

Greetings!

It is always a blessing to pause and reflect on what we've been doing in Guatemala over the last several months and realize just how present God has been in the midst of our 'doing' ministry. **We are grateful to serve a God who is so powerful yet so intimate that he invites us to play a role in His plans.** In the case of Se Luz, we are working towards transforming the lives of about 50 youth in Guatemala (Santiago Sacatepequez), so they do not join the gangs of Santiago; more importantly, so they will be shining examples in their community of how to love and serve each other in the name of Jesus Christ.

In our board meetings we've been reflecting on the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23), and specifically how Se Luz fosters growth of the fruit in our youths' lives. It has been a sweet experience to have our eyes opened to all of the ways that youths' lives are already changing; **to understand that God is developing love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, and self-control in each one** through our weekly youth group meetings and monthly-ish service projects.

Our goal is to be able to complete one service project each month. Currently, we raise enough money in a year to do about half that. We are very appreciative of all your gifts to make this ministry possible, and it feels strange to ask you to give more. Yet in order to continue growing, the bottom line is we need more funding. So, we have been trying to creatively broaden our support base.

We had a lovely couple host a garage sale in June and donated the proceeds to Se Luz, which was over \$700! In August, Se Luz was a non-profit that benefitted from Macy's Shop for a Cause event. Through that fundraiser we brought in approximately \$300. **Coming up on November 16, 2011 we will be promoting our online fundraiser's Give to the Max Day, which is a 24-hour giving bonanza.** In preparation for GTTM, we are looking for sponsors who are willing to set up Donation Matches that would encourage others to give online that day. **If you are interested in setting up a match grant, please contact Kali Pliego 612-702-2263 right away.** Individuals and businesses can offer matching grants, so feel free to ask your boss if they might consider helping us out!

One method of raising funds that has worked very well for us with the churches that participate is the 5th Sunday offering for Se Luz. There are 3-4 months every year that have five Sundays, and this program would take a special offering from the congregation on that 5th Sunday for Se Luz. Churches like this program because it doesn't take away from any fixed budgets, and because the congregants have a chance to respond personally to the call to generosity. We like it because our 5th Sunday months provide us with a fairly regular income stream. **If you think your church might like to support Se Luz with 5th Sunday offerings, contact Kali Pliego 612-702-2263, or kali@se-luz.org.**

What your money supports:

In July we had a group of 20 youth (19 volunteer hours each!) serve a public school in Santa Maria, a village near Santiago. (See pictures on our facebook page: Se Luz) The kids painted the entire school building, inside and out, and they replaced some broken

roof tiles. This project took more time than anticipated, so the youth returned to the school for a second weekend of serving! Part of the reason our youth are willing to give up two consecutive weekends to a Se Luz project is because they have developed strong friendships with each other. For them the line is blurred between social time and ministry time. Se Luz is a safe place for our youth, a trusted family. This is a big deal in a culture that suffers from extreme poverty and the social ills that come with it: abuse in the homes, chemical abuse/dependency, marital unfaithfulness, lack of education in favor of working.

About a month ago, I got a call from Romeo with news that two orphaned brothers (Wilver and Eriberto Sactic) had been coming to our Tuesday youth group meetings. **The leadership team learned of the boys' situation, being parentless and homeless, and decided something must be done.** Jorge, one of the older youth and a leader took the boys under his wing, buying them food and making sure they were safe at night in the church they slept in. Then, the church leaders unfortunately decided to tell them they were no longer allowed to sleep in their building. So, Romeo found a room and is paying the rent out of his own pocket (about \$30 per month), so that the boys have a home. Jorge continues to look after them.

Although not technically a ministry of Se Luz (we are not financially supporting this situation), I am proud of the loving response our Se Luz family in Guatemala has shown these two orphan boys. **It is a testament to how Se Luz has empowered them to put others' needs before their own and look after the 'orphans and widows in their distress' (James 1:27).** We realize that renting a room for the boys and continuing to buy them food is not a long-term solution, but until we can figure out which long-term solution makes the most sense for these boys, it is working. **If you are a social worker, you may be able to help us think through our options. Please contact Kali Pliego 612-702-2263 if you have some advice to offer us.**

On October 27th, we will be taking our board trip to Guatemala. It will be an exciting week packed with learning on our part, and hopefully our presence will encourage Romeo and the youth to keep moving forward. We'll be serving with the youth, visiting past and future projects, having leadership meetings, hosting a movie screening, seeing old friends, meeting new ones, and just having a great time! We might even hike a volcano! Seriously, it will be a great, blessed trip. Sunday, October 30th, we would like to do a live video feed from Guatemala into your church service. **If you are technically inclined, contact kali@se-luz.org to discuss how this can be done.**

I hope that you can see God's fingerprints on this ministry as I do. It is hard in a two-page newsletter to give you the full story. As always, if something I've mentioned in this update has you wanting more information or left you with some doubt, I'd love to talk to you about it. As a supporter, YOU are included in the Se Luz family, and we believe it is important to take care of family. Please don't hesitate to contact me at the phone number or email mentioned above. We are so thankful and honored to be in ministry with you! Peace!