

Dear friends and family,

Happy Thanksgiving!! I hope this letter finds you well, and you are currently enjoying the beauty of Canadian fall. Thank you for your support and prayers always.

These past months have been quite hectic as the pickup truck broke down, so we were down to only my car for running with all the needs of the kids and the home. I sure am thankful for having a reliable vehicle! Its capacity in volume (amount of kids) has definitely been put to the test. We've had quite a few injuries as well, so three of our kids needed surgery for fractures and/or dislocation. Never a dull day!!

Esmeralda, our ballet dancer, had an official RAD (Real Academia de Danza) evaluation and spent 2 days in San Pedro Sula for that. It was a very formal event and we are proud of her for carrying it through. It is wonderful to see her grow and heal through the arts.



Some of our kids have a scholarship in a soccer academy in town. We have been approached by the Honduran national soccer team to recruit Lorena for the Honduran National team in the near future. On other soccer news, our kids at Casa Hogar have made their own soccer team, called "FENIX". A coach from the U.S. has been coming up to the home to coach them on Saturdays, and they have been able to play in friendly games. The idea will be to participate in official tournaments. I love that our kids have this opportunity.

This year we are approaching High school a little differently. We realize that for some of our older kids, academics are a little extra challenging, and learning a skill/trade is as important as obtaining their high school diploma. There is a school in town that offers the option of learning a trade at the same time as doing the last 3 years of high school, so we have been testing it with 3 of our older boys. We are so thankful for the efforts of fundraising that are being done to help cover these extra costs.



GRACE IN DARK PLACES

One of the most beautiful and impacting experiences I have had in the last few months has been the “reunification” of one of our little boys with his mother. It is not an actual reunification, because they can't be together as his mother is incarcerated and will remain so for a least a decade, but let me tell you about **a reunion filled with grace and love in the middle of one of the darkest places.**

Little “A” was taken away as a baby when his mother was incarcerated. He was put in something similar to a foster family until the foster parents no longer could/would care for him, and that is when he arrived at Casa Hogar, at the age of 2. We didn't know much about his family, and it seemed like the authorities didn't have much information either. About two years later, so a few months ago, we found out through the authorities where his mother was, and planned for a first meeting in prison. I wasn't at all excited about the idea, as from my own judgemental perspective I didn't see what good could come out of it, since the kid didn't even remember her, and without the certainty that there would be consistency I could only see it as something damaging. However, not having much of a choice, we set a date and prepared little “A” for it. At first he was confused, as he thought his “original” mother was the foster mother he had when he was a baby, but we explained a bit and then he got all excited.

When we got to the prison, we waited in a special area where minors are allowed, and then his mother came in. The look of emotion on her face was so overwhelming I couldn't hold the tears back. Little A knew this was his mother, so he jumped in to her arms and hugged her. He was his normal excited joyful clueless boy, and she was completely moved. Pause: If you know anything about Central America you will know that luxury is not part of it. The next thing that happened, is that she ran to the window with little “A” in her arms, and there, in the yard, were about 20 ladies waiting and anxious to see this little boy's face. They were all celebrating that this woman could see her son after 4 years of not knowing where he was. They had gotten together and helped her pack a present, craft-made, and with goodies in it that they probably had to work very hard to afford purchasing. And they were all waiting to be able to see his face through the window. Since then, Little “A” and I have made the trip to visit his mother a few more times, and every time the excitement is bigger. Little A's mom hugs me every time we go and cries of genuine gratefulness because she sees that her son is well taken care of and is happy. When we go for our trips to prison, little “A” tells the staff that he goes to “visit his mom at her house”, and that there are cats there. He has zero clue about anything else, and that's ok for now. What is clear for all, is that “The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; Great is His Faithfulness” Lam. 3:20-21.

Thank you for helping us make a difference in the life of these little ones in Honduras. Thank you for covering us with your prayers and giving us your care and support.

May God bless you always,

Melo

“NOW TO HIM WHO IS ABLE TO DO FAR MORE ABUNDANTLY BEYOND ALL THAT WE ASK OR THINK, ACCORDING TO THE POWER THAT WORKS WITHIN US, TO HIM BE THE GLORY... FOREVER AND EVER.” Ephesians 3:20-21