



## GUATEMALA QUARTERLY REPORT

### Impact

- 1. Three child predators are behind bars.** The Escuintla Justice Center team obtained these convictions totaling 40 years on behalf of three girls. There are many incidents of sexual violence against children in Guatemala, but guilty verdicts against the perpetrators have been historically few. Our lawyers, social workers, and psychologists labored tirelessly, driving the cases through the justice system, preparing the girls to testify, and collaborating with public officials. The Kids Alive team is helping justice prevail, turning the tide in an area that desperately needs it.
- 2. A teenage mother is overcoming trauma by experiencing a life-changing relationship with God.** The thirteen-year-old came to Oasis with her baby last year and entered Arquilla's program for adolescent mothers. At first, she could not adjust to motherhood. However, as time passed, with the help of counseling and spiritual guidance, she fell in love with her child and embraced her responsibility. The brave young girl dedicated her baby to the Lord at her local church, demonstrating the transformation God wrought in her heart.
- 3. Two girls from Oasis achieve academic honors.** Their school recently recognized them as outstanding students, demonstrating the power of the Oasis team's many hours of dedicated tutoring. We give the girls the tools they need to live a life of independence and service.
- 4. A child is enjoying a new family, and many more will experience that happiness soon.** Kids Alive Guatemala's Foster Family program accomplished the reintegration and is working with 13 other children and 10 families towards the same goal. This arduous undertaking includes home visits, video calls, phone calls, training sessions, medical visits, court hearings, and other activities. The program is a desirable model that helps devise a sustainable foster family system. By request, our staff trained over 30 Guatemalan professionals and government workers in methods to strengthen the child protection system. Additionally, we have established collaborative relationships with church partners and other non-profits to ensure child safety is a national priority. These efforts contribute to a safer culture where children can live in a family and community free of fear and violence.

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## Miracles of Love



At midnight on August 23, Bianca, pregnant at 13, a survivor of sexual violence, arrived at Oasis just days before her due date, brought by Guatemalan social services under court order. Our caretakers welcomed her and supplied her needs. After her first day, Bianca said, "This place is nice, and I thank God I'm here."

Bianca went to the hospital to give birth on August 25, accompanied by her social worker and a caretaker. Bianca and her baby boy are at Arquilla, growing and easing into their new lives together in the haven afforded them and

other girls in her position by Kids Alive. Bianca is receiving holistic care to help her overcome the violence she experienced and empower her to live a prosperous life as a Christian mother.

Heidy Berduo, Oasis Residential Program coordinator, who was at Bianca's side when she gave birth, says,

"God took care of Bianca like his own baby, and at the right time, God brought her to Oasis, and her life changed. Here, she sleeps safely and feels loved. I thank God for his goodness and for choosing me to be here and be part of these miracles of love."

"Miracles of love" is God's transforming work. He does this daily through staff like Heidy as they walk with the courageous young mothers in Arquilla.

# Events

- 1. Kids Alive Guatemala hosted the Soy Arte (I am Art) camp for the girls at Oasis.** The children enjoyed a week of art activities and afternoon painting, drawing, and dancing workshops designed to teach them that they are God's creative masterpieces. They concluded the week with an art exhibition featuring the children's creations.
- 2. The Escuintla Justice Center team helped over 200 children** by participating in the Escuintla Referral Network's forum called "Violence from the Perspective of Children and Adolescents," sponsored by the Guatemalan Justice System. The team collaborated with local officials, demonstrating that they value Escuintla Justice Center's work and partnership.
- 3. The Guatemalan government rolled out a new policy Kids Alive helped draft that assists victims of crime.** It happened at the first-ever International Congress on Assistance and Care for Victims of Crime. Our Foster Family and Escuintla Justice Center team witnessed the unveiling of the "Dignified Reparation Policy for Victims of Crime 2023- 2033." The government, and ultimately, the children of Guatemala, benefit from our efforts to improve the system to protect the most vulnerable children from violence.

## Now I Understand!

A special report by Katheryn Guitz, Spiritual Coordinator at Kids Alive Guatemala

"I'm frustrated because I believed in a baseless faith," Melisa confessed to Katheryn Guitz, Kids Alive Guatemala's Spiritual Coordinator, during a discipleship meeting at Oasis.

The teenage girl grew up adoring religious images and adhering to certain beliefs that gave her no peace or joy. But Katheryn helped Melisa understand Paul's words in 2 Corinthians 5:17:

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new" (NKJV).

Katheryn explained that the person who gets to know Jesus experiences joy, for faith in Christ is not baseless but founded on God's sure Word, and those who believe it become new creations in Christ.

"Now I want to start building my life on Jesus and the new identity He gives me," responded Melisa, "even though it hurts to admit that my old beliefs were wrong."

In their following discipleship meeting, Katheryn taught Melisa about the human condition without Christ, that without Him, we are dead in our sins (Ephesians 2:1) and fall short of God's glory (Romans 3:23). Melisa responded,

"Now I understand why it is called Kids Alive! Because we came here to meet Jesus, and since we were all dead in our sins, we needed life — and here, you give us Jesus, and Jesus is life! I am one of those girls who received LIFE because you introduced me to Jesus!"

