Guatemala Trip, 2013

Good morning. My name is Laura Page

First of all, I thank God for all the love and mercy He has shown me, so I that I am able to go out and show His love to others. And I thank you, the people of Spring Creek for your prayers and generosity in financially supporting the inside stove, the outside stove, and a water filtration system for 36 families in Guatemala. It was an incredible trip. I did not know how beautiful the country of Guatemala is. It was a tropical paradise with mountains, rainforests, waterfalls, volcanoes, coffee plantations, very old cities with cobblestone streets, and ornate architecture in the beautiful old buildings and churches. The HELPS International company did an amazing job of security, translating, driving, and putting us up in very nice accommodations. The food was good and no one became sick. I am still overwhelmed by the extreme poverty I saw there. The homes where they live have dirt floors with fleas, chickens, roosters, dogs and cats running around, inside and outside. There are just thin boards for walls, corrugated metal for roofs; no plumbing, no sewer, no electricity, and no mail service. I saw very little food. Two times I saw some eggs sitting on the shelf, and an uncovered bowl of masa that they use to make their tortillas. Once I saw a lady cooking meat patties on her new stove. They have no refrigeration. I saw no drinks, I guess they just drink water. I did see beautiful, and clean, mothers, babies, and children. Their hair was clean and shiny. A lot of the women had on clean colorful blouses and skirts. Some had on the blouse I have on today. They did their work in these nice clothes. They walked around in mud because it rains every day. In the homes, there were no cribs, no strollers, no pampers, no toys, very little furniture, maybe a log stump, a bench, or table. The women are so strong. At one home, the tiles we had to put in the outdoor stove were cracked when we opened the box. So the lady of house, and Ms. Faustina, our community helper that came along side of us, went down the hill, back to the truck to get another box of tiles. The box weighed probably 10 to 12 lbs. They came back up that steep hill much faster that we did when we walked up the hill, and the lady of the home was carrying the box of tiles on her head. I saw her chop a piece of wood into small even pieces very quickly to have to start the fire in the new stove. The ladies and children were so loving to each other. After installing the two stoves and a water filtration system, playing with the children, blowing bubbles, reading books to them, we circled up around the inside stove, held hands, and prayed. The translator said they thanked God first, and then they thanked Spring Creek for the stoves and us for coming to Guatemala. These people were in tears for what Spring Creek brought to them. This is what touched my heart. God was definitely there and I felt His love pouring down on me. I was so blessed by these sweet people. They even blessed us with a surprise Fourth of July party. When our van pulled up, we saw they had lined the steps up the hill with palm branches, just like they did for Jesus. They had red, white, and blue balloons outside and inside. And as we started up the steps, firecrackers went off! Then, inside, they had 12 chairs for us to sit in, while they stood around the walls or sat on the floor. These ladies walked far with babies and small children, dressed in their best. They presented certificates of appreciation to Denise, Sally, and to you, our Spring Creek Church family. Then, these ladies, who have nothing, gave a handmade gift to each one of us. I was so honored and humbled. The hardest part of this trip has been coming home to the overabundance, and the materialistic life we have here, after seeing the extreme poverty they live in. These people are probably happier than we are in this country, because of the stress we have of having to take care of all our stuff. I still am having trouble sleeping at night for thinking about the huge difference. It does not register by looking at pictures, or reading about it. You have to experience it in person and see it with your own eyes. I cannot even tell you what all I saw. Words are not enough. I think every Christian who can go, should go to a third world country and see it for themselves, or they just don’t get it. I know I didn’t, until this trip. The Guatemalans are strong people and very close to God. They have to be, for they have to depend on God for everything. It was a great adventure and I will never forget these beautiful people. I pray for my new Guatemalan friends every day.