

INROADS

Summer 2016

a publication of Lunches for Learning, Inc.



LUNCHES FOR
Learning

A 501(C)(3) NON-PROFIT CORPORATION
ESTABLISHED IN 2004

Bringing hope to Honduras ...
... one lunch at a time



Honduras is one of the poorest countries in Central America. The country's population is essentially evenly-divided between urban and rural populations. However, poverty is much more prevalent in the rural areas with as many as 70% of the population in rural areas living in extreme poverty - earning less than \$2 per day. This is particularly true in the western region of the country, including the Valle district in southwest Honduras.

Residents of the Valle district are particularly susceptible to the effects of poverty. While 28% of Honduras is agricultural land, and 38% of the population is employed in the agricultural sector, the terrain in the Valle district is mountainous. Over time, this terrain has seen significant erosion. As a result, agricultural productivity has decreased significantly.

Breaking the Cycle of Poverty

Much of the agricultural land in Honduras is utilized for the production of low-profit crops such as bananas, plantains, rice, maize and beans. In mountainous regions like Valle, where small-scale farmers produce basic grains, slopes are often steep and difficult to cultivate. Sustainable farming simply is not possible there.

In the midst of these challenges, **hope endures.**

Lunches for Learning maintains a singular purpose - to break the cycle of poverty in rural Honduras by providing a nutritious and balanced lunch to children in public elementary schools. And the best news is ...



it's working!

Education is the key to breaking this cycle of poverty. Students in Honduras who are able to remain in school and complete the sixth grade become literate and employable in the local economy.

When children are hungry, their families in these rural areas are faced with a choice. Their choice to either send their children to the streets, begging for money so they could buy food, or to send them to school for an education and hope for the future. It's difficult for anyone to learn on an empty stomach. When parents know their child will receive a nutritious meal at school, they make sure the child attends daily.

With the help of our donors and sponsors, Lunches for Learning is now feeding more than 1,700 students in 29 different schools in the Valle district. These schools

have seen an immediate and sustained increase in attendance. Their students are receiving a nutritious lunch at school, which means they are better able to focus, learn and excel.

Consider this feedback recently received from one of our sponsored schools, "... we are infinitely thankful for the creation of the Lunches for Learning Program, whose actions commit us to being more consistent with the education of the boys and girls of the community. We can say that GOD HAS BEEN GREAT TO US AND WE ARE SO HAPPY."

Additional schools in Valle are waiting - and hoping - to be added to the program and experience this dramatic impact themselves.

We invite you to join us in making this hope a reality.

New Generation of Service & Impact Ahead

You undoubtedly know the magnificent work that Lunches for Learning has done for the rural impoverished communities in Southern Honduras for this last decade. Through our simple lunch program and our impassioned sponsors, many thousands of children have achieved education levels never before available to them. They have grown beyond their circumstances and have been given life opportunities they never considered as possible.

The impact of your support and service have resulted in some significant accomplishments:

- Additional school sponsors in 2016 have enabled our reach to grow to over 1,700 students who receive a daily lunch at school.
- More than 200 students will graduate from the sixth grade in November.
- Working with community leaders, the local Honduran government and Department of Education, L4L and sponsors have enabled three schools to each add a grade level to their schools, giving nearly 100 more students access to education beyond the sixth grade.
- The St. Charles Rotary Club and District in southern Mississippi and Louisiana sponsored a 3-week program in which Honduran staff, teachers, Principals and students participated in a cultural exchange, visiting over 30 organizations in their area to share the L4L message.
- A partnership between Roswell (GA) Rotary Club, a dedicated L4L school sponsor, and the Villa Real Rotary Club of Tegucigalpa resulted in a \$73,225 grant to install central water and sanitary systems in two of our school communities.
- Eyeglass projects facilitated by L4L and initiated by individual sponsors provided over 100 eye glasses to individuals who needed significant vision correction.
- Passionate sponsors and supporters have taken on fundraising events such as the "Hearts for Honduras" event in Roswell, GA and the "Wine and Dine In Wonderland" event in Dadeville, AL that have allowed L4L to feed more hungry school kids.

It is also exciting that many additions to our Board of Directors bring a fresh set of skills and an exciting level of dedication, which is enabling us to reach more children and provide greater support to our schools. Perhaps most exciting is that we now have in place a new Executive Director who will work closely with our Board of Directors to more effectively communicate with our donors and sponsors about the exciting impact of their generosity, as well as execute on the various strategies necessary to carry forth the mission of L4L.

Lunches for Learning has a growing number of schools waiting for sponsors so that they can be added to our program. We need your help in reaching out to other individuals and organizations which could be inspired to join us as sponsors. The children of Honduras need us.

Craig Simons, Board Chair



L4L Welcomes Phil Dodson as Executive Director

Phil Dodson joins the Lunches for Learning team as Executive Director after having spent the past ten years serving as Development Director for



North Georgia Camp & Retreat Ministries, which includes the sibling ministries of Glisson Camp and Retreat Center, Grow Day Camps and the Experiential Leadership Institute.

As a 1986 graduate of LaGrange College in LaGrange, GA, Phil began his career in higher education, serving three different colleges in the Admission and Financial Aid arena. In 1997, Phil transitioned to the credit and financial services industry where he served in several Client Relations roles before returning to the non-profit sector in 2006 with North Georgia Camp and Retreat Ministries with a primary focus on fundraising.

"Lunches for Learning makes such a powerful impact on the lives of these students and their families", says Phil. "I am excited about the opportunity to join this organization which is so committed to ending the cycle of poverty in this region of Honduras by feeding kids in school."

Phil lives in Alpharetta with Tracy, his wife of 28 years, and their three children: Megan, a rising senior at Georgia College & State University; Mia, a soon-to-be freshman at Young Harris College; and Jimmy, a rising sophomore at Milton High School. The family attends Northbrook United Methodist Church in Roswell.

Message from the Treasurer

By Jeff Bohman

2015 was a year in which we focused much of our attention on how our organization will evolve as we gradually expand our impact in Honduras. We did increase the number of schools and children served, ending the year providing school lunches to children in 29 rural public schools located in the Valle district. Donor contributions to L4L increased from \$170,000 in 2014 to \$220,000 in 2015 with much of the new funding attributed to long-term school sponsorship commitments.

We depend on recurring contributions and now have a broad base of support from individuals, churches, civic groups, corporations and matching grants. Individual contributors account for 45% of our revenues and are vitally important to the ongoing success of this program. While the global increase in the cost of food remains a concern, our strong financial position ensures there will be no interruption in the services we provide. We also anticipate adding more schools to the program, those who have petitioned L4L repeatedly to be "included among the chosen."

We have several activities planned for 2016 that had not been considered previously, most significant has been the addition of a full time executive director to advance our program. Beyond just dollars and cents, we are committed to effectively building forward as resources and opportunities allow.

As your treasurer I can tell you with confidence, and our independent audit will show, L4L entered 2016 financially and structurally sound. We are more stable than at any time in our 10+ years of operations. L4L is prepared to expand our reach through 2016 and beyond. Please join us on this journey!

Our Permanent Presence in Honduras

A major reason for L4L's success over the years is the presence of our dedi-



Fernando Ortiz, Jessica Gonzales and Juniors Ortiz (far right) are the hands and feet of the Lunches for Learning operation in Honduras. They make sure our L4L sponsored schools are fully supplied with lunches all year long

cated team in Honduras which works diligently to ensure that our sponsored schools receive their lunches each month.

Based on the number of students attending each sponsored school, our L4L team determines how much of each raw material - rice, beans, powdered milk, cooking oil, etc. - is needed for the month and purchases virtually all of the components from local providers in Tegucigalpa and Nacaome. The only exception to this is the multi-vitamin - which originates in the U.S. - given to each child as part each lunch.

Once the lunch components are acquired in bulk, they are transferred to L4L's warehouse in Nacaome where materials are

grouped together, utilizing U.N. standards for determining portion size, to create a month's supply of lunches for each school. Once the school shipments are packaged, the delivery process begins.

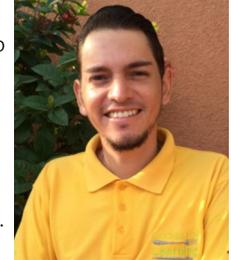
Upon arrival at each school, the school's Principal signs for delivery and then coordinates the team of mothers who will prepare the meals each day (see the FAQ section below for more).

At the end of each month, a second trip to each school is made to acquire a copy of the same official attendance records which the Principal submits to the Honduran government. As a result, we are able to track the number of meals delivered to each school and the number of meals served

during the month for accuracy.

A program which began with lunches being served in one single school in 2005 has now grown to serve 29 schools eleven years later. Much of the success of the program can be attributed to the highly-efficient meal distribution process - utilizing local Honduran resources - which ensures that

lunches are delivered to all 29 schools throughout the 10-month school year.



DID YOU KNOW?

Honduras is divided into 18 geographic areas known as departments - comparable to the 50 states in the U.S. Each department is headed by a Governor who is appointed by the President. Lunches for Learning operates in the Valle Department in the southwestern region of the country.

You will notice that we often refer to the area we serve as the Valle District rather than the Valle Department. Because the term "department" is not typically used to refer to a geographical area in the U.S., the term "district" seems to bring more clarity to the concept for our supporters in the U.S.



Lunches for Learning FAQs

Is there a reason L4L serves this specific region of Honduras?

Fortunately, school-aged children in the U.S. have access to a safety net when it comes to food. Honduras is not able to offer the free and reduced-cost meals which are available to U.S. school children. With as many as 70% of families in the Valle district of Honduras living in extreme poverty, Lunches for Learning provides the only nutritious meal many of these children will receive on any given day. Our goal is to end the cycle of poverty by keeping these children in school, allowing them to become educated, literate individuals who are able to eventually secure employment in the Honduran economy.

What do the lunches consist of?

All the ingredients in a L4L lunch arrive at each school packaged as dry ingredients for safe storage and transport. Each menu includes a carbohydrate, a protein, milk and a multivitamin.

The menu could be referred to as a meal of rice and beans. Rice is typically the carbohydrate component while some form of legume serves as the protein for the meal. Powdered milk is included, as are flour (for tortillas) and cooking oil.

Each "lunch" is typically served around 9:30 a.m. because most of these children arrive at school hungry. Eating early in the day facilitates better academic focus.

How are the meals prepared?

Lunches at the schools are prepared and served by parents of the students being fed. The students' mothers work in rotations to include as many of the families as possible in the rotations.

For schools with kitchens, meals are prepared on-site. However, many schools simply do not have kitchens. In these cases, the Moms volunteer to prepare the meals at their homes and then carry them on-foot to the schools.

These "Mom teams" take great pride in being able to prepare lunches - sometimes even adding-in small amounts of their own spices to provide some varieties of flavors.

Could I make a trip to Honduras to see first-hand the work being done by Lunches for Learning?

Absolutely! Tailored trips to Valle are scheduled throughout the year. While these trips are ideal for donors and sponsors, anyone is invited to participate. Trips generally consist of 2 travel days and 3 service days at our schools and typically cost \$500 per person.

Graduation trips are also hosted in November, usually consisting of 2 travel days and 2 days attending graduation celebrations. This is a special time to celebrate with our Honduran partners and gives a true picture of the L4L impact. Typical cost for these is \$450 per person.



Group Study Exchange Members (left to right): Ace, Roger, Myriam, Robinson, Angela, Jessica, Fernando and Wendy (not pictured)

Building Lasting Partnerships

“Meeting a graduate of the L4L program was compelling evidence that the program works and continues to make a tremendous difference in the lives of individual students.”

Rotary clubs of District 6840, covering portions of Louisiana and Mississippi, have been supporting the Lunches for Learning (L4L) program for more than 4 years. District Gov. John Cornwell of the Rotary Club of St. Charles Parish officially designated L4L as his signature project for the 2015-2016 Rotary year.

Phase one of this initiative involved a team traveling to Honduras to celebrate graduations at four different L4L schools. John Cornwell, Tyrell Cornwell, Jeannine Granier, Thomas Hines, Ace Necaize and Rotaract student Max Hill traveled to southern Honduras to attend graduations in November 2015.

The members of the team were amazed to see first-hand the impact of the L4L program at each of the schools they sponsor. The drop-out rate, which had traditionally

been over 30% for these schools, has improved to near zero - and school administrators point to the lunches provided to the students in school as the primary reason.

Children in the sponsored schools don't find it necessary to drop out of school to work for food. Their parents, particularly their mothers, assume an active role in preparing the students' daily lunches for their own children and their kids' classmates. Teachers and principals across the board are grateful to the L4L program and credit it for the increased attendance - and attentiveness - of the students.

The second part of Gov. John's initiative involved sponsoring a Honduran Group Study Exchange (GSE) team to travel to Rotary District 6840 in January 2016. Jeannine Granier of the Rotary Club of St. Charles Parish, LA

took the lead on this project. She was responsible for the selection of the GSE team and the logistics of their visit to District 6840. The GSE team, pictured above, included: two members of the L4L Honduras team, Fernando Ortiz and Jessica Gonzales; Rotarians Wendy Ayestas and Myriam McCormick; School Principals Robinson Berkell and Angela Reyes; and Roger Chavez, a graduate of an L4L-sponsored school and now an accountant in the city of Nacaome. The Honduran GSE team arrived in New Orleans on January 6th to begin their visit to southeastern Louisiana and southern Mississippi.

While visiting, the team stayed in Rotarians' homes as they traveled throughout the region presenting the L4L program to 13 different Rotary clubs. They also visited 10 schools where the principals on the team learned teaching techniques they can adapt to their own schools in Honduras.

It wasn't all-work-and-no-play. The team enjoyed boat rides, southern style barbeque and experienced Mardi Gras in New Orleans. After more than 2 weeks in the U.S., the team returned home to Honduras on January 21st.

L4L Board member Ace Necaize and his wife Pattie were involved with both phases of the initiative. They had the opportunity to visit the schools in Honduras first-hand and spend time with the children there. *“It was a pleasure hosting the Honduran team in our home for three days & accompanying them to the different clubs and schools they visited”, Ace shares. “We enjoyed all of these experiences – it is something we will never forget. Meeting a graduate of the L4L program was compelling evidence that the program works and continues to*

Board of Directors

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Ace Necaize
Ocean Springs, MS

Armando McCormick
Nacaome, Honduras

Bill Rivers
Canton, GA

make a tremendous difference in the lives of individual students - and through them, their families and communities also.”

Both the guests from Honduras and the US-based Rotarians benefitted from the exchange of ideas and the friendships that were formed - while obtaining, and sharing, a better perspective of the L4L program and the success it continues to make possible.

DID YOU KNOW?

Honduras lacked a national education system until the late 1950s. Before the reforms of 1957, education was the exclusive privilege of those who could afford to send their children to private institutions.

The government of President Ramón Villeda Morales (1957-63) introduced reforms that led to the establishment of a national public education system and began a school construction program.



2016 Events

January

6-21 ~ Group Study Exchange
Rotary District 6840
Mississippi/Louisiana

February

12 ~ Hearts For Honduras Event
Roswell, GA

April

17 ~ Mini Homemade Market at
Messiah Lutheran Church
of Madison, AL

22 ~ Wine & Dine in Wonderland
Fundraising Event
Dadeville, AL

May

18-22 Roswell (GA) UMC Vision trip
to Manuel Bonilla School

November

School Graduation Ceremonies:
13-16, 16-19, 20-23, 23-26

*JOIN US on a trip
and see what L4L is
all about!*



Save The Date!

February 11, 2017

Members of Dothan
Houston (AL) Rotary Club
with students attending
Escuela Jose Trinidad
Cabanas in February. The
Honduran school calendar
runs from February
through November .



Three Rotary Club Sponsors ... One Purpose

Members of the Dothan-Houston County (AL) Rotary, Roswell (GA) Rotary, and the Villa Real de Tegucigalpa Rotary clubs came together last February in Honduras. Each organization is a financial sponsor of one or more schools in rural Honduras, thereby making it possible for hungry children to be provided a nutritious lunch each day they attend school.

It is not uncommon for sponsors of L4L schools, especially those who regularly travel to the area, to recognize an additional need that exists in the community. While L4L remains focused on our core mission of feeding hungry children, we partner with our school sponsors to assist them in their endeavors that may go beyond L4L's core mission by

helping our school sponsors take -on additional projects benefiting the L4L schools and surrounding communities.

This trip was no exception. The group visited Dr. Juan Lindo School where Kay Love, representing the Gaines and Love family sponsors, presented textbooks in Spanish to the school Principals. Their travels then took them to 3 de Octubre, where Kay Love and Lisa Carlisle, representing Roswell Rotary, presented the school with much needed school supplies collected by Roswell area "Interact" students.

And the partnerships go even further. Roswell Rotary has gone "well" beyond its financial sponsorship and is partnering with the Villa Real de Tegucigalpa Rotary Club and the Goasoran Mayor's office on a global grant

to bring water and sanitation to the more than 800 residents in the communities of Piedras Blanca and El Resbaloso.

On this same trip, members of the Dothan-Houston Rotary Club, who sponsor Jose Trinidad Cabanas and Jardin Alegrias Infantiles saw first hand what a difference their sponsorship has made in the communities of El Rincon and Nacaome, Honduras. They were greeted by happy, smiling, healthy children and families who were grateful for their support and giving.

The simple act of feeding hungry kids, in order to encourage them to remain in school and graduate, has inspired so many to go above-and-beyond to work together to make a difference in so many ways.

Hearts for Honduras Fundraiser 2016



The Valentine season is filled with love and compassion and the second annual Hearts for Honduras fundraiser was a fantastic night of compassion and generosity for the children of Honduras. Led by Program Chair Terry Taylor and a group of Roswell, GA Rotarians who have been involved in Lunches for Learning, the H4H committee orchestrated a fun-filled event of dining, drinks and live music and dancing on February 12th.

For the second year in a row Rotarian Chris Archer, president of Founders Hall in Roswell graciously donated the beautiful southern style hall in the heart of Roswell's historic district. Taylor and his committee sold out the event for the second consecutive year. Items donated by local businesses, as well as handmade Honduran jewelry, were sold at auction - all of which directly benefited the children served by L4L.

Many of the members of Taylor's committee have personally visited southern Honduras and - like many - were inspired by the need to help the schools in the L4L program. Theo Keyserling has made numerous trips to this impoverished country herself and was this year's event co-Chair. *"It's great when you work with a group of people who share the same passion and energy to create such a great fundraiser for a fantastic cause"*, said Keyserling. A gift of only \$150 will feed a child in Honduras a daily lunch for an entire school year, but this group's goal to sponsor four schools was a great stretch goal. Through the generosity of many individuals and local businesses in the north Fulton area of Georgia, the goal was exceeded and enough funds were raised to sponsor FIVE schools for an entire year! www.roswellh4h.com



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Lunches for Learning is an IRS-approved 501(c)(3) organization which exists to break the cycle of poverty in rural Honduras for the next generation by providing daily nutritious lunches to schoolchildren, encouraging them to complete their education and ultimately enter the workforce as literate individuals.

Tax-deductible gifts can be made easily and securely by utilizing the **Donate Today** feature at lunchesforlearning.org.

You may also return the card below with your check made payable to Lunches for Learning, Inc.

Please be sure to provide us with your contact information so we can keep you updated on how your gifts are working to help break the cycle of poverty in rural Honduras.

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (_____) _____

Email _____

Each of these giving levels will ensure a certain number of children receive lunch in school **for an entire school year**:

- \$150 feeds one child
- \$750 feeds five children
- \$1,500 feeds ten children

You may also sponsor an entire school:

- \$7,500 sponsors an average-sized school
- \$15,000 sponsors a large school
- My preferred amount \$ _____
- I'd be willing to join forces with another individual or organization as a co-sponsor*