

Dear Friends,

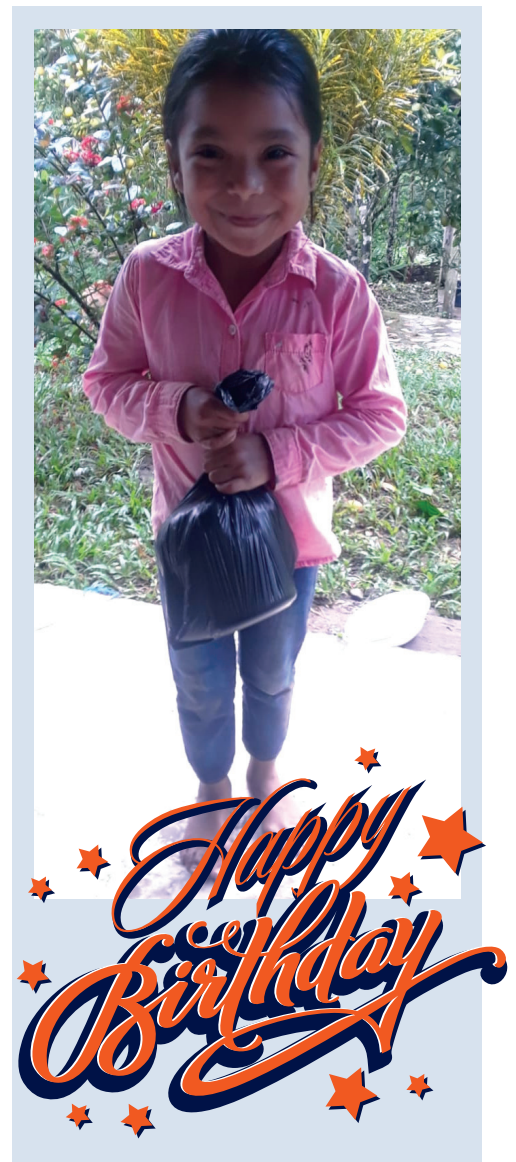
The festivities of Christmas and the New Year have quieted, and I ponder now on what word or message will be given to guide me in 2019? And what comes to mind is a little girl named Miriam.

Miriam's mother, Maria, came to my home the day before Thanksgiving and invited me to a party the next day celebrating Miriam's 7th birthday. She said, "We weren't going to celebrate – there is very little money. But Miriam insisted saying, 'Mamá, I want to celebrate my birthday – I am here – I lived! We HAVE to have a party with a meal, piñata – everything!' And she said, 'We have to invite Hermana Katy.'"

Maria and I reminisced...Miriam is Maria and her husband's last child. Shortly after Miriam's birth Maria's breast milk dried up. The family, who live off the land growing corn, beans and cardamom, with seven hungry other bellies to feed had no money to buy the expensive infant formula the new baby needed. When Maria came to me for help and opened the shawl on her back revealing a skeleton of a baby girl, my eyes widened. *Would this baby survive in her malnourished condition?*

We came to an agreement that Ixcán Ministries would provide the money for the baby formula and Miriam's father would provide some service. Over the months, with the milk and her mother's constant care, slowly Miriam's emaciated form filled out, she put on weight and began to flourish. I called her then, '*Miriam Milagrosa*' - Miraculous Miriam.

So seven years later, on her birthday, Miriam the miraculous, walked the 10 minutes from her house to mine bearing an aluminum kettle filled with hot chicken soup and tortillas on the side. The soup was an expression of thanks and also brought a bit of the party to me (I unfortunately was unable to be there, I was hosting a Thanksgiving meal at my house that day).



We hugged and I gave her a gift and asked forgiveness for not being able to attend her party. I hoped she understood. Her radiant smile didn't waver and after we visited for a short while, she left content with the stuffed toy in a black plastic bag I had given her swinging at her side.

I am still touched by her visit. This was a seven-year-old child who knew the value and preciousness of life, insisted on celebrating that, and didn't forget to thank those who God had used to save her.

Miriam embodies my Word for 2019.

I am deeply grateful for all the ways God worked in and through Ixcán Ministries this past year and for all those who made that possible through financial donations, prayers and countless kindnesses. Thank you so much! *Muchísimas Gracias!* We cannot do this ministry without you!

May God bless you and yours in 2019!

Sincerely,



Kathy Snider



Mission Update:

The **scholarship program** is helping 35 students study this year with partial scholarships, The **library** continues to develop offering reading reinforcement for primary school age children, resources for Jr. High students, and a lending library now in place, Kathy is accompanying the **Jr. High committee as an advisor**, The **women artisans** had a successful year of sales reaching \$9,500.00 over Christmas, We are slowly trying to develop a team of men who are recovering alcoholics to form an **AA group** in the village, Kathy is meeting with the **wives of men who are active alcoholics** for prayer and support, the **Luchadoras women's group** continues to meet, **pastoral work** in the village and with the parish is ongoing, **the poor and sick** with financial needs who come to the door are helped.

Do I live my life each day aware that it is precious and a gift and give thanks by giving it back to God via others?

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

Ixcán Ministries is a Christian lay mission serving as a ministry of presence with the Maya people in the Ixcán jungle of Guatemala. We act as a bridge between cultures for the exchange of gifts to transform lives and society.

Ixcán Ministries is a 501(c) 3 organization. Your contributions are tax deductible.

Contact us or send a donation to:
Ixcán Ministries
PO Box 51
Mandan, ND 58554

www.ixcanministries.org
ixcan_ministries@yahoo.com
Marlane Peterson, President
(701) 426-9276

Purchase Ixcán Creations products at:
Tienda Marleny
(call 701-426-9276 to shop)