving us special time with my mother. After we left her, my mother had emergency surgery for a bowel obstruction. She has a long recovery ahead, so I would appreciate your prayers for her. Her name is Sarah Durham.

We left TN on the 15th of July and traveled about 4500 miles before our return to Honduras on July 30th. We visited several churches and Phil had the opportunity to preach and share about all that God is doing here in western Honduras. It is always a blessing and encouragement to visit churches that support Mission UpReach and believe in what we are doing. It is also a blessing to be able to visit new churches and share what has gone on and what we hope for the future. It is so humbling when people thank us for our sacrifice and what we do. I don't really feel like we

sacrifice much, considering what God has done and continues to do for us.

We thank God daily for the life we have in Honduras and the many ways we get to witness

God moving and changing people. We feel honored to be a part of that.

We were also happy that our youngest daughter, Laura was able to return to Honduras with us, even if it was only a short 9-day visit. Lord willing, she will finish her Master's Degree in Industrial and Organizational Psychology in May of 2022 from the University of Tennessee, Chattanooga.

I would like to thank you again for supporting us with your prayers, encouragement, and financial support.



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*Our mailing address is as follows:*

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