



Mission of Love



*"You are not here to save the world, but to touch the hands that are within your reach."
~ Kathleen Price*

My experience of going to Guatemala:
One Trip - One Mission
Twenty-two Hearts - Forty-four Hands
One Orphanage – One Goal

To tell you the truth, I didn't have one expectation of going to Guatemala, except to serve.

The weeks prior to the trip I had plenty of time to pray about the opportunity ahead. And because of that time, I felt I was able to make the pledge with one attitude in mind – "willingness". I was willing to be used in whatever way I could, no matter what.

When I first arrived to Guatemala, as I had never been to a third world country before, I was in disbelief of the culture. It was so very different from ours here in the United States. I was eager to get to our destination with anticipation, hope and love.

At breakfast our very first day Angie got up and spoke of the inception of the orphanage, what has transpired since and yet all the work that still needs accomplished – setting one goal at a time.

At first sight of the orphanage (in the middle of the jungle) my heart began to beat to a faster drum and my stomach right then and there, began exercising with flip flops. The dock was lined with kids and adults alike... Departure off the boat we were not only greeted with handshakes, but heartfelt smiles and hugs. You could just see the hope on their faces and depth of love in their eyes. We all felt like family within the first ten minutes of our arrival.

Our group of twenty-two people just naturally split into three groups; based on experience and ability:

Administrative: They took care of all the "not so neat stuff". Obviously being the backdrop of all the planning and organizing, along with transportation and safety. It certainly wasn't easy traveling as a group of twenty-two.

Construction: They had the monumental task of building a six-stall bathroom on a swampy 30x50 plot of land, providing a safe facility for both school and orphanage use.

Painting: This was the crew I volunteered for. We painted the outside of buildings and shacks, really anything that didn't move until we ran out of paint.

Putting aside all the hard and exhausting work, nightly we gathered around sharing stories of enthusiasm, sadness and hope. Deep relationships were developed throughout the week, not only among us, but with the orphans (from all ages), people from the surrounding villages and the volunteers and teachers from all over the world.

"Willingly", I left behind part of my heart at the orphanage.

One Trip – One Mission.

MaryBeth Eckberg

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