

O C T O B E R / N O V E M B E R 2 0 1 3

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VOZ NUEVA

GIVING A NEW VOICE TO THE CHILDREN OF GUATEMALA IN ORDER
THAT THEY MAY "PROCLAIM WHAT THE LORD HAS DONE."
PSALM 118:17



This newsletter is a publication of Jennifer Gieseemann, Speech Pathologist and Missionary to the New Life School, Santa Maria de Jesus, Sacatepequez, Guatemala

Contact Information:

Email Address:
jenngiese82@gmail.com

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Joseph before surgery

Healthcare through the Eyes of the Poor

To start, this is not a critique of Obamacare or the American healthcare system. This is a look into the life of most Guatemalans as they seek to find good healthcare for their children. One of my kids, Joseph, had surgery to remove cataracts on his eyes 2 years ago. He was blessed to have this procedure done at no or little cost to his parents. I received a call a few weeks ago saying that Joseph had an appointment at one of the hospitals in Antigua for his eyes. This hospital brings down medical teams from the States and other places to provide good healthcare at little or no cost to Guatemalans. Patients must be put on a waiting list and are called if they are able to see the teams when they come. Many times, they must wait a year for this to happen. I accompanied Joseph and his parents to his appointment. We arrived at 6:45 am and had been told they wanted to see if he would qualify for another eye surgery. We waited approximately two hours and then were brought in to see the doctor.

The doctor and his assistants spoke in English to each other and explained very little to the family. They explained the surgery to me, so I was able to explain more in detail to the parents. They decided to perform the surgery and told the parents they were doing it the same day. They were in shock and not prepared to have their son go under the knife so fast. Very little was explained to them, yet they had to make the decision very quickly. When they called him in, his mom went back with him. She came out crying as she was scared of the unknown and had been through so much with him. I was able to pray with her, and she thanked me immensely for being there with them. When he came out of surgery, we were able to go back to see him, but there were only 2 hours a day for visitation. So the dad had to leave and return later.

Healthcare through the Eyes of the Poor, continued

Joseph is currently at home. He was only able to have surgery on one of his eyes due to the condition of the other eye. He will have one good eye with an artificial lens, but he will have to live without a lens in the other one. I was grateful for the experience of looking into the way most Guatemalans are provided healthcare. This was actually one of the better situations as I have heard horror stories from other people. I am thankful for the doctors who come down to give these people a chance for better healthcare, but I have seen how much more of a need there still is in this country.

NEW APPRECIATIONS

Ever since I moved to Guatemala a year and a half ago, I have been getting around using public transportation. When I had visited Antigua back in 2011, I saw that it was a very walkable city and that the buses to Santa Maria ran often and were not that bad. I guess when you are only in a place for 3 weeks, you only see a part of what it is really like. Public transportation for a year and a half has definitely come with its challenges. Sometimes you end up carrying a heavy bag of groceries around town and barely make it home in one piece. You learn to forget the rules of personal space, and you sometimes even fall out of your seat when the bus driver drives too fast around a corner.

But, I have only had to deal with these “inconveniences” for a year and a half. Most of the people in Guatemala have to live with it day in and day out for their entire lives. It is their reality. And do they complain? No. Are they unhappy? No. Do they see a car as a necessity? Definitely not. It is a luxury. One that too many of us have taken for granted in life. Recently, due to concerns of safety and needing to be more mobile for my ministry, I decided to purchase a car. I was a little nervous about the whole process because this was my first experience buying a car all by myself and because it was in Guatemala. I started praying and researching cars. My mechanic steered me away from the cars I was looking at and told me about another one that was better for the rough cobblestone streets of Antigua. So, I started looking for that model. I found one online that looked very nice. I made an appointment to see it on Saturday. My minister and his wife drove me to Guatemala City to meet the owner. I was blown away when I got there. This car was perfect and was a great price! It was the first car I had seen, but I knew it was the one for me. God took all the stress and worry away from the process and laid my car right at my feet. I almost felt unworthy to purchase the car, but I knew that it would keep me safe and that God had brought it to me! But now, instead of just being excited to have a new car, I am extremely grateful for this “luxury” God has given me. I hope I never take it for granted. I pray that I will allow God to choose its purposes instead of me. I know he has great plans for it. So, look out, Guatemala, another crazy gringa is on the roads!! ***Thank you to all of you who sacrificed in order to donate towards this purchase. I do not have the words to tell you how grateful I am for this gift!!!***

My old mode of transportation!



My new mode of transportation!
Thank you to all so graciously donated!

