



Dear Friends,

“There is no place like home,” Dorothy from the Wizard of Oz said over and over as she tapped her ruby red shoes to return there – to Kansas – to home. I am thinking of housing as the television flashes devastating images of houses turned to ash in light of the fires most recently in Maui, HI and Medicine Lake, WA that left so many without homes and possessions. Many lost their lives.

In the Ixcán, Guatemala, poverty is the fire that leaves some without adequate housing. Our outreach ministry once a year assists someone with that need. This year, Magdalena, one of the women from our *luchadora* program, (our program for mothers raising their children alone) asked for help. She lives in a small wood house with her two little ones, ages ten and three, on land that belonged to her uncle, transferred to her cousin, who now wants to use it and asked her to leave.

Where will she go? When we explored tearing down her present house, salvage what is useable and build another one somewhere else in the village, we asked Magdalena, “Do you own land?”

Most of the elders in our village are land owners who eventually turn over the land to their children to live on and to cultivate corn, cardamom, fruit, and raise cattle. Unfortunately, in this dominant patriarchal culture, fathers often deny their daughters land ownership simply for being a woman.

“Did your father leave you an inheritance?” “Yes, he did,” she affirmed. He had recently drawn up a Will leaving her a small piece of land on which she could build a house. However, in order to protect the land from being grabbed up by greedy relatives, she needed a title. This involved costly lawyer’s fees that she couldn’t afford. We offered to pay for the legal expenses involved however, Magdalena faced another complication – her step-mother.

Magdalena’s mother had died when she was just two and a half years old. She and her siblings, two sisters and one brother, were left alone with their father who later remarried. Unfortunately, the step-mother wanted very little to do with his children from his first wife. (Over time, she would bear eight children with him.) And she and Elena didn’t get along.

In the legalization process the land to be inherited had to have the signature of the original owner – her father and the step-mother (through marriage). The step-mother refused to sign any land document in Elena’s name.

Now what? Elena’s father felt conflicted. He wanted to help his daughter, but he couldn’t change his wife’s decision in regards to Elena. So he, Elena’s brother and the lawyer devised a plan. (This is Guatemala after all.) They would present Elena’s title along with the rest of the children’s titles for signing without the step-moth-



er knowing. When the lawyer slipped Elena's title before the step-mother (who couldn't read) and said simply, "firme" sign – she blackened her thumb from the ink pad and pressed it on the page (the way an illiterate person signs documents).

Elena became the legal owner of the land! Justice!

After months of waiting – Elena showed up to our *luchadora* meeting with the title to an acre and a half of land in her name! This piece of paper protects her future home from unjust family members stealing it or dislocating her and her children again.

Ixcán Ministries and Elena's brother are working together to build the little wooden house with the tin roof, and dirt floor situated in the thick jungle – a humble, simple abode...

that will be home for her and her children. And for them, there will be no place like it.

Thank you for your continued prayers and financial support of Ixcán Ministries! May God bless you and yours and keep you safe in these final warm days of Summer into Autumn.

Sincerely,



Kathy Snider



## Mission Update:

Mission Update: Kathy is back in North Dakota and will travel throughout the summer to Wyoming, Minnesota and maybe Florida state. She is promoting Ixcán Creations product sales, visiting friends and donors, and doing on-going ministry development here in the U.S.

Our on-site managers, Javier Gonzalez and Carmen Jimenez, are overseeing our outreach and educational ministries in Guatemala and are in close contact with Kathy via telephone.

### 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:  
Ixcán Ministries  
PO Box 51  
Mandan, ND 58554

[www.ixcanministries.org](http://www.ixcanministries.org)  
[ixcan\\_ministries@yahoo.com](mailto:ixcan_ministries@yahoo.com)  
Kathy Snider, Director  
(701) 425-1914

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