

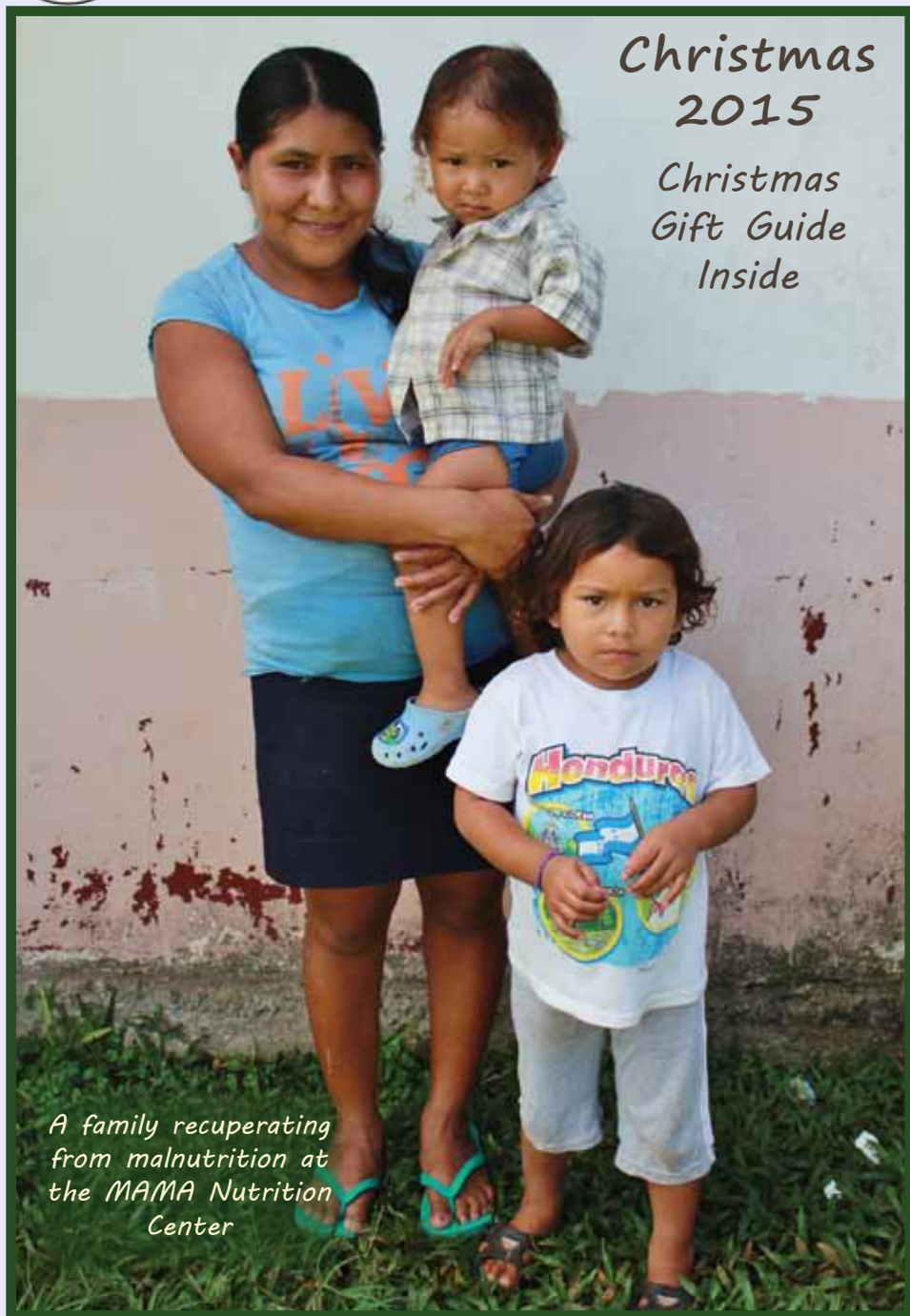


MAMA News

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2015*

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*A family recuperating
from malnutrition at
the MAMA Nutrition
Center*



Felix's Life Story - MAMA Employee



For those of you that have been to Honduras to serve on a mission team, you have met Felix, one of MAMA's reliable employees, leading each team through the windy mountainous roads to each community. His smile never leaves his face as he works hard to give families concrete floors. He uses his little-known English to make each person on the team comfortable and teach them the process of pouring the new floors.

Recently MAMA celebrated Felix's 12th anniversary as an employee. Upon reflecting about his time with MAMA, we felt sharing his story with others is valuable in learning about how MAMA changes lives all around - from those that travel

on the mission teams, those that receive care in the communities or in the Nutrition Center, and those that are employed by MAMA Project. Continue reading as Felix shares his story:

My childhood was beautiful for the most part. My parents showed me how to work and how to be honest. The only thing that they couldn't give me was school. I wasn't able to study or finish even the primary school. I went as far as finishing second grade. Now, as an adult, I was able to finish third grade.

As a child, I wasn't able to play with little cars or trucks like the other children. Other children had the freedom to play and to go to the school with their bags, notebooks, pencils with erasers, and everything that they needed; everything that I was unable to have.

One reason that I was unable to go to school was that I didn't have shoes; but I also didn't have a notebook to write in. Often times my mother would purchase paper and then sew the papers together with thread and needle so that I would have a notebook. I had my plastic bag and then my little pencil stub when I would go to school. So, for those reasons, I wasn't able to continue to study. My childhood wasn't like many of the other children.

When I came to live here (in San Francisco de Yojoa) around 1995 my house was the first one to be built in the area. MAMA Project already existed but I

had no idea what MAMA was. I just watched people enter and leave; I saw the North Americans come and go in the vans but I had no idea what they were doing. The only thing I knew was that they had a garden and I watched to see what they planted.

When the people would enter [MAMA's Nutrition Center] they would leave the gates open and the animals from the street would go in and eat some of the plants in the garden. I would go in and get the animals out and then close the gate. When I would see people in vehicles leaving or coming, I would go over and open the gate for them. This was my way to help despite not knowing anything about MAMA Project.

One afternoon my father came to me and said, "Your mother told me that she has been praying that you would look for work in MAMA Project." I told him, "I already have work (I was working in a sweatshop) but it's not going really well because I have to pay for my food and transportation. I'll take it into consideration."

Weeks passed and I remember that it was a Friday when I saw Sergio (the MAMA Project Director at the time) leaving the Nutrition Center. When I opened the gate for him, I asked if he needed any workers. He knew that I was already working but I explained to him that after paying for transportation and food, very little pay was left over. My children needed to go to school as they were getting older and I needed to find a way to provide an education to them. Sergio replied that with MAMA Project I might not make a lot of money either since it is a non-profit organization.

Felix (middle) with his daughters, wife, and son.



That was the first time I heard those words - a non-profit organization. Sergio went on to explain that MAMA Project helped children and for that reason, they couldn't provide a high salary. He then said, "I am glad that you have a desire to work with us. Do you know why? Because I have seen how you care for the Project. I have seen from the office how you get the animals out of the garden, how you open and close the gates and that gives me confidence that you are a good person and that you may work well with us."

So the following week I put in my resignation at the sweatshop and on August 17, 2003 I began work with MAMA Project. My work entailed taking care of the property - cleaning, planting seeds in the garden, and repairing the fences.

About two months later, an employee from the PA office of MAMA Project asked me about my education and experience. When he heard that I only had education to the second grade, he said that he thought MAMA really needed professional staff and people who could drive.

That moment brought back memories of my childhood when I hadn't been able to study. I thought to myself that if that is the kind of person that MAMA needs, maybe I should not work for MAMA. As we talked, I was praying, "Lord, if you want me to work for MAMA, I will continue, but if not, I will find work elsewhere."

When I started to walk away, he continued, "For example, tomorrow when we go to Santa Cruz to pick up Doña Maria and her malnourished children, how would you be able to find them if you cannot read directions or a map?" I took a piece of paper and drew a very detailed map of exactly how to get to her village. When he saw that, he was surprised and admitted that he may have had a wrong opinion.

Over time my self-esteem increased. I got to meet people from all of our country, in the communities, and meet people from the USA and we worked in friendship and harmony.

Later Dr. Herman Sagastume came and he gave me the opportunity to learn more about driving vehicles. I started driving to San Pedro Sula (city), going to places further away and got to know the location of many communities. This all helped my heart to open up. Before I didn't know that I had a heart for service but while working with MAMA Project I learned that my heart was to serve. With MAMA, I discovered my gifts and my talents that God has given me, even though I never studied and didn't have a title. God gave me the opportunity to open up to the people in the communities. Sometimes I'm addressing the community and introducing the MAMA brigades. I pray to the Lord, "Lord, look at all that you are doing!" I never tire of giving thanks to God for MAMA Project for giving me the opportunity to serve, for believing in me.

Now I have discovered the value that I have, that MAMA has given me. I have been able to help

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Felix picking up the weekly tilapia donation for the Nutrition Center.

He always has a smile on his face!

Felix teaching community leaders about using a water filtration system to purify drinking water.



my children study and graduate from school. Thanks to my work with MAMA, I have been able to build onto my home. Thanks to MAMA I have learned how to treat people. I also know that there is still much work to do and to learn.

During my 12 years with MAMA Project, I have met many families at the Nutrition Center. I have seen many families change. There are a few families that I will always remember.

When I started working with MAMA, I began to bring the children from the communities. I would see them where they lived in their homes and bring children that were malnourished, had marasmus or kwashiorkor. I didn't know these sicknesses existed. I saw them as chubby with yellow hair and thought they looked different but pretty. But now I know that is the child with malnutrition. MAMA has shown me the secret, the way to recuperate children with malnutrition.

I remember one child. I will never forget him. His name was Milton. He was 5 or 6 years old. Milton came with his grandmother to receive treatment at the Nutrition Center. He came with a hat and sweater, they were very thick, made for cold weather. Milton was very swollen and where ever you put him, he stayed. Even in the sunniest of days, he never took off the hat and sweater. Many times if his grandmother placed him somewhere, he would stay there, immobil. He was always cold, he didn't have the strength to walk.

Maybe 4 or 5 weeks later, I was cutting the grass and behind his room, I found his hat. I thought to myself, "That's weird that Milton took off his hat." So I went and found Milton. I asked him why he took off his hat. He said, "I don't

need it anymore. I also took off my sweater because I no longer need it." Milton was now recuperating, more active.

Earlier in his life, Milton had learned to walk and played as children play. But as he developed malnutrition, he could no longer do any of those things. With treatment, he returned to the way he was earlier in his childhood. It was an amazing recuperation, to see him running around the dining room and through the yard.

When I met Milton, I had been working for MAMA Project for about 1 and a half years. It marked my life because it gave me the will to continue doing what I was doing with MAMA. I wanted to do my part in helping others.

I have seen how the families leave the Nutrition Center very content. Not only do I pick them up to come to the Center, but I also take them home after treatment. I see how when they return home, they return with an education - as much about God as about healthy hygiene and eating healthy. The mothers even look different.

I also remember a mother that we brought that was recommended by a doctor in a public clinic. The mother's name was Iris. Her daughter was very malnourished. The mother was malnourished, too. She came so neglected that she received special treatment at our Center. I welcomed them at the gate of the Nutrition Center and then Rosa (MAMA's nursing assistant), evaluated them. After two weeks at the Center, the woman was completely different and the daughter had improved quickly as well.

After about three weeks, Iris became sick and we took her to her doctor. He asked a few questions about Iris: Where was she from? Where is her mother? The mother responded, "Doctor. Don't you remember me? I am the one that you referred to MAMA Project." The doctor replied, "I didn't recognize you! You look so young and refreshed!" Then the doctor leaned over to me and Rosa and said, "I congratulate the work that you are doing with MAMA Project. It's obvious that it's done with love."

These are times that have motivated me to continue to do the work that we do. Sometimes it's tiring, sometimes we have personal or family difficulties. But I have learned and have applied this to my family also, that hygiene and health is important but also loving our neighbors as ourselves is very important.

Truthfully the work of cementing floors in the communities is very tiring. Also, the way we work with our hands and have to do it every day (especially from January to March when we have non-stop teams), can be very tiring. We see how the volunteers from USA come to our country, without knowing anything about the situation that so many of the children live in, and they do it with love.

Felix (right) with a family that was at the Nutrition Center.





This transmits the love to me, too, and gives me the energy.

One of the things that I always do when I'm in the home that we are pouring concrete and I have the instrument in my hand that helps to smooth out the concrete, I see the reality of the concrete and what we're doing.

When I was a child, I lived in a house made of sticks, covered

with earth and stone. The floor did not have cement. I slept on the floor, since I was the child, with my brothers and sisters. During that time there were bags that we slept in, made of thick string. I would climb into the bag and then sleep on the floor. I had restless sleep since the ground was so uneven and uncomfortable, sleeping between the rocks and the loose dirt. My childhood was spent sleeping on that floor.

That's what motivates me, too. Remembering each time that I help pour a concrete floor, even though I'm tired, I feel happy that the family will benefit from the floor. I know that there are still children that sleep on the floor and this will change their lives. It makes them happy to be able to sleep on a firmer, more level surface.

Sometimes while we work, the children come into the house and see how different the floor is. I remember one time in the community of Las Lomitas, we poured a concrete floor for a very poor family. The floor was very uneven and when we finished the floor, a child came to us. He was very small and he shouted to his friends, "Hey! Come here! Look at how beautiful the floor of my house is. Now my back won't hurt when I sleep!" This filled my heart and made me feel moved. Those are the memories that mark my life, in my heart and in my mind.

There are also adults that we see that motivate us, thank us for our work, and encourage us to continue. I have young friends and older friends. When we arrive in a community, the children that know me are greeting me with excitement when I haven't even gotten out of my car and then run and give me hugs. The adults or elderly also greet and give hugs. This helps us to continue, knowing we have made beautiful relationships with so many people.

I'm appreciative for all of the opportunities and responsibilities that MAMA Project has given me. I pray that I will be able to serve God through my work for many years to come!

Christmas Gift Guide

This Christmas would you like to give a gift that changes lives through MAMA Project? If so, it's as simple as 1, 2, 3!

1

Choose your gift!
Send your donation
to MAMA Project.

2

Give a card to your
friend or loved one
telling about the gift
given in their name.

3

Your gift helps
change the life of
someone through
MAMA Project!

Changing Lives of the Families at the Nutritional Rehabilitation Center



Each year MAMA Project brings about 100 children to its Nutritional Rehabilitation Center to receive care and education about healthy hygiene and living.

Children stay with their mothers and siblings at the Center. They receive all of the medicines necessary to treat their illnesses.

Daily the families participate in educational sessions and devotions.

The time at the Center is life-changing for many of these children (and mothers), giving them a second chance at life!

Cost: \$8/day per child

Changing Lives in the Communities



MAMA Project spends a lot of time each year in educating the poor, rural communities of Honduras. To the left, you can see how MAMA Staff train the people about the importance of adding micronutrients to their food.

MAMA works closely with community leaders to bring materials, educational opportunities, and teams to them.

Cost:

\$100 for training for a community leader

\$30 for a guinea hen

(to use eggs with micronutrients)

\$6 for 1 year of micronutrients one growing child



Visiting teams provide medicines, vitamins, concrete floors, deworming pills, dental care, and more to communities.

Cost:

\$20 for water filtration system

\$0.05 for one deworming pill

\$300 for a cement floor in the home of a poor, rural family

\$5 for one Bible



Changing Lives through Donations

As Felix mentioned in his story, he was not able to go to school because he did not have shoes, notebooks and pencils.

Material donations to the children and families in Honduras provide more help than we can imagine.

MAMA is looking at expanding its office and warehouse space in 2016 to accept & process donations.



Cost: \$10,000/Global Cost of Shipping Container

\$3,000/month for Additional Office & Warehouse Space

***We are looking for 12 donors to help with \$3,000/year.**

Changing Lives of Students in Labaleine, Haiti



MAMA sponsors support the children at Tree of Life School in Labaleine, Haiti.

The sponsorships provide uniforms, food, books and cover the cost of tuition for children who otherwise would not be able to afford it..

Cost: \$25/month for primary students

\$40/month for secondary students

\$150/month for university students

***One-time donations accepted.**

Join us at a MAMA event in 2016



Annual Volleyball Tournament

February 6, 2016

Quakertown Christian School
50 E. Paletown Rd, Quakertown, PA

Women's Tournament: Start at 9am

Co-Ed Tournament: Start at 1pm

*Co-Ed team must have equal or more women than men on the court at all times.

9th Annual Golf Outing

June 3, 2016

Butter Valley Golf Port
South 5th St, Bally, PA

Shot-Gun Start at 8am

Lunch Buffet & chance at prizes
to follow.



Annual Banquet & Silent Auction

November 12, 2016

Quakertown Christian School
50 E. Paletown Rd, Quakertown, PA



MAMA Project

Mujeres Amigas-Miles Apart
(Women Friends-Miles Apart)

Nutritional Rehabilitation
Medical & Dental Brigades
Work Teams

Cross Cultural Training

Deworming &
Vitamin A Campaigns

Donating Medical & Dental
Equipment & Supplies

Community Development
Scholarships

Child Survival Training

The *MAMA News* is a quarterly newsletter available for free to anyone who would like to receive it. To add, remove or change your address on our mailing list, contact: Amanda Sagastume
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MAMA Project is a Non-Profit Charitable Organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the U.S. Tax Code— Federal Tax Identification #23-2993647.

All donations given to MAMA Project are tax-deductible and a receipt will be sent to donor.

All photos were taken by MAMA Project Staff or Service Team Members.