

Mission UpReach Newsletter

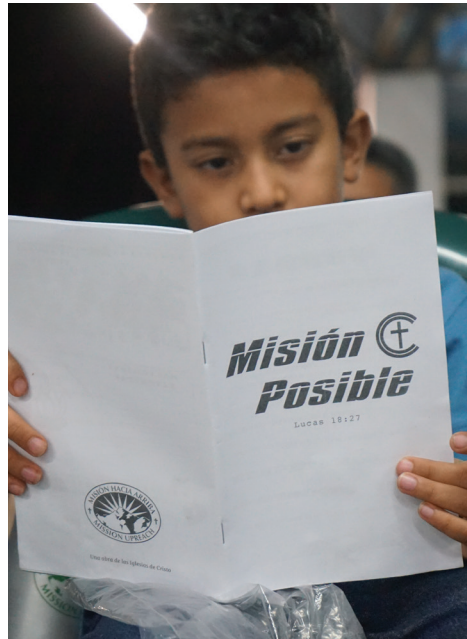
A Dream Come True

By Phil Waldron, CEO

This month MUR took a huge step forward in realizing our dreams of equipping a generation of an entirely new type of leader here in Honduras. One of the most effective “tools” that we have to help us form leaders in this new, “John 10:10 Generation” is our DESEO Christian Bible Camp. Anyone who has ever worked with a Christian Bible Camp knows intuitively that Camp has a powerfully transformative effect on children and young adults.

Thankfully, now there is a substantial amount of statistical research that supports this intuitive conclusion, and those of us who raise money to support these efforts can report back to donors that their money is indeed having a generational impact. Recently I read an article on Buildfaith.org that says this about Christian Bible Camp:

“Campers’ increased interest in worship services faded shortly after camp, but their increased agreement in the value of belonging to a church



persisted, along with the belief that they could turn to Christian friends or adults at church in times of need. Campers were also participating more frequently in devotional practices that sustain faith long-term: including Bible study, prayer, church attendance, and conversations with their family about faith.

A three-month impact is

wonderful, but there is additional evidence from the National Study of Youth and Religion that these lasting changes continue years after the experience. Participants in the study who attended religious camp as teenagers or youth were significantly more likely in their young adult years to participate in communal religious practices like group Bible studies, college religious groups, and church attendance than those who never attended summer camp. Even more astounding, those who attended religious summer camp as children or youth were over three times more likely to remain religious five years later than those who did not attend. (Sorenson, 2014)”

Our dream of having a Bible Camp run by our Honduran DESEO team staff began more than 8-years ago when Ty Ford, Director of Camp Deer Run in Winnsboro, TX, and I had a conversation on a bus headed from Santa Rosa de Copan to San Pedro

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those is the addition of a third week of camp so that we now span the ages of 8- to 18-year-olds. The second milestone that we are celebrating is that, for the first time, our Honduran Director, Carlos Umaña, directed without any US-Co-

Director participating.

Sula. Our daughter Laura had been participating in Camp Deer Run sessions as a camper. Ty had come to Honduras with a short-term mission group from Pine Tree Church of Christ in Longview, TX. While riding on the bus together, Ty and I began to dream about how he and some of his staff might help us get a Bible Camp started here in Honduras. Thankfully, over the next three years, Ty and some of his staff were able to come and help us put on our first Bible camps.

Of course, from the beginning the camp sessions were hugely successful despite some turbulent times here due to political unrest. Ty and his Crew helped us build a tradition and culture for the camp that persists today. In fact, I think that if someone who has attended Camp Deer Run were to attend one of our camp sessions currently, they would recognize our culture as being a Honduran adaptation of the Camp Deer Run culture.

This year, we achieved two more significant milestones in our development of Bible Camp. One of

These accomplishments mean that we are truly seeing our dreams come true. Carlos began his relationship with us



via his participation in our after school UPWARD basketball program that is run by DESEO.

It's been 11-years since we first met Carlos as a Jr-high school student and he has been through our DESEO program, our CREO Boot Camp Christian Leadership Training Program and our two-year

Saturday Bible school. He is also a veteran of our local church's youth group, youth retreats and active participation in the local church. He is currently serving on our church planters' team. He exemplifies what we are seeking to do with your donations and that is to inspire, equip and train a whole new generation of Christian leaders that will change their country for the benefit of everyone.

We are grateful to God for His blessing on this ministry. We are grateful to you and to the many others who have donated generously to give

these children a Christ-oriented, transformative camp experience. When the children leave camp to "come home," they are crying. Most of them are crying because the experience of being in a loving environment where they receive three meals a day plus snacks is a "piece of heaven on earth" compared to their daily routines at home. Thank you for being

a part of this incredible ministry. We cannot do it without you.



Post-Camp Celebration

On Sunday, January 30th, our church auditorium was almost filled with our usual church members, plus our camp participants and their parents. We invited the children who participated in any of the three weeks of Bible camp this year along with their families to join us as we worshipped our Father followed by a camp celebration. We enjoyed a beautiful worship service geared towards our visitors. During our usual Bible class hour, we had a celebration of Bible camp and included a video of the children and all their experiences, Bible story skits performed by the children, and some of the children shared their favorite things about camp. We had approximately 100 visitors, many of them for the first time. The elders of our church shared a sincere plea to each of the families to join our family and allow God to transform them for His glory and honor. We also had the privilege of witnessing a baptism resulting from the third week of camp. During camp there were 2 other teens baptized as they gave themselves fully to the lordship of Jesus Christ.

Concerns for COVID caused us to cancel camp last year, but this year we were determined to proceed with camp, taking all the necessary precautions to avoid illness. We tested our staff weekly, just before the new campers arrived. We also had a doctor on staff each week to treat any illnesses and test for Covid when necessary. There were plenty of sore throats (mainly from screaming), but mostly bruises and scrapes from all the fun. We thank God that everyone stayed clear of Covid and that we were able to complete the three weeks of camp without any significant illnesses.

After the celebration, Phil and I invited the camp staff for pizza and cake. It was a fun time of fellowship and gave us the opportunity to thank each of them personally for their sacrifice and service. Every camp leader shared how the experience was spiritually uplifting for them personally and how encouraged they felt after serving in this way.





A note from Donna

I want to begin by thanking each of you who prayed for our son's surgery on January 26th. Phil and I were able to be there with him for a few days and we are happy to report the surgery went

well. It's remarkable to see the positive impact of the medication. He is struggling with some side effects that should diminish. Please pray they do so that he can continue this treatment.

Phil and I returned from our brief trip just in time for the camp celebration (see above). It was such a fulfilling moment to have our auditorium so full and hear the children participating in worship songs they

had learned at camp. I personally feel it is one of the most impactful things we do in our effort to reach children. I know Bible camp has a huge impact in the U.S. as well, but I would say that here in this culture, it is even greater.

The theme for camp this year was "Mission Possible," and as you might guess, it was centered around a spy theme but with an emphasis on how all things are possible with Christ. Luke 18:27 was the theme verse which says, "But he said, 'What is impossible with man is possible with God.'"

Our hope and prayer is that as these precious children return to their homes (many filled with hunger and conflict) they can remember that with God all things are possible and that it will cause them to draw near to Him as they navigate the challenges of their lives.

2022 Brigade Season

Feb. 26-March 5.....Tusculum Church Medical Team
 April 2-9VCOM Medical Team
 June 11-18.....Pine Tree Church Medical Team
 June 25-July 2Southside Church/Woodland Park Church Medical Team
 July 9-16.....Burnt Hickory Church Medical Team
 July 16-23Disciple Trips VBS Team
 July 23-30Tusculum Church VBS Team
 September 3-10Surgical Team

Mission UpReach Board

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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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Longview, TX 75604

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

You can correspond directly with Phil and Donna at:

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