



August

2026

Dear Friends,

I am presently in North Dakota but by the time you read this will be in Guatemala. I am remembering now an incident that occurred not so long ago in my village. As I walked outside up the cement stairs leading to the doorway of our church for a Thursday evening service— I stopped in my tracks. There stood Diego, a young man who always participates—nothing unusual there—except for the shirt he had on. Blazoned in white lettering on the front of his dark green T- shirt were the words—North Dakota soccer!

Being a North Dakota native, I was surprised and wondered how a T-shirt with my home state printed on it, had made it all the way to a remote village in the Ixcán jungle of Guatemala?! (I hadn't brought it!)

Then I thought I was like that shirt —how did I, a woman from North Dakota, come to be living in Santiago Ixcán with the Maya indigenous in a remote jungle?

Only God could do such a thing.

Maybe God had sent that North Dakota shirt to remind me that I am called to be there, acting as a bridge between the United States and Guatemala for the exchange of gifts. I am thinking how Ixcán Ministries has impacted the area and people by my just being where God has led me and by my staying open to the movement of the Holy Spirit. I say this humbly, knowing that without God moving through you, our benefactors, and without the help and support of the local people in my life, none of our education or outreach programs would be possible.



The present Junior High School in Santiago Ixcán is an example. I marvel even more now how the school even came to be through an outstanding donation given by a man I met one evening at a restaurant in Antigua, Guatemala.

Mr. Tom Glennon and his wife, Ellen, were visiting their daughter (my friend, Beth) at the non-profit organization out of Minnesota, Common Hope, Familias de Esperanza. Beth was volunteering there with her husband and young son at the time. She had invited me to join them one evening for dessert at one of Antigua's higher end restaurants. "Yes, I would love to," I responded.

Mr. Glennon's distinctly eastern accent, short silver hair and groomed beard, a big man with wit and confidence, dominated the table. Ellen was elegant, every hair in place, and effused a quiet grace. Early in the evening, Mr. Glennon made a surprising offer:

"Kathy, I want to help your work," he said.

"Well, thanks, Mr. Glennon! What do you have in mind?"

"Why don't you build a school?"

My coffee cup lingered half way between the table top and my mouth. I set it down. My heart beat a bit faster.

"Well, Mr. Glennon, I don't have that kind of money. And I don't know if a school is what the people want."

He smiled and said simply, “If you build it, I’ll fund it.” He continued, “Go back and talk with the people. If they want a school, draw me up a proposal and we’ll begin.”

So I did that. The people were ecstatic at this amazing offer! The government provided education up to the sixth grade but then further education stopped. They had petitioned for years for the government to build a Junior High School (Instituto Básico) but to no avail.

We organized, mobilized and in 2000 a Junior High School was built in our village. True to his word, Mr. Glennon funded it. Presently, the school and staff are recognized and funded by the Guatemalan government.

Over the years, youth from Santiago Ixcán, and the neighboring villages have studied 7th, 8th and 9th grades at the school. It has opened opportunities that once weren’t even considered in the lives of most young people in our area—like Magaly Ixcoy, an accountant at a grocery store, Myke Perez, a teacher and IT specialist, David Villatoro, a human rights lawyer, Maria Imul, a registered nurse, and Jose Brito, a mechanic.

The school has helped open up minds and new ways of seeing. Girls are breaking with the cultural norm of education being for ‘boys only’ and entering school at all levels. I have heard more than once a sweet, demure-looking girl in the sixth grade declare with a determined tone in her voice, “I am going to continue to study— I am going to the Instituto Básico- the Junior High School.” (And she does!)

Like Petrona Jimenez, a 7th-grader, who is receiving a scholarship from Ixcán Ministries to study this year at the school.

What the people needed came, not through any strategic plan of mine, but directed by God’s action through a man with a vision for others whom I met over coffee and cake.

Sincerely,



Kathy Snider



Mission Update:

Kathy returned to Guatemala on August 5th. Mission activities are underway with our two women’s groups — Luchadoras and Ixcán Creations — as well as our outreach, scholarship and library programs, and church liturgical and pastoral ministries.

A special thank-you to Spirit of Life Catholic Church in Mandan, North Dakota for doing the printing of our newsletter. Muchísimas Gracias!

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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