Believing in a positive future
- Step by Step Scholarship program offers hope
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Dear friends,

At International Samaritan, we encourage students to believe in their dreams. During a recent visit to Guatemala, I met with Miguel, a graduate of our Paso a Paso scholarship program who is now working with Autorepuestos Kars, a car parts distributor in Guatemala City. He is an experienced mechanic, having studied at the Institute of Technology of Electronics and Design in Guatemala.

During our conversation, he told me that he received his scholarship from International Samaritan at a crucial point in his life. Shortly before being awarded this scholarship, a relative was living in the United States and was encouraging him to illegally immigrate to live and work with them. Miguel decided not to follow his family member, and elected to stay in Guatemala to pursue his education.

“International Samaritan’s scholarship changed my life. It gave me motivation and a psychological boost to study and stay in Guatemala. It helped me do what I wanted to do. I would not have been able to fulfill my dreams without the scholarship. Now, I am saving money to buy a car and a house.”

With your help, we have positively impacted the life of Miguel and many others around the world. With the guidance of our Board and your support, we are dreaming about the big things we will accomplish together in serving our poorest brothers and sisters. My hope is that you will consider giving to help change a life.

Most Sincerely,

Andrew Pawuk
Vice President of Operations

Sponsor
Help send children to school so they can escape from poverty.

Donate
Give money, hold a local fundraiser, send children to school. Every dollar helps.

Volunteer
Join service immersion experience to help teach, build houses, provide medical services.

Lead
Contact our office about starting an I.S. campus chapter at your high school or university.
For recyclers sorting through mountains of refuse, garbage dumps are torture. Every day, workers spend their long days enduring appalling stench and horrid filth while sorting for things they can sell. At day’s end, they collect their meager “harvest” and go home, their skin covered in sweat, grime, and sores, their lungs filled with fumes leached from the landfill.

But if the local garbage dump closes, recyclers will experience an even greater agony, one where they are unable to use their sorting abilities, one in which they lack the education and skills to find work that could match even the meager wages earned from recycling.

When Nicaraguan authorities closed and privatized services at one of the world’s largest dumps, some recyclers found secret, illegal entrances to carry on their way of life, despite the filth and danger. Others, fearful of being arrested, no longer went to their former workplace, and thousands of already destitute people were left in desperate straits. Ironically, in spite of eliminating a dangerous and uncertain job which allowed them to make a living, former garbage recyclers do not have the skills they need to support themselves and their families.

International Samaritan has established an effective scholarship program to help children, teenagers, and young adults who once worked in the garbage dump. These young people are now earning an education in order to follow their dreams of better lives.

Just as we do with our successful Step by Step Scholarship program, our objective is to help recyclers in garbage dump communities attain the necessary skills and education to find decent work and realize a life of hope and dignity.
Chereka women’s group wins award

In Ethiopia, mothers of Step by Step Scholarship recipients established a business called the Chereka Model Women’s Group. Recently, they won a trophy after the city’s evaluation of their successes. The chairwoman of Chereka Model Women’s Group said, “It is because of our perseverance that we have been able to receive the award. Our children now are in school because of scholarships from International Samaritan. Now, we have time to focus on our dreams, our shared dreams to own a business and support our families. Presently, we have over 150 chickens and sell eggs everyday which equals consistent monthly income. Above all, this opportunity has given us the confidence to dream even bigger and to say it is never too late to try and to dream.”

Chereka Model Women’s Group discusses their business, what they can do for their community, and how they can give a better life to their children. Working in the garbage dump is physically challenging and going to the Kose garbage dump was the last thing the women wanted to do; however, they had no choice because they were the breadwinners in the family. With International Samaritan’s support, they are now working during the day with their friends and are more financially stable than ever before.

After the loss of her mother Liyunesh dreams for a brighter future with her grandmother

One woman in the Chereka group is Gelayetu Terekegn, the grandmother of Liyunesh Bilelegn. Liyunesh lost her mother to HIV/AIDS 4 years ago and her grandmother, a former garbage dump worker, became her guardian. Now a Step by Step scholarship recipient, Liyunesh and her grandmother have joined the mothers of the children who receive scholarships from International Samaritan.
Step by Step Scholarship Student Highlight

Liyunesh Bilegen

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

“Just a few years ago, I would have dreaded the coming of a new year, because despite the change of a calendar year, nothing would ever change for me. I wouldn’t be able to attend school. My family did not have money to send me to school. When my friends and neighborhood kids were busy buying uniforms and exercise books, I would always be left out.

I remember how I felt when I heard that I was going to receive a scholarship from International Samaritan. It is the happiest I have ever been. I felt like my prayers had been answered. I start class with my friends in a couple of days at Hibir Primary School. I love my teachers and classmates there. I already have my uniforms and my school bag filled with my school materials. I am counting the days until we start school with the anticipation that I will be one of the best students in my class. When I grow up, I want to become a teacher. So this year, I will go to school, thanks to International Samaritan. A new year, a new grade, and new things to learn!”

Steven Juarez Lopez
La Chureca Garbage Dump, Nicaragua

Steven Juarez Lopez of Nicaragua is from La Chureca and is in a “ciclo” program to study two years of education per year to catch up to his age level. The “ciclo” program was created for children who are behind in their studies, usually, because they spent their time working in the garbage dump rather than going to school. A child’s working in the dump is not uncommon. Steven, however, is committed to his education, even though his parents have required him and his brother to work in the dump. He is studying hard at school, trying to catch up to his peers’ grade level. With the support of his teachers and the program, we believe there is a chance for a positive future for Steven. His Step by Step scholarship saves him, and others like him, from garbage dump scavenging.
GROWING COMMUNITY IN JAMAICA

Friends of International Samaritan,

As International Samaritan continues to expand our service immersion trips and our programs to support people in garbage dump communities, continuous efforts are made to explore new regions in which to work. September of 2017, I traveled to the Riverton City garbage dump community in Kingston, Jamaica to begin forming the partnerships necessary for International Samaritan to begin its work. Montini Catholic High School was the inaugural volunteer group for Jamaica and was there in July, working with the students and teachers at Riverton Early Childhood Centre in their summer school program. International Samaritan is looking forward to continuing this new Jamaican partnership with St. Patrick’s Foundation. Moreover, we hope to send a medical team there in October to continue our work.

Blessings,

Daniel Piaskowski
International Service Coordinator

Notes from the Field
Friends of International Samaritan, Want to make a difference? Join us for our 2018

PROGRAM COUNTRY UPDATES

San Pedro Sula, Honduras

Recently, political unrest over the presidential election in Honduras has caused strikes and nationwide road blockades. This unrest prevented water and food from being delivered to the garbage dump community in San Pedro Sula. Unfortunately, El Ocotillo, the community that International Samaritan serves was without water, causing many families to not have enough for basic living. International Samaritan stepped in, and Step by Step Scholarship students volunteered to distribute water throughout the community. As a result, 35 families were able to receive their much-needed water.

Want to make a difference?
Join us for our 2018

Oct 7-14, 2018
Kingston, Jamaica

Nov 11-18, 2018
Guatemala

For more details, visit intsam.org/volunteer or email Daniel Piaskowski at dan@intsam.org
Nicaragua has been in a state of civil unrest since April 18th, due to President Daniel Ortega’s pension reforms. Though the policy has since been repealed, there have been widespread peaceful and violent protests nationwide. Marches, strikes, and blockades have caused school and business closures, recommended nightly curfews, and limited flights to and from the country. Unfortunately, over 200 people have died as a result of the protests, including Catholic priests. The bishop of Managua is making attempts to negotiate with President Ortega and his wife, the vice president, to hold early elections to end the unrest. International Samaritan has temporarily suspended our volunteer programs in Nicaragua until there is a peaceful resolution. Our Paso a Paso Scholarship program continues to serve our beneficiaries and students attend classes as often as the situation allows.

It is our sincere hope to be able to safely send volunteers to Nicaragua once again. Please join us in praying for peace in Nicaragua.

Guatemala

Volcano Erupts in Guatemala

On June 3, the Fire Volcano in Guatemala erupted. Our program beneficiaries, staff, and community members were not affected, continuing to attend school and keep operations running smoothly.

Angelica Cancinos, director of Paso a Paso, confirmed that all of our scholarship students and their families are safe from the volcano.

Service Trips Continue

Students from Bishop Watterson High School, Walsh Jesuit High School, and St. Charles Preparatory School traveled to Escuintla, Guatemala in June. Volunteer Ethan Johnson said, “The closeness of this group has helped us get lots of work done all week. Not to mention how the kids are always making us smile and laugh throughout the day. This trip has changed our perspective on life.”
Dear Friends,

Our slogan “Stop... and change a life” not only represents the impacts we can create, but also reminds us that change is a life constant.

Throughout my 15 years of involvement with International Samaritan, I have witnessed plenty of change. I have joined countless groups of medical professionals, students, and Jesuit candidates on medical brigades. The medical changes these trips make in people’s lives are easy to see. When a person has an infected tooth or is in need of glasses, doctors make a diagnosis and a treatment plan which positively impacts the patient. The greatest change, I believe, occurs within the hearts and minds of the volunteers.

Last May, our medical team included two International Samaritan veterans, Doctors Jim Lepczyk and Paul Stockmann. Since their first brigade, they have grown immeasurably in wisdom. Dr. Bill Bennett returned for his second trip, while Doctors Jim Clement and Ruth Mullowney-Agra made their first plunge into a life-changing medical brigade.

International Samaritan is forever grateful for these doctors’ expertise and look forward to working with them on future trips.

By far, the greatest change for me was returning to Guatemala after 10 years and seeing the progress International Samaritan’s many volunteers have made. Upon returning there, I found the neighborhood near the garbage dump vastly improved with more and stronger houses, a high school, and a new medical clinic. Most importantly, there was a change in the people. I had hopeful conversations with young people in the Step by Step Scholarship program about their accomplishments and their futures. The positive changes I witnessed with the passage of a decade demonstrates the lasting good that International Samaritan does.

International Samaritan is seeing changes, but so are the people of Guatemala and our scholarship students there... and isn’t that how it should be?

Yours in Christ,
Brother Jim Boynton, S.J
Volunteer

Dr. Ruth Mullowney-Agra examines a patient at the clinic in Zone 3, Guatemala City

Brother Jim on a medical mission in Guatemala in 2007