

His Hands for Nicaragua

Pastor Carlos Baez of Iglesia Pentecostal MI in La Mercedes along with his associate, Pastor Abel Duarte, are working in La Mercedes, Limon, Jalapa, Somoto, Teotecacinta, Wiwili, the Mosquito Coast, and other areas, to bring help and hope to the children and their parents through their Mercy Kids program.



March 2018

Marilee Colpits, Program Coordinator for the Africa Program

"Seeing these children in Nicaragua broke my heart. So much need. Knowing we can help by donating less than a dollar a day per sponsorship is a blessing. It's a small gesture, but it's one of love and caring. These kids and families deserve to know they are not forgotten and that their lives matter."

Jamie Charles, Secretary and Program Coordinator of His Hands

"We are honored and humbled at the same time to be used by God to bring some much-needed help and hope to the children and their families in this program. This is our first program that focuses solely on helping disabled children and their families. Having been to all of our program countries and interviewing children in each of them, I have to say that the stories of these children in Nicaragua are completely heartbreaking. The tears were flowing on many occasions. But God is good and He is a God of provision and we are excited to be a channel of that blessing to these sweet children and their families in Nicaragua."

Hi, I'm Jessi

In January I went on my 1st mission trip outside of the US and it changed my life. God orchestrated this trip and all of the organizations that partnered together to make this mission a success in so many ways and this is just the beginning! Nicaragua is the next child sponsorship program for His Hands, and I am humbled and honored to be the Child Sponsorship Coordinator for Nicaragua. I left a piece of my heart in Nicaragua and tried to figure out how to reconcile what I experienced. Turns out it can't be reconciled. It's not something that can easily be "fixed." Instead, we can choose to enter into their suffering and let them know that they matter, their stories matter, and we care about them. I can't wait for you to meet them!





Thank You, Child Sponsors!

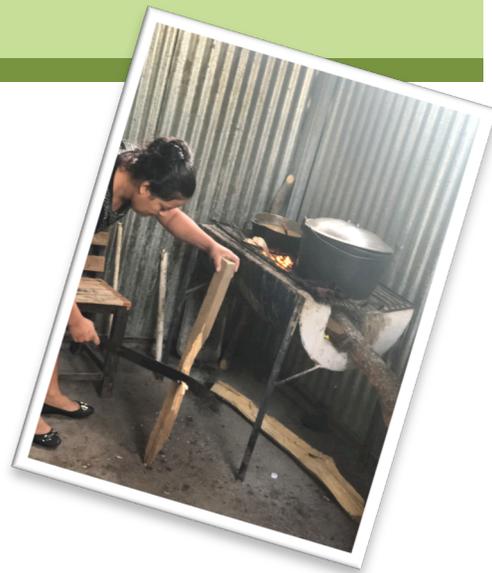
Your generous support helps to provide monthly food distributions for his family as well as needed medications and access to other medical necessities and therapies.

For many of the children in the sponsorship program, this assistance is life-saving. Most of the families in the small, rural community of La Mercedes and the surrounding areas are farmers or make handicrafts. Many are not able to provide well for their children's needs

because they need to provide full-time care for their disabled child. Many of the people in this area suffer from skin conditions and parasites. Malnutrition is also a common problem. Only about 50% of the adults can read and write. Government schools have

free tuition but require uniforms and other supplies which put the cost of education beyond many of the people in the area, especially those parents who are also caring for a disabled child.

Such gracious hosts! They cooked for 14 people in this kitchen.



Disability in Nicaragua

This is Dennis. He has hydrocephalus, which is a common birth defect in Nicaragua, in addition to cerebral palsy. Dennis was not predicted to live past 6 years old. He is 15 and cannot see. He can hear. 15 years as a prisoner in his own body.



RELIGIOUS VIEWS REGARDING DISABILITY

Surveys have found the vast majority of Nicaraguans are Christian with 73% adhering to the Roman Catholic practices. One challenge that people with disability in Nicaragua face is that disability can be equated with sin, making it more difficult to receive assistance from people in one's community.

GOVERNMENT PERCEPTIONS REGARDING DISABILITY

Nicaragua is recognized as the poorest country in Central America

according to an article written by Susan B Matt in Disability Studies Quarterly. This means that children with disabilities in Nicaragua have very few resources. Between 10-15% of the Nicaraguan population are experiencing disability. There are few laws protecting those with disability and many of them are not reinforced.

CULTURAL BELIEFS REGARDING DISABILITY

There appears to be a mixed cultural response to people with disability in Nicaragua, according to Susan B Matt in her study published in Disability Studies Quarterly. While some

people are accepting of those with disability, many people still have a negative view of this portion of the population. People with disability are often ostracized. It is not



These are Daniel's sisters who are healthy twins.

uncommon for parents to believe that it is somehow their fault that their children have these disabilities. However, many parents remain



Pastor Carlos

The Mercy Ministry began in 2006 when Pastor Carlos discovered 18 children recycling at the garbage dump in his city of Somoto. They were poor, and hungry, barefoot and unschooled. He built them a home, fed and clothed them and sent them to school. He soon learned that some of the kids and some of the staff that was helping, knew of someone with a child with disabilities. Pastor Carlos learned that these 10 homes were also hungry. This number is now 265 children with special needs. Where many of the fathers have fled, leaving hungry and downcast families.

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hopeful that their children will gain independence in the future. Also, some medical treatment, such as physical therapy, is beginning to become available.

Abundance Has Nothing To Do With What You Have And Everything To Do With What You Believe.

You can see God more clearly when all of the distractions are taken away. These people don't have a Plan B, a backup plan. All they have is their faith in God. It's easy to deny God exists when you are living comfortably. You live differently, pray differently or not at all, and treat others differently when you don't have anything else to depend on BUT

GOD. People question if there is a God when they see suffering. People pray away suffering, but it's in the suffering where God meets you.

This Life Is Temporary.

Life was never about us, but what we can do for others. It's not about what church we attend, what prayers we pray, or what songs we sing. It is about our heart. *The heart of the matter is a matter of the heart.* We can't earn our way into eternity by doing the right things. No one else can help us get there. We are the only one in charge of our destiny. What we focus on grows.

Together we are changing these family's lives. Thank you for partnering with us by sponsoring the Mercy Kids!

May God bless you!