



Dear Friends,

On the 10th of every month, a group of about 20 women with children in hand and a few dogs straggling along, walk up the long dirt road on the outskirts of the village to our mission house in Santiago Ixcán. There they will gather to pray. They are the jewelers and weavers of Ixcán Creations.

Ixcán Creations, their microbusiness and an outreach of Ixcán Ministries, began in 2007 as a mental health program rather than a viable business. Eridenia, from Panama and working out of Playa Grande started the program knowing the positive effects of bringing women together to create. She showed them how to make simple bead necklaces and earrings. When the women ran out of materials and with no market- the project ended. I stepped in and reorganized them, bought more materials and with the help of other U.S. women began selling their jewelry and weavings in the United States. Thus, their little business slowly grew and they became very good at their craft.

Creating their necklaces, earrings, and bracelets and their hand-woven shawls, scarves and table runners has changed them. I've watched them grow – not only as artisans but in other ways.

Getting together for the monthly prayer has given them a reason to leave their endless work at home for the opportunity to pray, laugh, and chat as well as to help each other in making their art. They have formed community. With their collective earnings (the jewelers take out 14% of their earnings to put into a common fund) they enjoy an outing together once a year and go to a waterfall, natural park, or river with their children. Some of them had never experienced these beautiful places in their own country. Until now.

In addition, they have opened their own bank account in Playa Grande and a few women within the group manage their check book and do the payouts. Some of the women had never been in a bank before!

Every sale of Ixcán Creations product goes directly to the woman artisan. Their earnings helps them financially and practically. I love how jade earrings, back-strap fine woven shawls, or seed rosaries transforms into a water holding tank, a pot of chicken soup, medicine, or shoes for children. The women feel empowered and grateful for the opportunity to help themselves and their children. But they can't do it without us.

And we could use your help.

If you feel led to get involved in this important ministry from wherever you are, please consider hosting a home sale or approaching your pastor in having a sale in your local church or with your women's group. We can guide, provide information, product and accompany you in this endeavor. If you are interested please contact us by email at : ixcan_ministries@yahoo.com.

Also, the Christmas season is approaching when in the United States many become very interested in 'gift-giving'.



Dilma and her water tank bought with her earnings

If you are in the Bismarck/Mandan, ND area you can purchase product at our upcoming sale at **Spirit of Life Catholic Church** in Mandan - **November 25th and 26th** following the Saturday night and Sunday Masses.

Or in Fargo, ND at **St. Anthony of Padua Catholic Church** - **December 9th and 10th** following the Masses.

Also, our Native American (Mayan) style jewelry can be purchased at United Tribes Technical College gift store in Bismarck, ND.

The board of directors and I, along with Javier Gonzalez, Carmen Jimenez and the people of Santiago Ixcán and the women of Ixcán Creations -Francisca, Rosa, Juana, Josefa, Maria, Marta, Cleotilde, Irma, Vicenta, Irma, Fabiana, Natalia, Vilia, Magdalena, Maria Angelica , Maria Elena, Josefa, Ana and Dilma - extend our heartfelt thanks for your support of our ministry in Guatemala!



I spoke with one of our weavers, Rosa Gordean, about Ixcán Creations and its impact on her life. She said, "*Me ayuda bastante*. It helps me so much. My last earnings came right in time. I was sick and with the money I was able to go to the parish clinic in Playa Grande for a doctor's consult and medicine. It helped me a lot. Thanks to you and the sisters in the U.S. who are helping with our business. *Dios queda con Uds*. May God stay with you."

May God bless you and yours this Thanksgiving as we give thanks to God for All. And may we continue to pray for peace in our war-torn world.

Sincerely,

Kathy Snider

Mission Update:

Guatemala has been in a political crisis after national elections that has sent indigenous groups, students and citizens to non-violently protest against corruption within the government. This led to road blockades in the month of October. The primary goal behind the protests was to demand the resignation of the Attorney General- to no avail. Presently, the roads are open but the people continue to protest in front of key governmental buildings in Guatemala City. The President elect, Bernardo Arévalo, ran on a campaign that focused on anti-corruption. He will take office on January 14th.

Our outreach and educational ministries are moving forward under the leadership of Javier Gonzalez our on-site administrator with the local leadership committees of each program. Kathy is in contact weekly by telephone.

Kathy hopes to return to Guatemala sometime before Christmas 2024.

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.

Contact us or send a donation to:
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