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SAMARITAN WORLD

News for the friends of International Samaritan



Meet our First College Graduates in Ethiopia

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*Hadas, a Step by Step
Scholarship Graduate in Ethiopia*

New Beginnings

Dear Friends,

How good it feels to be a part of the family here at International Samaritan!

From my first moments spent interviewing with the members of International Samaritan’s Board of Directors, to my initial visit with our team and families in Guatemala City, to the first few weeks here at our main office in Ann Arbor, Michigan, I have been overwhelmed by the people in this organization—each of whom, in his or her own way, is committed to being the person Jesus Christ called us to be when he told the parable of the Good Samaritan 2,000 years ago.

What I love about this organization is how thoughtful it is in its approach—combining critical needs like housing and food with breakthrough educational opportunities and scholarships—and how focused it is in scope—strategically targeting those families living or working in and near garbage dumps in developing nations around the world. That’s a powerful combination of breadth and focus.

Fr. Don Vettese, S.J., founded this organization almost 25 years ago after he and five students from St. John’s Jesuit High School in Toledo, Ohio saw the horrific conditions of life in garbage dump community during a trip to Guatemala City in 1994. With

exceptional vision and tenacity, he and a relatively small, selfless group of donors and board members have built a foundation strong enough to achieve our vision of a time when the garbage dumps of developing countries are no longer homes to human beings struggling to survive.

Because of the vision of Fr. Vettese to build an endowment fund for a sustainable future, the generosity of his good friends who gave much to fund it, and the steady hand of our Board to steward it, we are now in a position to ensure that every dollar given to International Samaritan will go directly to the people we serve in other countries. The proceeds from our endowment will cover the operation costs necessary here so that your gift will go directly to people in need abroad.

I am so excited to roll up my sleeves and get started on this life-changing work with you. Please reach out to me at mike@intsam.org at any time with questions and suggestions. And please keep this work we share and our families in your prayers.

Many blessings,

Mike Tenbusch

President
International Samaritan



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 a 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.

Guatemala Program Welcomes New President

Before his first day on the job in Ann Arbor, incoming president Mike Tenbusch accompanied interim president Andrew Pawuk on a trip to Guatemala City to meet International Samaritan's Guatemalan team. After touring the schools and early childhood center that IS helped to build and fund, Mike and Andrew visited with families of students in their homes which border the dump and then met with scholarship recipients at their jobs around Guatemala City.

"What really moved me," Mike said, "is how concrete and how much of a difference our support makes. The houses we've built offer such an immense improvement in the standard of living, and seeing our young people working in their jobs and hearing how critical their scholarships are to helping them get there was incredible. It's a unique experience for me to witness such a transformative impact."



While the trip was abundant with highlights and good conversations, the Santa Clara Nursery's kindergartner's joyful, enthusiastic skit about a bird and an old couple stood out. We are blessed to have a really good Guatemala City team, led by Angelica Cancinos who helps so many young people learn and make life-changing connections.

New Year, New Resolutions

Many good resolutions fail before the first month of the year ends, but we have an easy way to make one resolution last all year: join our recurring donor program. Donors who register for the program commit to helping our program through a set monthly gift. The gift is automatically withdrawn from your credit card each month, and your resolution will bless our students all year long.

Make this year different and let your resolution change lives.

To learn more, visit www.intsam.org/donate or call Michelle at 734-222-0701.



Michelle Kuhar, Development-Communications Coordinator

Cover Story

Graduates in Ethiopia



Hadas

Kotebe Metropolitan University

Degree in Education

Teacher, Peniel Primary School

Meseret (Mesi)

Kotebe Metropolitan University

Degree in English

Teacher, Peniel Primary School



Yeshiwas

Hope University

Degree in Management

Intern, Sat Trading PLC



Habtamu

Gonder University

Degree in Management

Currently Interviewing



Yosef

Dilla University

BA in Psychology

Teacher, Spring of Knowledge Academy

Biruk

Hope University

Degree in Management

Purchaser, Bereket Knife Aluminum Works



Graduate Highlight

Rahel completed her teacher's education in Kotebe Metropolitan University after a childhood sorting trash in a garbage dump.

The dangers Rahel encountered while working in the dump were endless and included sexual harassment and statistically high chances of being raped. In order to protect her, Rahel's brother quit school in the sixth grade and took on her portion of work. Their mother suffers from AIDS so her brother became the sole support of the family, determined to allow Rahel to complete her education.

After graduating from high school, Rahel entered college while her brother struggled to pay for her new transportation costs and college supplies. When Rahel met International Samaritan and joined the Step by Step program, she moved closer to school and worked with a tutor who helped her with English and social skills, which she lacked having spent her childhood working instead of interacting with her peers.

Rahel is now teaching English at Keranio Medhanealem School and providing for her family. She is also determined to return her brother's favor by supporting his education.



Rahel

Congratulations to our first College Graduates in Ethiopia!

Tragedy by Fire

Pablo's Story



Many of you remember Pablo, a Step by Step scholarship recipient in Honduras, who lost his mother last spring. In September, he awoke to screams and a suffocating cloud of smoke. Erika Cuevas, our in-country coordinator in Honduras, quickly informed us of the tragedy. "Thank God they were warned in time and were able to escape," she shared. "It happened very quickly and they left with only the clothes they were wearing." Though the family was unharmed, they lost both their home and possessions.

Later in the week Erika sent a quick update. "The children are so traumatized," she shared. "Pablo hasn't been able to sleep since the fire and he is very nervous." After the death of their mother earlier in the year, this second tragedy was devastating. Erika kept in close contact after the fire, taking with the extended family about the children's needs and helping them to process the experience.

Due to generous donations to our emergency fund, Erika took the children shopping to replace their wardrobe and bought new mattresses and bedding. "The children were so excited to select their own clothes for the first time in their lives. In the past all of their clothes were hand-me-downs or donated items," Erika shared. As their lives are rebuilt, light has returned the children's eyes and they are hopeful for the future.



Left/Center: Pablo and Paola, his younger sister, on the shopping trip.

Right: Pablo carrying his new bed into the house



International Samaritan in Jamaica

Dear Readers,

For a year after college, I was able to be a part of the Passionist Volunteers International who have been working in Jamaica since 2003 to accompany the poor under the guidance of the Passionist religious community. During my year in Jamaica I learned many lessons but the greatest one can be exemplified by a couple I met, Gloria and Dean.

When I met them, Gloria and Dean were middle-aged Jamaicans who were about to get married. I had only known Dean for a few weeks when he asked me to be his godfather as he received baptism and to walk Gloria down the aisle at their wedding.

One day I received a call from the local priest asking me to go by Gloria and Dean's house because Gloria's mother had died. I arrived shortly after they had taken the body away and sat awkwardly on a stump in front of the house as they processed their grief and reminisced about her life. I felt as if I should do or say something but there was nothing I could do but be present. Suddenly, less than a week later, Dean was in the hospital and died soon after.

Over the next few weeks I was present for the grave digging, wake, and funeral of Gloria's mother and then Dean. I can point to few periods where I felt as uncomfortable as I did then. There I was, a white American stranger present for deeply painful and intimate moments of these people's lives. But that is what I was called to do: be present and accompany them. This experience taught me the importance of being with people rather than doing things for them.

After returning to the United States, I began working at International Samaritan. Our service immersion experiences and medical mission trips are wonderful examples of how individuals are able to accompany people living in poverty, even if just for a week. International Samaritan's trips



Montini students and Riverton students from the summer school.

provide volunteers with opportunities to sit and be present with people and not just provide help with a project or task.

This past summer, we began working with St. Patrick's Foundation in the Riverton City garbage dump community of Kingston, Jamaica. Starting with a trip in July 2018 from Montini Catholic High School in Lombard, Illinois, we assisted with summer school classes and repainted the playground at the Riverton Meadows Early Childhood Centre. Two more school trips will take place in 2019, and I will be leading two medical mission trips back to the community in the coming year.

International Samaritan invites you to experience accompaniment with us and the people living in garbage dump communities around the world. You can join us on a service immersion or medical mission trip in 2019 or beyond. Please consider opening your heart to volunteer and your life will be enriched. You may walk away from the experience repeating the phrase many Jamaicans use when asked how they are, "I am blessed."

God bless,

Dan Piaskowski

International Service Coordinator
International Samaritan



Summer Medical Missions!

May 12-19, 2019 (Guatemala) August 4-11, 2019 (Jamaica)
Visit intsam.org/medical or email dan@intsam.org for details

Guatemala - Gardening Project



The space behind the classrooms at the Francisco Coll School contains a number of beautiful, raised garden beds which are tended by the students and teachers. "Through the gardening program, students learn about healthy eating, personal responsibility and the importance of fresh produce for a healthy lifestyle," their Principal, Sr. Marlene, shared. "The children take the produce home to their families or occasionally make a salad during the school day." In addition to enriching the students' diets, the project has helped them learn to interact with, utilize and manipulate natural resources.

"The children's houses are small and in poor condition," Sr. Marlene said. "There's no room for this type of activity." Raised beds were built at the school to hold dirt which was brought in from outside the area. This was necessary due to the contamination of the ground surrounding the dump. In addition to working in the garden, the students attend a gardening class and can take a course on the environment.

Photo: Sr. Marlene standing amidst the raised beds which hold a variety of vegetables and herbs.

Nicaragua - Dream Home

"One night I had a dream in which my dearest hope to have a home came true. Within a month Francisco (International Samaritan staff) came to tell me that I was going to receive a house." ~Isabel del Carmen Cruz Sandobal

The family moved into their home in October, eager to share their excitement with Francisco. "In the beginning, our house was made of plastic," Isabel said, showing him an old photo. "Later, I started to work in the dump, and we were able to buy some debris that we used on top of wood frames." Over the years, the family did their best to improve their home, however, the materials they were able to buy only partially blocked the weather and there was still no way to secure the door.

Expressing her joy over the new house from International Samaritan, Isabel said. "I love everything about the house. I love that it is secure and my children are safe. God is so great to have touched your hearts to provide my family with a home."

"My dream came true and now I feel so happy." ~Isabel



Original House



New house during the construction phase.



Eddy and Isabel with their newly completed home.

Dear Friends of International Samaritan,

As I looked out of an airplane window while taxiing into the San Pedro Sula, Honduras airport, I could not help but notice dozens of long, shiny, steel chains connected to handcuffs and ankle cuffs spread across the tarmac. Next to these restraints was a nondescript, large jet painted entirely in white. From the mysterious jet, a line of over 100 Hondurans, looking tired and forlorn, walked under the hot midday sun towards the terminal.

I wondered whether the deportees had feelings of relief for going home to their homeland, or of defeat for returning to where they had begun their journey. Each had made a difficult decision to uproot their life to travel to the USA to secure a better future for themselves and their families. As I looked at their faces, I could only imagine why many of their journeys had begun, perhaps victims of abuse, violence, exploitation, and discrimination. Desperate, they were.

While there are differences of opinion on immigration policy, we know that most migrants prefer staying in their countries of origin close to their families and communities if given an opportunity. This is why International Samaritan's work is more important than ever, because we are giving children and young adults living with their families in Central American garbage dumps the opportunity and a pathway to pursue their educations and dreams in their home countries.

International Samaritan has identified over 1,500 well-deserving children and young adults in Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Ethiopia who would benefit from a scholarship where they will be educated to make a living and remain in their native countries with their families. International Samaritan will give 100% of your donations to scholarships to support these students.

Please, pray for the marginalized families living in worldwide garbage dumps. In addition, please, consider making a donation to help their children pursue their dreams of earning an education to become gainfully employed, in order to sustain themselves, their families and, in turn, their communities.

With gratitude,

Andrew Pawuk

Vice President of Operations
International Samaritan



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