

WORLDWIDE HEART TO HEART MINISTRIES

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NOVEMBER - DECEMBER 2006

Gifts From God - Our True Heroes

Spotlight on Marvin

By Amy Serrano



Marvin



Lawn mowing prior to tractor arrival



Doing Homework

In the last four years at the Children's Village, one thing we are certain of is that all of the children that come to be part of our family are hand selected and brought here by God. Each child brings something that without it, the village would be empty. They fit into a space that only they can fill. We know each one truly belongs here. The story of the young man in the spotlight this month is living proof of that fact. This month we want to bring you up close and personal with our oldest resident, Marvin. He is a fascinating young man with a fascinating story.

Eighteen years ago, high in the mountains of Santa Barbara, Honduras in the village of Los Flores, Marvin was born. The nearest electricity is in Quimistan, about one hour away on nearly impassable roads. The population of Los Flores is about 150 people, all more or less related in some way or another. Marvin is the oldest boy of ten siblings. Life in Los Flores is hard. As a means of survival, this small community bands together as a tight knit family.

Marvin's mother and father are both very hard workers. They did their best to raise Marvin. Unfortunately, however, when Marvin was 9 years old, he came under the influence of a misguided uncle. His uncle began to teach Marvin how to go into the neighboring villages and steal. Marvin told us that he and his uncle would steal the gas out of vehicles, and anything else that they could find. He knew this was not the life for him, but felt trapped in the extreme poverty that his family was in and didn't think that life could be any different.

Marvin's father told us he lost control of him. When Marvin was 12, he left Los Flores to live in San Pedro Sula. He said that his initial idea was to try to find work. But he only found trouble. In

the streets, he continued his life of crime, stealing and getting involved in gangs. All this time, however, Marvin knew within his heart this was not what he wanted. It was not who he was.

He eventually went back home, returning to the same situation. There were too many mouths to feed and not enough food. Finally, at the age of 14, his dad told him he needed to leave and try to find some sort of work. Marvin had no idea where to go or what to do. His dad told him about a man from their village named Miguel, who now worked as a mason near the coast in the town of Tegucigalpa. So, Marvin left home to find this man and see if he could give him a job. Miguel is a very common name in Honduras, so the chances of him finding the right Miguel were very slim.

Marvin made his way to Tegucigalpa and miraculously found the right Miguel who, as God would have it, had been working for us for the last year on the construction of the Children's Village. Miguel told Marvin that he had no work to offer him, but that possibly, we could help. When Miguel brought Marvin to the village site and explained his situation, we immediately thought he was a very small child. We were shocked to find out his true age! Marvin was 14 years old, so malnourished he could have passed for a 9 or 10 year old child. He easily fit into 8 year old Cesar's clothing.

It is the policy of the Village that we don't generally take in children that age. It has been our experience many times, that kids older than 12, who have spent time on the street, can often be a danger to the younger children in the Village. But something, (or Someone) about Marvin made us think he might be different. We told him that he could stay on a trial basis, but that his dad would have to sign a form releasing all of his parental rights to us. With a smile, Marvin grabbed that paper and took off running down the street.

To our great surprise, when we arrived at the Village the next day at 8 am, there was Marvin with the signed paper! Now we knew that Los Flores was at least a 6 hour trip one way in a car. We could not imagine how he had made that trip without a vehicle in one day.

He was so happy to be here and wanted to start being helpful right away. He told us that he was an experienced farmer and could do any farming and planting that we needed. This all proved to be very true, and he is now the director in charge of all our agricultural projects.

Some time later, Oscar and I asked him with curiosity how he got to Los Flores and back to Tegucigalpa in one day. He explained to us that geographically speaking, Los Flores is not that far away from Tegucigalpa. The only problem is the huge mountain that separates the two. There are three ways to get to Los Flores. You can drive around one side of the mountain, which will take you through San Pedro Sula. You can drive around the other side of the mountain, which will take you through Guatemala. Or... you can go straight up the mountain and over. He told us he went over the mountain, a very dangerous trip, running all night, because he did not want to miss this opportunity.

Marvin has been with us now for 3 years. He has been such a blessing, and literally a builder and founder of the project in Tegucigalpa, along with Marlon and Josué, two of the first residents. When he came, we were just barely getting started. Much of the building that you see today was

constructed by his hands. Almost all of the planting you see has been done under his supervision. He is a young man now, and we are very proud of him. Even at a very young age, we depended on him, and he has proved himself very worthy of our trust.

After he has finished high school, Marvin would like to go to the U.S. to go to college. He wants to train for a profession and someday go back to help his family. For right now, he is happy milking his cows, taking care of the fish ponds, the grounds and any building projects we need.

He told us one day, with tears in his eyes, “Thank you so much for giving me this chance, because if you hadn’t I would be dead by now.” In the end, all we can say is, “Thank you, Marvin! Thank you for coming along and filling a place that had your name on it, that only you could fill. We thank God for you, Marvin. You are a great blessing to us and all of the children for whom we care. The Village in Tegucigalpa is a richer place because of you.”

We thank God for all of these children and for each of you who pray for us and send us support to keep this Village alive. You also fill a place without which this project would be empty. Even though we are not related by blood, I think all of us together give the world a pretty good definition of what a true “family” is all about – the family of God.

VILLAGE NEWS FOR NOVEMBER **BY AMY SERRANO**

It seems like it has been so long since I wrote a report and don’t even remember what has gone on since my last one. Well one thing that is definitely new are the new little faces that we have around the village. We have a young man from Los Flores named Cristian. He is 9 years old and in the 2nd grade. We have also another young man named Cristian as well. He is 7 years old and from a nearby town of Cuamel. We also have three young people that were brought out to us from INHFA, which is basically the Honduran equivalent of the child protection service. They are: Nora, age 7, Oscar, age 8. All of these children have adjusted so well to their new home. Any one would think that they had been here for years



School let out for their vacation time which is done here in Honduras from the months of November to February. We have really had to become creative with activities to keep them occupied. One thing that can be said is that the swing set that was built by Oscar and funded by Touch of Hope ministries as a Christmas present last year is getting lots of use! The children’s final reports have come in, and all but one child passed the grade they were in. And they all passed with 85% to 95%. Kelyn scored the best with a 96% over all percentage. Even Cesar a young boy in the village with developmental problems that we were told would never pass the

1st grade passed after his third time repeating the grade with a 76%. He is very proud of himself and we are proud of him as well as he has worked very hard. The one little girl Martha that did not pass, did not pass because of her very shy and timid personality. After so much abuse she had closed down completely. But she has since opened up and become much more trusting, I have no doubt she will do much better next year.

Well after all of the work. After all of the prayer. After all of the frustration its finally here!! The container has arrived!!!!!!! And it is a blessing beyond what we ever imaged it would be. The children were in such desperate need of clothes, the kitchen was in such desperate need of equipment. Not to mention the fact that we were cutting the 4 acres of land that we have with machetes and weed eaters. When Oscar saw the tractor sticking out of the back of the container he hugged the tire and said, "You're home now, Darling, and Daddy's not going to let anyone take you away."

Everything arrived safe and sound with nothing broken or missing. All of our church showed up to help unload the day that it arrived. And then came the best part. We separated the clothes into girls and boys and then into sizes. We dressed up the tech school like a little store and let all of the kids come and do "shopping". I think we had more fun than they did. One of the really neat things is that we are now in the middle of a chicken pox outbreak. About 15 children have it at the moment. When they came to shop I think they forgot all about it. We have put however all of the clothes that still had stickers which we had at least 3 huge boxes of brand new unused clothes. Those we will rap up and give with a toy on Christmas day.

Overall the container experience has been awesome! Thank you all so much for your hard work and generosity. You have blessed us in ways that would be impossible to describe here in writing.

As many of you may know as well we have inherited a church. Just when we thought our days of pastoring were over. In reality this has really been going very well. Some months back some friends of Oscars that he had grown up in church with came to him and asked him if he would do a bible study. They were now in a church that was very religious and needed something more spiritual. So after some prayer Oscar agreed to a "bible study". On the first Sunday 40 people showed up at our house. Well to make a long story short. We now meet every Sunday at the Rotary Club building right down the road. The church has focused itself on working with the children and went to work right away creating a program for Christmas.

We are really excited about Christmas. It in so many ways is really for children. We are asking for your help this year. We would like to do a special dinner for them and have them put together some baskets to give to the poor. Any extra change that you can spare for our Christmas project would be so appreciated. We also would like to bless our workers.

Well the blessings just keep coming. Thanks you all again for making all of this possible. I really wish that you could all just come down and see for yourselves how cool this all really is. God bless you all. And from all of our family here at WWHTM, we want to wish you all a very merry Christmas and a safe and blessed New Year.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

The following teams are planned for the coming months:

Dec. 26- Jan. 2 - Youth Group from Immanuel Lutheran in Centralia - contact person is Youth Pastor Shane Wood hepcat20@hotmail.com.

Jan. 27-Feb. 3 - Tentative plans for a Vacation Bible School from Castle Rock Christian Church - contact person is Tina Campbell tducks@juno.com 360-274-8840 *March 21- March 31* - Medical Team - contact person WWH2H Medical Team Coordinator, Karen Kearcher Joiner , karenkearcher@msn.com 503-728-4290

**Thank you and
Merry Christmas
from the
WWH2H Board
of Directors**



Plans are underway for the Medical Team to return to Honduras in March. Contact Karen Kearcher for more information.

karenkearcher@msn.com



WWH2H VBS team leaves January 27th to minister to the children in Honduras. Contact Tin Campbell for more information on how you can help.

Meeting with the First Lady

One of our Honduras board members is Douglass Uritia who is also our ministry's lawyer in Honduras. His wife is the secretary to Dr. Marlon Lara, the current Sec. of State for Honduras. Marlon was the mayor of Puerto Cortes when we first began working in Honduras. We used to do the presentation of wheelchairs from his office with him present and, of course, the national media. I am assuming that is how the First Lady, Xiomar de Zelaya Rosales, found out about our work. She has requested that we meet with her and her cabinet on Oct. 5th in the Capital. The First Lady has the authority to provide us with a full time doctor for our clinic. The doctor is provided by the World Health Organization and is financed by them. She decides where to place the doctors. Her agenda while her husband is President is threefold: to provide food to the desperately poor, to support and develop education programs for abandoned children, and to provide medical helps through brigades. Since this is our agenda as well, we are hopeful she will be able to help us help her people, who are now OUR people, too! More on this next month!

PLEASE JOIN WORLDWIDE HEART TO HEART MINISTRIES IN PRAYER FOR...



Nelson asks the blessing

- **Good health and Holy Spirit wisdom for Serranos, our children and their caretakers**
- **Safe journey for our container**
- **God's wisdom for the board as decisions are made**
- **Monthly Support for our growing number of children at the Village. We have two new little girls this month bringing our total up to 25.**