



# UTREACH CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

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Hello All,

As I write this (September 15), it is Honduras's Independence Day. The roads are full of parades of school bands and baton twirlers, and the night will surely resound with the sound of unending fireworks. Meanwhile, I am thinking of my clients and their freedom. I have begun seeing regular clients at my internship. So far, most of my clients are children and adolescents who are institutionalized. These children's homes often have true orphans or children whose parents have abandoned them. One of the functions of La Promesa Honduras (LPH), the non-profit where I work, is to come alongside foster care families and to generate more foster families by sharing this opportunity with churches. LPH recently celebrated Children's Day with foster care families. We had lunch, played games, and smashed open a piñata, much to the kids' delight. The switch from orphanages and institutions to foster care has been recent, slow, and based on research that children develop better when they are in a stable family and home environment. Because the foster care system is newer, the number of foster families is quite limited. The families who arrived at our Children's Day event mostly consisted of women in their sixties or older who have taken on three or four very young foster children. I marveled at their energy, passion, and commitment. So many young people we have worked with over the

## News from Honduras

years were institutionalized at one point in time. One example is a young man I have known many years named Jorge. Jorge was only a couple years old when Hurricane Mitch hit in 1998. His mother was already struggling financially, and he and his many siblings lived in a risky area. The hurricane destroyed his home, and Jorge was placed in an orphanage. At the orphanage, he received a bilingual education and name brand clothes and tablets. He became accustomed to a North American lifestyle. Upon turning 18, Jorge was released to his family—a sister he had never met, a mother who had never bothered to visit him, and a home in impoverished, gang-controlled territory. Jorge had never learned how to take a bus or survive in low-economic conditions. Since then, he has struggled greatly. His family has rejected him. He now walks hours to get to a job that took him a long time to acquire, and he is almost always on the brink of hunger or homelessness. This is the sad reality for many young people who transition out of orphanages in Honduras. This is why foster care is so important because it provides one-on-one relational connection, as does counseling. If you would be interested in sponsoring the counseling of my clients, please contact me. Institutionalized clients do not pay at LPH, but sponsorship can help provide operation costs, play therapy resources, and staffing for LPH. Please join me in praying for these precious ones! *Sarah and Raúl*