Our International Team in the U.S.A.
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International & local staff together at the Detroit Filling Station
Dear Friends,

I’ve never understood the saying, “If you don’t know where you’re going, any road will get you there.” Seems to me that if you don’t know where you’re going, you’re never going to get anywhere. I like being clear on where I’m trying to go.

In April, for the first time in our organization’s history, leaders of our work from each nation gathered together at our home base in Ann Arbor, Michigan to meet with our board of directors to acquire clarity on where International Samaritan is headed. Our time together was the culmination of a four-month-long strategic planning process in which our board and staff imagined what we can achieve together and how we can make it happen. Here are some highlights:

We want to grow our model to ten nations within the next five years.

We identified emerging elements of our model that we want to expand. They include:

- Building “Family Life Centers” in each community as a place where scholars can study after school and their parents can learn to read during the day.
- Fostering business co-ops made up of scholars’ parents.
- Focusing on our scholars’ spiritual growth and leadership skills to help them emerge as leaders in their nations.

We committed to ensuring that each of our communities has access to clean water, even though we previously have not worked on this.

We reaffirmed that scholarships are the game-changer in every nation, and we want to double the number of scholarships we give in each nation, every year, in each of the next few years.

In this issue, you will see pictures and highlights from a fun and inspirational week with our international team. Know that underneath the fun and excitement rests our shared purpose and new strategic plan, which will be accomplished through your critical support.

In gratitude,

Mike Tenbusch
President of International Samaritan, pictured left with Angelica Cancinos, our Guatemala Program Director

Get Involved in a Medical Mission for 2019...

August 4-11
Visit Riverton, Jamaica and provide medical and dental care to the community.

September 1-8
Visit Guatemala and split your time serving between Zone 3 and Chinautla.

November 10-17
Visit Riverton, Jamaica, and provide medical and dental care to the community.

... by signing up at www.intsam.org/medicalmissions.
For many families, a garbage dump is a place where food is scavenged to feed their loved ones. This requires arriving at a dump by 4:00 AM to find food thrown away by restaurants and hotels at closing time. What can seem repulsive to some is a relief to others.

The reality is that more than 700 million people, or 10% of the world’s population, live on less than $2 per day. To spark a sense of what that feels like, and to forge a solution to poverty in the process, we asked our friends and supporters to choose a day during the first four weeks in Lent to eat for less than $2 on that day. We called the campaign Fast2Change, and people came through in creative, impactful ways. A few examples follow:

**Students at Bishop Watterson High School** in Columbus, Ohio, formed a *Paso a Paso Club* at their school to raise money for scholarships in Guatemala after their trip there last year. Through churros sales, dress-down days, and “Brownies and Bracelets” sales (with handmade Guatemalan bracelets), they raised $2,500 for five new scholarships in Guatemala.

**Scott and Molly Filippini**, working parents of two pre-schoolers from Boulder, Colorado, completed the fast and donated $4,000 to expand scholarships in Nicaragua, where they completed a service trip in the past.

**A classroom of pre-schoolers at The Nest Early Learning Center** in Stow, Ohio, ate an inexpensive snack of rice, bread, and bananas instead of their usual refreshments. Maggie, age 5, remarked, “If I eat the same thing every day, my belly will hurt. I think the kids feel bad that they have to eat this every day.” Carter, age 4, added, “I didn’t feel good about today because they have to eat it every day. I would not be OK if I didn’t get to eat chocolate or cookies again!”

Along with these insights, reflections and prayers, 20 new scholarships were funded with more than $10,000 raised by those who fasted and their friends during the campaign. If you missed the Fast, choose a day and try it on your own, or consider joining us next year.

You can learn more at [www.intsam.org/fast2change](http://www.intsam.org/fast2change).
Our International Team Here

For the first time ever, the leaders of International Samaritan’s work in Ethiopia, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua convened to discuss and launch a strategic plan at the Board of Directors meeting on April 10, 2019. One night later, they shared the challenges and the progress of their work in dumpsite communities during a public discussion at St. Mary Student Parish, located in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Almost 100 people attended, including four students who drove three hours from The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio, and are forming an International Samaritan campus chapter there.

The international team stayed together in a home just blocks from our office. In between workshops, meetings and events, the team enjoyed walking tours of Ann Arbor and local favorites, like lunch at Zingerman’s and an evening at Hill Auditorium taking in Handel’s Semale.
“For the last few years, I felt like International Samaritan was one person, Andrew Pawuk, because that is whom I always talked to,” Ethiopian program director Selam Terefe said. “This week, I met the many people who make up International Samaritan. Now, I feel like I’m part of the family.”

If you’re interested in learning more about our team around the world, you can read their biographies at www.intsam.org/staff. You can also watch the public discussion they led at St. Mary Student Parish on our Youtube Channel.
A Space to Meet and Dream in Ethiopia

On Saturdays for the last three years, Selam Terefe, the leader of our work in Ethiopia, has been hosting a book club for our scholars in a makeshift community center just outside of the garbage dump in Kore. The kids have read books like Hiwot Teffera’s Tower in the Sky, books intended to inspire dreams and show a life outside of their village. But no matter how powerful the impact of the books, the location of their meeting was always the same – a patched together shed with leaking tin roof - reflecting the poor conditions they face every day.

That all changed, virtually overnight, when Selam met with Fr. Odomaro Mubangizi, SJ, the leader of the Jesuit Community in Ethiopia. Fr. Odomaro was so inspired by Selam and our scholars in Ethiopia that he offered the Jesuit Residence as the new location for the book clubs and similar events. Our scholars are currently reading and discussing Steven Covey’s Seven Habits of Highly Effective Leaders, a world away from the village in Kore, where they have more space and inspiration for their dreams to grow.

A Safe Place to Study in Guatemala

One of the ongoing challenges for our scholars is the increasing demands that private schools place on our students for completing homework online. For students living in a one-room home, just finding a space to study can be difficult, and computer access is impossible. This changed for our scholars in Guatemala City in January when a group of generous donors furnished our first computer center. The Ave Maria Learning Center, located near the dumpsite in Zone 3, provides our students plenty of space to study, along with Wi-Fi access and laptops. Special thanks to students from St. Michael’s Catholic Academy in Austin, Texas, who gave the Center a facelift just days before opening, and Marian High School in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, who delivered numerous laptops during a service immersion trip.

The inauguration was a tearful, joyful event. The new center was packed wall-to-wall with Paso a Paso students, their parents, and supporters from the community. At the inauguration, Angelica Cancinos, our program director in Guatemala, said, “This is a place unlike any other. This place will always provide life for all, love for all, and service for all. This is a place filled with love.”

It’s the Little Things that Matter

Your investments in International Samaritan help make big things happen. Each year, we build classrooms, houses and medical clinics for people in desperate need. Last year, we awarded 355 scholarships to children whose family members, or even the children themselves, work in garbage dumps.

Even with those major investments, little things often keep people from reaching their fullest potential. In this issue, we celebrate the small ways ordinary people are making a big difference: those who serve on trips, support our work, or help us in-country.
Clothes for Kids in Honduras

Families who work in dumpsites often clothe their families with items they find in the dump, and this can be a telltale sign when children begin to attend school outside of the dump. Our Paso a Paso scholarship students became part of the solution to this problem when we asked them to assist in distributing new clothes to families living and working in the El Ocotillo dump site. The items came from a clothing drive held in San Pedro Sula.

Daury Pineda, pictured right in orange, is a Paso a Paso scholarship student and recent high school graduate. He shared, “This was one of my favorite experiences I’ve had with Paso a Paso in all my years in the program. For me, that day brought me so much joy because I was able to see the excitement and gratitude of the children.”

Daury, who worked in the dump as a child, understood first-hand their smiles. “There was a boy in the garbage dump who thanked us for having given him those clothes, because he only had one set of clothes that he wore every day,” Daury said. “I was so happy I could bring him so much joy with such a simple thing. I love being able to help the people who need it most.”

Our Core Values at Work in Jamaica

No matter the nation, people in garbage dump communities are often treated like outcasts by the people in nearby cities. This makes our mission of walking hand-in-hand with those we serve so meaningful, and their interactions with service trip volunteers so valuable.

In March, students from the University of Toledo Honors College, Toledo, Ohio, spent part of their week taking care packages to visit with elderly and sick people in the dumpsite community serving Kingston, Jamaica. The conversations on the first day of these home visits were hesitant, as the volunteers learned how to interact with people they had just met. To assist the process, we asked our volunteers to focus on just being H.E.R.E., living our core values of Humility, Empathy, Reverence and Excellence. They did, and by the end of the week, the home visits were buzzing with energy and laughter, so much so that the chaperones needed to round up the volunteers who did not want to end their conversations.

Our work in Jamaica is just beginning, but the impact has already begun in homes where people were reminded of how much they matter to God and to us.

Prayers Needed for our Nicaraguan Students

One year after the government protests in which more than 400 people died, our main work in Nicaragua is now focused on giving scholarships to students and equipping them for success. Tim Bouldry, our manager in Nicaragua who witnessed much of the violence, shared, “We ask our students who think about joining the protests to consider succeeding in school as their form of protest.” We ask for your help by praying for their safety and success.
Dear Friends,

Twenty-five years ago, I was one of the students from St. John’s Jesuit High School in a car driven by Fr. Don Vettese, S.J. that went to the garbage dump in Guatemala City. I could never have imagined that the events of that day would yield an organization that has sent nearly 3,000 students to gain that same exposure, and serves the world’s most disadvantaged people in five countries across the globe.

Not long after that first trip, I was packing up for college. The experience was never far from my mind however, as college life in Philadelphia reinforced the fact that we have brothers and sisters in need all over the world. I was frequently reminded of how truly lucky I was, but had not quite rounded the circle in terms of pushing myself to dig deep and use my efforts to give back to that formative experience.

That changed when I bumped into Fr. Vettese seven years ago and was asked to lend a hand to International Samaritan.

It was truly eye-opening, and refreshing, to be able to see all of the work that was done while I was starting a career and a family in New York City. The last seven years have shown me what persistent effort, and the truly outstanding empathy of the human spirit can do, if given some direction and objective. I now have two young children of my own, and being aware of the conditions that other parents are forced to endure amplifies the importance of our mission.

I recently had the opportunity to meet with Selam Terefe, our Program Director for Ethiopia, while she was in New York for a United Nations conference. It was fascinating to hear about her journey, and her path to finding the International Samaritan family. While her exposure to the people we serve has been much more direct that my own, I was touched by the ways that a common cause can bring people who are separated by so much to the same place. Only a week later, I heard from Selam again, this time with her peers from Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua at our board meeting.

We’ve come so far since I was in that car 25 years ago. I think we’ll be amazed by what the next 25 years will bring.

Chris Lindsey
Pictured above, 1994; pictured left, 2019

Looking for an experience like Chris had?
Learn about our service opportunities at www.intsam.org/serve.