



IDENTITY MISSION NEWSLETTER

TRAINING ORGANIZATIONS THROUGHOUT HONDURAS

BY: BECKY VEGA, IDENTITY MISSION SOCIAL WORKER

Throughout the history of Honduras, several critical situations created an ongoing orphan crisis in Honduras. With resources being low, the country going through various setbacks such as major natural disasters, corruption within the government, and a culture marked by poverty; orphanages naturally began to take root throughout the country. Orphanages became a commonality and an easy alternative to a family who was facing the effects of the setbacks of poverty; however, decades of global and credible research findings show that children develop better in families, and so at Identity Mission, we look towards better practices and caring for orphans with excellence.

We have witnessed that the staff that work within orphanages often have a great heart and care for children as best they can yet have little to no access to updated information. We see this as an opportunity to provide others with the kind of qualifications that will enable them to be empowered to then build up the children they work with!

We have started trainings on trauma awareness, brain and child development, healthy attachments, pro-active strategies for interventions, CPR-First Aid, sensory and emotional needs, and better policies and procedures for the caretakers of the children who live in orphanages and for other caretakers of vulnerable children. We believe and hope that this information shows people a path that enables them to make progress while caring for vulnerable children from hard places.

During our trainings these caregivers have shared success stories and have said things like this:

"I have seen behavior change in a child I care for by simply increasing their water intake and by being more proactive in giving them positive choices!"

"Giving options, alternatives, knowledge, and strategies for better practices emboldens the caregivers to do better."



"Thank you for teaching us how trauma can change the brain, I always thought my kids were being blatantly disobedient, now I understand that it is I who have to change because there are things they need more help with! This training has opened my eyes to show more grace to my children!"

"Being trauma-informed has taught me that children from hard places are wired differently, and I now don't have to be frustrated or burdened because now we have tools to help better!"

As we have continued to host training sessions, the numbers have grown. We have had about 50 different entities representing foster families, orphanage staff, primary and high schools, and other professionals that work with at-risk children and youth attend the various trainings.

We love seeing how God has brought people that are compassionate to work with orphans and vulnerable kids. Being trauma-informed is so empowering that it allows caregivers not just to do better but to work with excellence. With these trainings, we aspire to inspire people to become trauma-informed and move towards better practices so that we no longer teach orphanages, staff, and children to survive, but also to thrive!

FOSTER FAMILY HIGHLIGHT

BY: TARA GARCIA, IDENTITY MISSION CEO

One of our newest foster families, the Murillo family, really stepped out of their cultural norm to say yes to the call to care for the orphan. When they were first approached by Identity Mission caseworker, Becky Vega, they were personally drawn to the purpose of fostering, but after sharing the concept with their extended family they were unsure. Their family was very against them being a foster family; why would they open their home to a strange child? What if the child was reintegrated; how would they bare the separation? Many of these same doubts prevent families from fostering here in Honduras. It is such a new concept and often not culturally acceptable by other family members.

That is why Identity Mission has launched a new awareness class called "Mi Conexion". It allows interested families to hear all about what fostering means, why it is an important transition away from orphanages, and to hear from current foster families. The classes are really engaging the local Christians in an amazing way, raising awareness for what is happening across Honduras, and providing families with the information they need to properly make a decision about their place in fostering.

After receiving such information, the Murillo family was able to fully explain their desire and reasoning behind choosing to foster; it opened up the family to support them in their choice and today, they are caring for sweet 14-month-old Allison!



Their family has found great joy in caring for Allison and in being a part of the movement in Honduras. They passionately share with others about the need for vulnerable children to be cared for in families and how it has been a blessing to their own family.

Thank you, partners, back home for making it possible not only for us to say yes to these precious kids, but realize that your partnership also makes it possible for families like the Murillo's to say yes to open up their home and answer the call with you.

MAKE A DIFFERENCE THIS FOSTER CARE AWARENESS MONTH

BY: ERICA SWITZER, IDENTITY MISSION COO

83 CENTS PER DAY



\$25/month to provide a family for one orphan
\$50/month to provide a family for two orphans
\$75/month to provide a family for three orphans
\$100/month to provide a family for four orphans

Did you know that in order for a child to be cared for within foster care that it only costs 83 cents per day?

This May, we are launching a fundraising campaign to give you the opportunity to join in with Identity Mission to help to provide a family for every orphan in Honduras!

When you commit to becoming a monthly sponsor of \$25/month you are helping to provide a family for a child who would otherwise live in an orphanage.

This foster care awareness month, we want to be able to open the opportunity to serve **THIRTY** more children through foster care! Would you consider becoming a monthly partner for one of the following amounts, this May?

WELCOME LESBI TO IDENTITY

BY: ERICA SWITZER, IDENTITY MISSION COO

Join us in welcoming our newest social worker, Lesbi Rodriguez to the Identity Mission team! She is joining our staff in the San Pedro Sula office, helping to manage cases of foster children in the northern region of Honduras!

You may have seen that we have hired several new Honduran social workers over the last year. If you are wondering why, it is because we highly prioritize vulnerable children receiving the most holistic care possible. The majority of children who have been separated from their families or who have lived through extreme poverty have experienced trauma. In order for a child to be able to process and be able to move towards total healing and ultimately be able to move towards fully developing their identity within their community and in Christ, they often need help walking through past traumatic experiences. We believe that there is no one more qualified to do this than licensed and trained social workers who have studied psychology, received training specific to childhood trauma, who know the culture of Honduras, and who are committed to walking with children through their healing process.

In Honduras, most residential orphanages share a psychologist's salary and split their caseload with another orphanage because the costs of maintaining a residential orphanage are high. Between the cost of the upkeep on a building, as well as staff such as cooks, directors, and other staff, employing a psychologist as a social worker often is unfortunately not the highest priority for most residential orphanages. This typically means that most social workers have a caseload of over one hundred children.

At Identity Mission, we believe that each child should have a specific and individualized plan for their situation that best helps a child heal from trauma and continue to grow beyond their past experiences.



That's why we are committed to having a social worker for every thirty children in our care because we believe that each child deserves the full attention of a family, their community, and the Identity Mission staff. We want to give each child every opportunity to grow and develop their identity in Christ, and we believe surrounding them by not only loving, but also equipped and educated professionals is vital to serving orphaned and vulnerable children well. So thank you, when you support the salary of a Honduran social worker, you are helping to provide this specific and in-depth care to children in need!

We are so excited for Lesbi to join our team to be able to ensure quality care for vulnerable children in Honduras! We are confident that having her on the Identity Mission team will bring a higher level of excellence for the children that we serve!

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TARA'S BLOG



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