

# -LINKED-

## SAFETY IN HONDURAS: A PERSPECTIVE FROM WITHIN ITS BORDERS

Hi everyone,

Thank you all for taking the time to read about the work God has blessed us to be a part of in Honduras. Your love and support truly mean the world to us. We have an exciting year ahead of us with lots of opportunities for you to get involved, so please don't hesitate to contact us if there is anything we can assist you with.

I wanted to take this opportunity to address the security concerns that have come up over the past few months. It is true that the Peace Corps has made the decision to temporarily leave Honduras. It is also true that the Honduran police force is currently undergoing a major internal investigation. However, neither of these issues has affected our ministry in a negative way. The police investigation has actually led to fewer problems with the police and more involvement by the armed forces in keeping the country safe.

Traveling to any foreign country, or any major U.S. city for that matter, to work with an inner city ministry is always going to have an element of risk. I don't want to downplay the risks inherent in mission work. However, I would like to assure you that we are doing everything in our power to keep those risks at a manageable level, and also to keep you informed of any changes or security threats. I have lived in Honduras for almost eight years now, and I can honestly say that I have felt safer than ever in the past few months. Much of the Peace Corps' decision to leave seems to center on the Northern Coast and the higher degree of drug trafficking and related degree of violence found there.

Peace Corps workers are also asked to travel by public



transportation and often alone. This is not something that I personally do, and it's not something we would EVER ask a member of a visiting mission team to do.

We have had many groups and parents express concerns about safety for themselves and their children. I assure you that at this time the threat level is no greater than at any other time we have received groups in Honduras. If at any point we feel that it would be unsafe for you to travel to Honduras, we will be the first let you know and begin to make other arrangements. We understand that each team has to make the decision for itself, and if there is any way that we can provide you with more information please don't hesitate to ask. Thank you again for all that you do. You are in our prayers.

Much Love,  
Amber Foster

# \$11,500 RAISED FROM ARLINGTON WINTERFEST CONTRIBUTION

BY COURTNEY MATHEWS

In January, Breaking Chains was blessed to be present at Winterfest Arlington. It was a rewarding time of seeing old friends, making new contacts and worshipping with teens and adults from all over. It also marked a giant step forward toward the purchase of our building.

We are currently in the middle of our 40 for 40 campaign - an attempt to raise \$40,000 through the Winterfest Arlington and Gatlinburg Sunday morning contributions to secure a \$40,000 match offered up by a pair of generous donors for the purchase of our building.

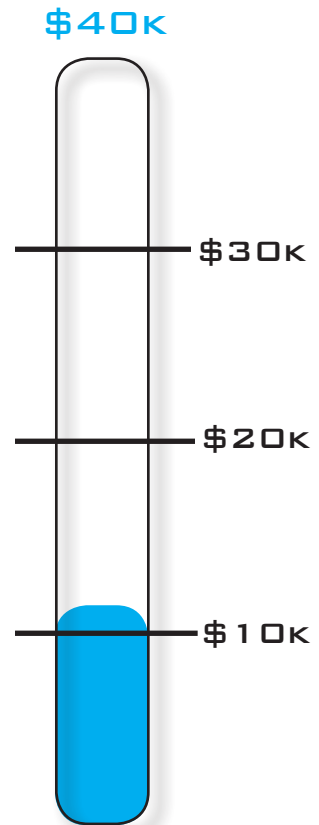
On Sunday morning in Arlington, Elijah Weaver, a high schooler who worked with our ministry last summer, stepped to the stage and delivered an original spoken word

poem about Breaking Chains Honduras. Following his poem, the 3,200 attendees offered up just over \$11,500 for our ministry.

We are blown away by this generosity and have been told that this far exceeds the typical Winterfest contribution at Arlington. We are so thankful to everyone who donated to make this possible, and thankful still to our matching grant donors.

If the next Winterfest follows suit, given its size, we should be on track to meet our goal of raising \$40,000. But, we can't just rest and hope that will happen - we need the help of the Gatlinburg attendees! Please be in prayer over the Gatlinburg event and, if you are attending, we look forward to seeing you there.

Thank you again Arlington!



Amount of 40 for 40 initiative raised to date.

## FIRST DAY OF A WHOLE NEW WORLD

BY COREY BRYANT

Monday was the first day of school for our BC kids! Jonathan and Dayana started kindergarten, and Escarleth and Arol started first grade. We spent much of last week getting the kids ready for school by buying their materials, speaking to them about proper behavior and talking to their parents about what to expect as they start their new journey.

It had been crazy leading up to the first day, worrying about how they would respond to such a foreign environment with so many new people, but they did a great job. Each child had a different experience, and I am so blessed to have been able to watch them as they began their journey.

Jonathan had the best first day of all the kids. His teacher could not stop talking about how well



behaved he was and how impressed she was with the amount of English he understood. Arol was uncharacteristically shy, but that will soon change. Escarleth was nervous and it showed as I had to force her to eat at lunch time. Dayana had a few troubles throughout the day, but having a piñata made all things better!

We want to thank everyone who made this day and every day from here on out possible. The kids are excited, and it is all thanks to your generosity. Please keep our kids in your prayers as they slowly adjust to this new environment, and pray they continue to learn and make new friends on this great adventure!

## STEPPING INTO A NEW FUTURE: MILTON'S STORY BY AMBER FOSTER

"You're worthless. I wish I'd given birth to some barbed wire - at least that would have been useful."

Eighteen-year-old Milton shared these words with me through tears soon after he moved to Breaking Chains. Milton's mom was killed when he was eight years old, and these are the words he carries in his heart from her. These are the words that repeat in his head when Satan feels he is losing his grip on Milton's life.

Over the past few months, Milton and I have spent hours talking about his past - a story filled with pain and violence, moving from one home to another and eventually ending up living on the streets in La Cazona. La Cazona is an abandoned building downtown that has a deep hole in the ground under a crumbling staircase. Many kids come to us after spending a great deal of time living in this literal hole in the ground, surrounded by rats and little else.

When Milton first moved in, he often spoke of suicide and the hopelessness that filled his heart. His family blames him for the death of his mother, and he carries that blame with him wherever he goes. He is an angry young man who struggles to keep his emotions under control. But he is also one of the kindest, most tender-hearted young men I have ever met.

Milton came to us searching for love, and in the process taught us all about the yearning we should have toward God. When Milton prays, everyone stops their fidgeting and listens as he pours out his heart to God. I have had the honor of watching Milton grow from a scared little boy into a very capable young man able to change his future.

With each of our teens, it is our goal to find them a sustainable living situation that will allow them to break the cycle of poverty. We are currently developing a relationship with Casa Domingo, an independent living facility that teaches young people life skills, then finds them job training, a temporary job, and eventually their own apartment. I am pleased to say that this month Milton completed the long process of joining Casa Domingo and is on his way to a bright future.

When I left to visit the states, I asked Milton to write a note that I could share with our supporters about what our ministry meant to him. He handed me a two-page letter covered in bible verses and sweet words of encouragement. Below are a few of the lessons God has been sharing with Milton from his time with Breaking Chains.

I pray that Milton will go on to great success and that we will be telling his story to newcomers at Breaking Chains for years to come.

"You've taught me to be strong.  
You've taught me to be brave.  
You've taught me that I am someone.  
You've taught me to forgive.  
You've taught me to ask for forgiveness.  
You've taught me respect.  
You've taught me how to live with others.  
You've given me a reason to live."

*-Milton Aguilar on Breaking Chains*

## PRAISES FOR A BLESSING AND A NEW ROLE MODEL

BY MICHAEL LEMMONS

We knew after Christmas that we had broken chains on the beaches of Amapala. As I explained in the last newsletter, we also saw friendships form and a family born.

We have a big family by anyone's standards. After all, it includes nearly 50 people living in one house. Our Christmas trip created bonds in that family. One such bond we would never have expected.

Ricardo, one of the dads at our building, has kept mostly to himself in the past. We found out, though, that he lost his job because he took time off to go with us to Amapala. He could have gotten mad at us for this; but instead, he asked if he could redo the face of our building.

Then Ricardo took it even further and said he would do the project with our teenage boys to keep them occupied while Amber took a two-week trip the U.S.

So, for the past two weeks, Ricardo has become one of



my favorite people, doing anything he could to keep our boys out of trouble. He helped keep me sane while both David and Amber were gone.

Ricardo and the boys gave our building a new face and painted two classrooms and two murals at Corey's school, where four of our kids now attend.

Our team is thrilled to see our teenage boys respect someone other than us. We thank God they listen and love someone other than us. This blessing came out of another blessing, and we praise God for his incredible way of moving mountains when all we expected was for him to move a rock.



The Breaking Chains building received a facelift this month thanks to Ricardo and the BC teenagers.

## ONLINE MONTHLY GIVING NOW AVAILABLE

BY COURTNEY MATHEWS

If you have been considering monthly gifts to Breaking Chains, an easy, electronic format is now available on our website through PayPal subscriptions.

The link to subscribe for monthly payments is available on our website at [www.bchonduras.org/site/give/html](http://www.bchonduras.org/site/give/html). Simply select the amount you would like to donate each month, and it will automatically be charged to your account until you choose to unsubscribe. You can also leave a comment if you would like your donation to be designated to a certain account such as education or maintenance.

Please let us know if you have any questions or suggestions as we look for ways to improve the giving process.

## BREAKING CHAINS RECEIVES 501(C)(3) STATUS

As of last month, Breaking Chains Honduras is officially a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation. This means that all donations to Breaking Chains (past and present) are tax-deductible. It also means that we can move forward on more of our organizational tasks, including our board of directors. We will be sure to update you as everything develops with this new status.

If you have any questions about donations or acknowledgements for tax purposes, please contact Courtney Mathews at [courtney@bchonduras.org](mailto:courtney@bchonduras.org). Thank you for all of your prayers and support. We look forward to moving forward!

## MORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR SPONSORSHIP

We are so thankful to the generous individuals sponsoring our four BC kids for school. Over the next couple of months, we will be attempting to secure places at schools and vocational programs for the remainder of our BC kids and teens.

Please be praying and thinking about the opportunity to sponsor one of our BC teens or children to have a better future through education and vocational training. The cost to sponsor will likely be around \$50 per month, but we will inform you as more information becomes available.

Please let us know if sponsorship is something you, your church or your family would be interested in doing. We thank you for all of your love and support and look forward to this new opportunity.

INTERESTED IN BRINGING A GROUP DOWN THIS SUMMER? PLEASE LET US KNOW AS SOON AS POSSIBLE! SPACE AT BAXTER FILLS UP FAST AND WE WANT TO BE ABLE TO ACCOMMODATE YOU. PLEASE EMAIL [MAIL@BCHONDURAS.ORG](mailto:MAIL@BCHONDURAS.ORG) WITH QUESTIONS ABOUT AVAILABLE DATES. WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU!

## PRAYER REQUESTS:

- Winterfest 40 for 40 contribution
- Education and vocation sponsorship
- Safety in Honduras
- Spring Break and summer groups
- Our BC kids and schooling

## CONNECT WITH US:

- [www.bchonduras.org](http://www.bchonduras.org)
- [facebook.com/bchonduras](https://facebook.com/bchonduras)
- [twitter.com/bchonduras](https://twitter.com/bchonduras)
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