



IDENTITY MISSION NEWSLETTER

A FAMILY FOR EVERY CHILD

TARA GARCIA, IDENTITY MISSION CEO AND CO-FOUNDER

Approximately 8,000 children are still living daily without a family in Honduras. And those are only the children residing in orphanages; there are many more that suffer the results of family breakdown and do not ever receive a response to their need for care. After over a decade of working in orphan care in Honduras, I have discovered that the solution they need is quite simple: **If a child loses their family, for any reason, the answer is a family.**

That is exactly why Identity Mission has established two programs to provide that solution!

The first is foster care. If abandoned or being separated from their biological family is necessary, the solution is for that child to reside in a family that can care for them. Foster parents who have received training on caring for children that have suffered trauma and separation hardships can provide the ideal environment for healing, safety, and love to envelop that hurting child.

The second program is family preservation! Because frequently in Honduras, family breakdown is due to poverty, and a simple helping hand at the right moment can prevent a child from being unnecessarily separated from their family. In Identity's Family Preservation program, we walk with the family through a one- to two-year journey of discovering how they can move from being at-risk to thriving economically, parenting their children well, and becoming self-sustainable. Family Preservation prevents children from entering the welfare system altogether and keeps



them in a loving family, their family! Needing a family is God's design. When a family has been stripped away from a child, there are dire consequences. They suffer developmentally, socially, even physically. There is an easy to read research article done by Harvard that can give you a picture of the effect on a child growing up without a family.

This is exactly why your partnership with Identity Mission is so **critical!** Up to now, together, we have been able to prevent 77 children from entering an orphanage. That is 77 children that have not had to live one day without family support: either a foster family or their own biological family. Thank you to each one of you that helped make that possible! And now we ask of you to join us in shouting even louder that every child deserves to be growing up in a family. Let us advocate for children in our communities and overseas; let us not sit back, but walk out our calling to assist the orphan in their distress and assist them in the **RIGHT** way; by not leaving them lonely. Psalm 68:6 says that, *"God sets the lonely in family."* He knew that family is exactly what they needed on every level of life.

Let's be the voices and actions that make sure that promise is a reality for every child!

AN ESCAPE FROM THE EFFECTS OF COVID

ERICA SWITZER, IDENTITY MISSION COO

Since March 16th, the Honduran economy has been almost entirely shut down. Families who previously were just barely able to hold their households together have been forced into unemployment with the government mandate of an absolute quarantine that has lasted now for four and a half months. Only essential workers in medical, grocery, pharmacy, and some government-approved businesses have been able to return, but still, most are at a limited percentage of their workers. This has left labor workers and workers who do not work for national chain stores approved by the government plan to open the economy without employment options. All of the families in our family preservation program have been without work this entire time. (Get the full breakdown of family preservation in the article above!)

These families are a part of a 1-2 year program that works to move them to a more sustainable place! Working towards giving them opportunities for vocational training that leads to better jobs, start-up business loans, life coaching, improvement for their living situation when needed, and health and education subsidies for their children.

Needless to say, most of the parts of a life plan were put on hold, as the country-wide lockdown came into effect. Still today, families still cannot go to work. Which while most families in North America have savings accounts to be able to withstand a gap of no income, families who are



existing poverty do not have the extra means to continue to keep food in their home for their children, or continue to pay their rent or other living expenses.

These families were on their way to for the first time in their lives knowing what it was like to on their own be getting ahead, to know for the first time the dignity and the pride of being able to provide and care for their children. And then seemingly overnight, not because of their own doing, that ability was taken from them.

Identity Mission is **committed** to not letting these families slip back and stay down. We are committed to helping them with their immediate needs through the pandemic (providing food, subsidies for rent and basic needs, and covering medical costs). And when this comes to an end, and parents can work again, our family preservation directors are committed to not allowing these families slide back into poverty, but to be able to walk with dignity towards a place of where they can stand on their own feet and support their families, setting the example for their children, and breaking the generational chains that poverty has had over their family.

Because of the support that has been generously given in these past few months, Identity Mission has been able to:

- Fully support the families in our programs!
- Provide support to hundreds of families through food distribution
- Provide diapers and formula to babies in slum neighborhoods
- Partner with the welfare office to begin to brainstorm more ways that Identity Mission can be apart of strengthening at-risk families so that more children don't end up separated from their families because of poverty.

To continue to support families in desperate need, see the next article!

HOW YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE NOW FOR FAMILIES

ERICA SWITZER, IDENTITY MISSION COO

After four and a half consecutive months of the government-mandated shutdown to prevent the spread of COVID-19 from affecting the health of the vulnerable population and the already unsteady health care system, the economic crisis has taken a toll on families and communities at large.

The shutdown has prevented 70% of the working class from working and generating income since March 15th. These are families that relied on the day to day income to be able to make ends meet. People have lost their jobs, businesses have permanently shut down, there have been no unemployment or stimulus checks, and hopelessness has become a reality for thousands of people.

The effects on the child welfare system in the coming months will be higher than ever before. More children are entering the system of care because of increased poverty. Families who had a secure financial plan to care for their children are being faced with the terrifying reality that they won't be able to keep them alive and are feeling forced to turn their children to the government to provide a better life.

Your donation this month will better position us to...

- **Support families.** To provide for practical, basic needs that they have, such as groceries and support that will keep electricity and water in their homes so that their children don't have to face the trauma that happens when they are separated from their families due to preventable causes.
- **Prepare more foster families** to meet the needs of children who cannot be with their biological families. We want to guarantee that when a child loses their family, another family is positioned to care for them.

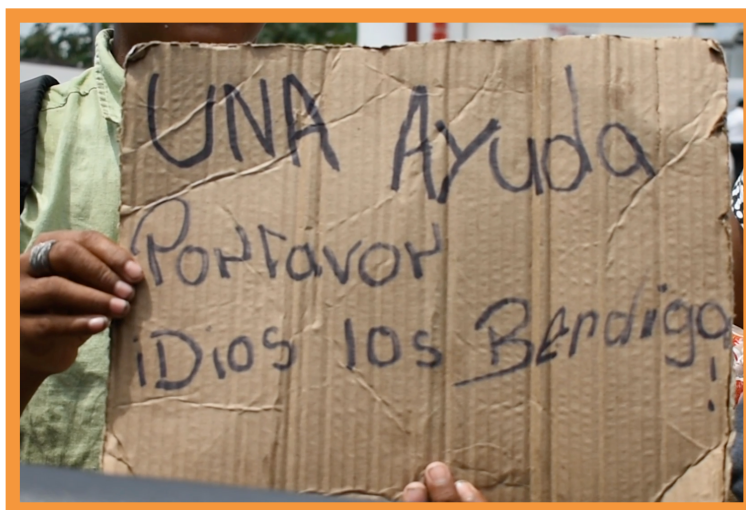
Together, we can stand on either side of the needs of children in Honduras, who have been caught dealing with the brunt of the hardships of this pandemic, through no fault of their own. Whether that is by supporting families to prevent their children from entering the welfare system or ensuring that quality and trained foster families can open the doors of their homes to care for children when their biological family is not an option.

We can only do this with your decision to invest in families.

Join us as this August, we raise \$20,000 to be able to serve children and their families well.

Thank you for how you make family a reality in Honduras!

To give toward family this month, simply go to identitymission.org/donate or to any of our social media pages and click on the link in the posts this month!



A family holds a sign in the streets of San Pedro Sula that says, "Help please! God bless you!"

THE FOSTER CARE PILOT PROGRAM

JORGE GARCIA, IDENTITY MISSION NATIONAL DIRECTOR AND CO-FOUNDER

As many of you may recall, we announced at the beginning of the year that the Honduran government welfare offices launched a foster care pilot program. **After leading the foster care movement for the past five years in Honduras, we at Identity Mission are excited about this move by the government to bring real nationwide reform to orphan care.** We are hopeful about how it will allow foster care to grow exponentially, bringing more regions of welfare offices and organizations into the foster care movement! *We know that change takes time, but we are more confident than ever before that with the support of the national welfare office at this level, foster care will become the main alternative for children when their biological parents are not able to care for them, instead of residential orphanages.*

A few quick facts about the pilot that will help you understand what's going on with the pilot program:

- The government developed a foster care protocol and pilot program with the assistance of Orphan Outreach, a nonprofit that works with countries to influence policy change and care reform on a national level.
- This pilot program is currently in motion with the main goal of proving that foster care can be a success as a better alternative to the orphanage system in Honduras by the end of 2021.
- Two organizations, Identity Mission and Family Life Missions are participating in this pilot in partnership with the welfare office in phase one, with the hopeful possibility of additional organizations may enter the pilot during its second phase.
- After the pilot program has ended in 2021, Honduras will start the next stage of ensuring that no child under three years old will live in an orphanage, and begin utilizing foster care as the first option in orphan care!
- Our team of psychologists and social workers are working nonstop in navigating the new changes alongside the welfare offices to process foster families under the new protocol and making sure that foster care advances in Honduras, so that more children than ever are taken care of in equipped families.

The time to be involved with Identity Mission is NOW because your support is ensuring a countrywide reform in orphan care. We genuinely believe that we are in Honduras for such a time as this, and joined by your support we will see a day where every child in Honduras has a family.

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