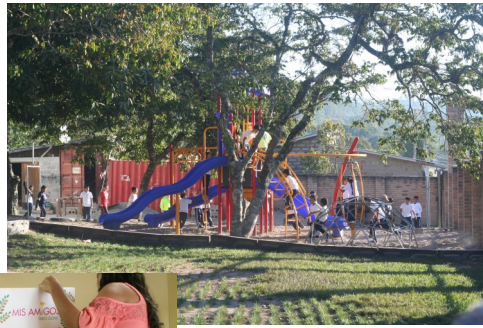


Jardin de Gracia



Aylin and Alex waiting for moms after school, recess, Teachers in the library reading the big books.



Back to School 2017

Back to school time is filled with such excitement, isn't it? All those little backpacks filled with labeled supplies, picking out a first day outfit & wondering who your new teacher will be... Here in Honduras, it's similar. The families of Jardin de Gracia get ready for the new year by buying a backpack and attending the "meet the teacher day" at school. They also finish their last week, as a family, picking coffee. Fathers know that going to school is more important than keeping their child in the field with them. Mothers make the choice to go to work a bit late so they can drop off their children at school & everyone saves the money that will be needed for odds and ends.

In El Socorro, Jardin de Gracia is a light to people with few options. The public school is over filled with students who can afford the price that come with a free edu-

cation. Things like uniform, snacks, and school supplies. Because of your donations, Jardin de Gracia families don't have the worry about any of this. They know that their little ones are cared for & will be loved as they learn. In addition to this some of the burden of over crowding in the public school is lifted.

As North Americans, we often take the public school system that is in place for granted. Sometimes we make the sacrifice for our children to attend a private school. We feel fortunate that you are willing to make this sacrifice for another. Thank you for supporting this school that shares God's love with these families. We are so thankful for people, like you, that believes in the vision of Jardin de Gracia. We're praying for this to be an amazing school year!



First grade girls after school



Waiting for Kindergarten to start



Sisters with gifts of flowers for their teachers



New shoes

Sixth grade girls entering school

Sponsorship Matters

The other day a question was poised to me that caught me off guard. A first time visitor asked me what it would look like if every child at the school was sponsored. I just stared blankly. This was a rarity for me; I pride myself on quick wit and snappy comebacks, but this caused me to pause. He chuckled and said, "It's that unthinkable for ya, huh." Still I stared blankly ahead, but the gears were turning.

You see about seven years ago there was serious talk about closing the school. There had been spits and schisms in the leadership on the American side of things as well as on the Honduran side. Things were not well and donations had dropped drastically. When we got here in 2012 there were about three churches that supported the school and a handful or so child sponsors. This passed through my mind and I begin to see the school as it is today. There are currently 15 churches that send short-term mission teams, money, and other forms of support. There are 80 individuals out there that sponsor a child and send prayers on a regular basis. We now have curriculums that not only meet and exceed the Honduran education requirements; most of them are Christian based. We serve a hot lunch every day to every student and breakfast is available for anyone that doesn't get it at home. We teach computers, guitar, and English.

As this flashed through my mind my daydream of the future became clear and I began to ramble out a list of things that could be done if every child had a sponsor. We would have art classes, not just classroom drawing time. It would be a time where the kids could see masterpieces. Where the kids could get dirty and dream. Our music class would be more than guitars. They would learn to read sheet music, love all types of music, and be taught to lead worship in one of the many home-churches in our village. I would buy more books and hire a librarian. We would teach chess and sponsor city wide league play. We would have a science lab where kids could learn and discover. We would have full time teachers for these positions. We would have field trips that were based on educational value, not cost. I told him we would become the best private school in Siguatepeque. I knew exactly what we would do; we would produce the best and brightest in Honduras. We'd make Christians that were ready to change the world; beginning with their world.

I don't say this to make anyone feel like they aren't doing enough. I say this to say thank you. Your help and support has made the unthinkable possible already. About three years ago the board of JdG decided a new vision statement was necessary; "We have done good enough, it's time to do better." It's possible it's time to update this vision statement; "We have done better, it's time for excellence!"

Dental Office Update



When we started the dental office at Jardin de Gracia in 2013 it seemed like endless work was ahead of us. We felt like the treatment plans would never be realized and it seemed like pulling the tooth was the best option. In those first weeks we tried so hard to build trust with children that never had visited a dentist before. Their only frame of reference was a cousin or sibling who'd had a bad experience. Dr. Brown and his team have worked extremely hard to gain the trust not only of our students, but of the families in El Socorro as well. This year we saw the fruits of our labors! Every treatment plan was finished. All the incoming kindergarteners were seen for a cleaning and most of them finished their treatment plans as well. The children who have seen the Doc from the beginning are coming in with few to no cavities. This is a big win, so...we are moving the care into the street! Adults, teenagers, and siblings can now be treated at our little clinic. All cost free & all with high quality care. We will have our first hygienist team coming in July! We are so excited to see what God has in store for them!



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