



Dear Friends,

I've been in Santiago Ixcán long enough to see children I know grow into young adults who now are parents with their own children! Time passes and the results of our labors aren't always seen. In our educational outreach with local youth this is often the case. However, I recently had the chance to run into three of our Junior High School graduates and scholarship recipients from long ago: Maria Imul, Jose Perez, and Sindy Raymundo and was pleasantly surprised to learn what they are doing with their lives.

A few weeks ago, when I travelled to Playa Grande and was walking down a long cement corridor flanked by small businesses, I came across a small bright pharmacy. Needing to purchase an item, I stepped into the shop and to my surprise there stood Maria Imul, all professional- looking, standing behind the counter. "It's you!" she exclaimed as she came from behind the glass display of medications and products and gave me a hug. "Is this yours?" I asked. "Yes! It's mine. We just opened a month ago!"



We sat in her office and caught up. I felt admiration and amazement at how far she has come from the small classrooms of our village Junior High School to getting a Bachelor's degree in Nursing in Cobán, and presently working for the Department of Health in a hospital thirty minutes from Playa Grande. In addition, she built her own pharmacy business, (nurses here often act legally as pharmacists) where she works with one other employee, juggling three night shifts per week at the hospital and working at the pharmacy during the day. She also studies ultrasound technology in Guatemala City two Saturdays per month! "I want to prepare to someday bring my skills to Santiago Ixcán and open an equipped clinic there!" she smiles. I love her vision, drive and dedication.

Recently, while driving down a gravel road between San Antonio Tzeja and Santiago Ixcán, it started to rain after a lapse of a month -the first of our desperately needed rainfall in the dry season. Unfortunately, the windshield wipers of our mission Toyota truck stopped working in mid-swipe! Thankfully, I wasn't too far from home and made it back as the rain dispelled. But it was scary.



Good and honest mechanics aren't easy to find here. I mentioned my wiper problem to a friend who said, "Hermana, take it to the young mechanic, Jose, he is capable. My son's truck had an issue and Jose was able to fix it."

Jose graduated years ago from our Jr. High School and received a partial scholarship with us for his three-year training at a mechanical technical school in Playa Grande. I know his family struggled and sacrificed financially to get him through and "Some days he didn't eat," said his mother. "He had no money for food." But he finished, graduated, and spent two years working first in Cobán and then in Playa Grande, learning and earning money. He eventually moved back to Santiago, but he wasn't doing much mechanical work because he didn't have the start-up money to build a shop and purchase all the tools he needed. He split his time working in the family fields and doing smaller mechanical work on the side. However, over the years, he earned enough money to purchase more tools and built an open-air tin-roof shop to work under. He works full-time now as a mechanic.

When I pulled up to his shop Jose lifted his head from under the hood of a truck and came over and greeted me. I explained the problem. "Let me take a look," he said.

We chatted as he checked fuses and he shared, "I can repair any kind of motor: trucks, cars, motorcycles, corn grinders, anything. I want to expand my business someday and rebuild used or wrecked motorcycles, but I don't have the capital to do so right now." "That sounds like a great plan," I said. "See what God has for you in the future."

Within thirty minutes he had the windshield wipers working like magic! I felt elated that the problem was resolved in the village and by him!

I admire Jose's persistence, resilience and resourcefulness in building his own business from the ground up in spite of all the obstacles he faced. He never gave up on his dream of owning his own business and using his gifts to help the community.

Sindy Raymundo, our present scholarship, recipient is doing her practicum in speech therapy at the Red Cross in Cobán. (I wrote about Sindy in a previous newsletter.) While in Cobán for a dental visit, I asked if it was possible to visit her at work. It was. When I walked through the doors of the garage-type building of the Red Cross, I found Sindy on her knees playing with a child of about four years. Sindy has a clear gift of compassion and patience with children. I felt happy watching her help a special needs child try to speak. She also is studying to get a double major in Psychology. Her skills in both areas are much needed in the Ixcán.



All three of these alums of our Junior High School (built thanks to the vision and donation of Mr. Tom Glennon) and recipients of our scholarship program give me hope.

I feel grateful to God and our donors that Ixcán Ministries has been instrumental in helping Maria, Jose, and Sindy attain their life-work. They have beat the odds, fought for their dreams and are making a difference for their people here in Guatemala.

As Maria told me, "My education at the *instituto basico*- Junior High School (and the scholarship) was an important bridge in order for me to continue to climb to the next step to attain my career goals. I am very happy and satisfied with my profession."

Thank you for helping us make a real difference in the lives of the people in Santiago Ixcán! We thank God for you.

May God bless you and yours in these summer days.

Sincerely,

Kathy Snider

## Mission Update:

The Ixcán, as in many parts of the world, is experiencing unusually high temperatures (in the 100's most days) with no rain. The dry season (that usually ends in June) drags on. This creates a special hardship as the wells, springs and nearby rivers dry up causing a lack of water for drinking, washing clothes and bathing. Also, the newly planted corn in the fields are scorched and the cardamom plants are wilted. Heat related illnesses of colds, fevers, stomach issues, affects many. We are doing what we can to help in the midst of this crisis, and are preparing to expand our corn project if the rains do not come.

Kathy is back in the U.S. as of June 22nd to do reverse-mission work. Javier Gonzalez and Carmen Jimenez will oversee our ministry outreaches on the ground consulting with Kathy via telephone when needed.

### 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.

Our programs include- Scholarships, Community Library, Women's Micro-business, Medical, Housing, and Food Assistance, Spiritual and Pastoral Accompaniment, and Promotion of Peace and Justice.

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

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