

Jardín de Gracia



Mid Year Report 2019

As of July 2019, we are making great progress on the new part of the school (7-9th grades) and if you want to pray with us, we would be so honored. If you want to donate towards the new school expansion, we'd be so thankful. We've put a lot of bricks and blocks in place this season & we are pleased with the process so far. Seventh Grade is going strong in the downstairs classroom. The eighth grade classroom is totally finished as well and the new office has tile & paint!

We have hosted half our teams. Our teams this year, have helped move blocks and bricks every chance they got. We used our teams to do lots of the unskilled labor that has to be done in the new building. Painting, moving blocks, cleaning up, hanging whiteboards, moving chairs and desks all takes time away from our "skilled laborers". The teams have run a family night where all the families were invited to learn about in home literacy, receive a Bible Storybook to read at home, and enjoy a special time together. We've hosted one dental team already & are looking forward to another one soon! We are so thankful for every single person that has given up time to come help us. We have enjoyed every second of this group season and hope that the teams that came down, also grew in their faith and as a core group for their respective churches.

Our Great Expectation teacher training just finished up and we are full of ideas to implement in the classrooms! ! It's the downhill slide as we enter the third 9 weeks here at our little school on the mountain. Please keep us in your prayers.

Field Trips!



Field Trips are a fun and important part of our first semester. They serve a few purposes. First, all of our students are considered rural and below the poverty line. It is an anomaly if these kids visit anywhere besides the next village over by first grade. Most of our first graders cannot identify a hospital or hotel. They have never seen a fire truck or ambulance. Their world is very small and we want to open it up! Field trips are proven to increase critical thinking skills, tolerance, and cultivate a curiosity and interest for the world around them. Our field trips are all very close to our big town or Siguatopeque. That way the kids can return with their parents if they want and the experience is meaningful to them. This year our kindergarteners visited a local garden, first went to the fire department, second will visit the Mennonite farm, third to the honey co-op, fourth to the park, fifth to the newspaper printer, sixth to the caves and seventh visited our state capital Comayagua.





Discipleship - it isn't about us

A couple months back was Semana Santa or Holy Week to you non Spanish speaking types. As we live and serve in a predominantly Catholic country, this week is serious times. Holy Week is, essentially, from Psalm Sunday to Holy Saturday or Black Saturday or Black Sabbath. Easter, which is Resurrection Sunday, is separate from Holy Week. Things are pretty normal from Holy Monday to about noon on Holy Wednesday (or Spy Wednesday). At noon on Wednesday during Semana Santa a majority of the businesses and all the banks, school, and government offices are closed till the Monday after Easter. In our village, there is a bus that passes every half hour from 6:30 am to 6:30 pm, every day of the year, except these three days of Semana Santa. If you've been to the school you have witnessed, more likely heard, the bus slowly chugging by and blowing its train horn every thirty minutes during daylight hours. However, on Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Black Saturday; there is silence and the absence of it is strange. Every year we are invited to Alba's house for lunch. Alba cooks breakfast in the mornings for the kids at the school. The visit to Alba's is a cure for cabin-fever that we all get mid-Semana Santa. At her house we eat fried fish, drink coffee, and get caught up on local news. This year the conversation moved to Alba's church which occasionally meets at her house. She explained the preacher had said they shouldn't take part in Semana Santa, because it's not in the Bible. We have had issues with this preacher before. He often times seems to be more interested in building his own kingdom and not The Kingdom. We explained that the things it represented were in the Bible and any time you set aside to focus on Christ was good. She agreed, but was worried about enjoying Semana Santa and then dealing with the pastor. This in particular irked the whole family. Now, I don't have the space, or desire, to go into the specifics of what was said, but know this, it was a civil conversation. It gave us the opportunity to get our Bible out and dig into what is and isn't in there. Alba did an excellent job of reading her Bible out loud and explaining her understanding of things. To be honest, she had a very good understanding of the Bible, however the preacher was greatly misusing a verse as a way to control his congregation. This caused some confusion on her part as to why he did this, but it was great opportunity for us to encourage her to read and think for herself. At some point the discussion was directed to her oldest daughter Tesla and we asked what she thought. Tesla graduated from Jardin de Gracia and said quite frankly that she preferred a different Bible translation to that of her mom's. So, she calmly opened a Bible app on her phone. She said the Bible app gave her multiple translations and this helped her to gain a better understanding when things weren't clear. She said she had learned to study her Bible this way while at the school and didn't care for the way the preacher would take things out of context to make the Bible say things that he wanted them to say. Then she stated that it wasn't right. The mission of this school not to turn the students into little Americans, it's to make Disciples. A disciple of Christ needs to know how to walk with him in a personal and continuous way. At lunch that day we got a good look at that mission being fulfilled.



The view of the south campus from the gate

South Campus Update

Most questions we get at this time are about the new school project/the south campus/middle school building... whatever you want to call it, we've got a big thing happening across the street! Our seventh graders are in class every day, they are learning big kid stuff and we are seeing just where we've missed reaching other classes. The truth is, these young adults are navigating more than we knew. They have challenges that in the public school would be overlooked or not even noticed. Here at Jardin de Gracia, we have the chance to mentor them, to disciple them in the way to make better choices. No one is born choosing to put others first. No one just decides one day that they are going to turn the other cheek. It's a long term discipleship that makes the difference. Thankfully we are now able to be by their sides as they walk this road in front of them. And we are learning as we go how different these grades are! As far as building goes, we are nearly finished with the downstairs offices. Both downstairs classrooms are completely done and in use. The kitchen/dining hall has a definite shape and the dental office has all the plumbing run already. Every group this year so far has had a hand in helping us make this dream a reality. The workers at the site have all been involved in the school for years and they are doing a great job! Please keep praying for funds. As we add grades, we add to our budget. Teacher salaries, classroom supplies and other ongoing costs are only going up at this point. When you have 200 students (which we should have next year!), it means all your systems must be more refined and our school needs to be just that much more professional.



Seventh Grade on the first day of school

We couldn't do ANY of this without you! Thank you so much!

Visit our website: www.jardindegracia.com & you can like us on Face Book & follow us on Instagram if you're into that kind of thing!

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