

# Hands of Hope Int'l



“FOR I KNOW THE PLANS I HAVE FOR YOU DECLARES THE LORD, PLANS TO PROSPER YOU AND NOT TO HARM YOU, PLANS TO GIVE YOU A HOPE AND A FUTURE.”  
JEREMIAH 29: 11



## OUR MISSION:

Engaging people and connecting resources.

## OUR PURPOSE:

To walk with Grassroots leaders as they change the world they live in.

## OUR VISION:

To see a world where equipped leaders create sustainable communities.

## The Hands of Hope Story: *Unfolding a Tapestry of Grace*

It was C.S. Lewis who once wrote that “symbols are the natural speech of the soul, a language older and more universal than words.” With this quote in mind, we have been trying to think of a symbol or image that might function as “natural speech” capturing the “soul” of our story at Hands of Hope as we sit down to write this first newsletter of 2015.

Many of you have been a part of the Hands of Hope story since our days serving in Vietnam. Others have been woven into the story more recently as we have turned our focus towards Guatemala. Still others of you reading this newsletter are hearing about our story for the first time.

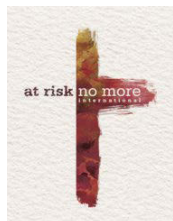
It is a daunting task to try to capture the essence of a story as rich as ours in the economy of words required in a newsletter, but let us try to do so utilizing a word picture (or “visual metaphor”).

One of the most vivid images of Guatemala culture is that of the *huipil*—a handwoven blouse worn by indigenous Mayan women. The *huipil* clearly and instantly marks one’s identity as a Mayan woman and identifies which part of the country she comes from by the unique designs and colors she is wearing. Thus, the *huipil* speaks to an authentic identity and the responsibility that comes from stating who one is and from where one comes. We have seen this portrayed so beautifully in the grassroots leaders whom we have come alongside to support in beautiful Guatemala. Their lives and ministries, like an ornate *huipil*, serve as beautiful tapestries of magnificent grace bursting forth with color and unique design for all to see.



Many of you have graciously walked with us as together we have entered into relationship with some amazing grassroots leaders in Guatemala who are weaving grace into the fabric of their communities. Specifically, this has included:

## At Risk No More – AMG Guatemala



Gary and Rachel DeLeon serve “at risk” street youth and are developing church-based foster care initiatives. Gary is the Director of Network and Alliance for AMG, creating awareness, equipping and empowering the Guatemalan churches to care for the orphans in their community. He has also been working on a Jobs Business Service Program that aims to connect AMG teens with potential employers where they will receive basic life skills, and a follow-up for job opportunities. Rachel is currently serving as the Director of Family Care at AMG. Rachel has also been instrumental in creating a sewing program for mothers of students at the schools. Sew Hope is now sewing all the shirts for the uniforms for AMG’s 3,000 students.

## Treasures of Grace – Sakerti



Pastor Jorge “Little Gee” Hernandez is the pastor of a growing church in the Sakerti community. His church-based community development is centered at a 2-story church building hosting Church Services, Sunday School, Youth Group Ministry, Vacation Bible School for 95 children, as well as a Daycare named Amor y Ricas (Love & Laughter). Little Gee’s wife Marlen coordinates and runs love and Laughter. Currently the enrollment is at 50 children ranging in ages 3-5. Little Gee has developed a Soccer Academy, which serves as an opportunity to mentor the youth ages 7-18.

## Treasures of Grace – Tesoros de Gracia Canalitos



Pastor Erwin “Shorty” Luna is leader in church-planting efforts in three Guatemala City communities - Canalitos, La Limondada, and Zone 1. Between these communities, Shorty leads nine worship services each week as well as a special children’s program every Saturday. Through his unbelievable life experiences, he shares his story of perseverance, brokenness and redemption to bring so many to Christ. Shorty also runs a home shelter, which provides a safe environment for youth and adults who need short-term housing.



## City of Refuge – Ciudad de Refugio



The Cerritos family serves in the renewal of the community Villa Nueva through the myriad of outreach activities and programs that have developed out of their church. Some examples of their

activities and programs include an after-school tutoring program for children, and a life-skills class for teenagers, as well as Bible classes at local schools.

Their vision is to be self-sustaining and be able to bless the people with limited resources in their community.



## Hope for Guatemala



Jose and Erin Armas run an amazing ministry in Zone 18. A large egg plantation home is now converted into a refuge of hope for many children in the community. Jose visits a large food

market every Tuesday and leaves with a truck overflowing with donated fresh fruits and vegetables, which is used to feed daily breakfast and lunch to 250 students. The remaining donated food is distributed every Tuesday evening to parents who volunteer at the plantation. After-school tutoring is available for the students. Farm animals, a garden and a tilapia fishpond are just a few of the ways Jose is teaching life skills to the students.



We cannot thank you enough for being, with us, Hands of Hope to these incredible grassroots leaders who are Gospel artisans – weavers of Christ-centered transformation. As our story continues to unfold, we invite you to join us into the next chapter of our story.

Since our very first days in Guatemala we have consulted with, and have been guided by the Center for Transforming Mission Guatemala. (CTM). CTM was founded by Joel VanDyke, serving with Christian Reformed World Missions, and is now completely in the hands of an amazing team of Guatemala leaders. It was through CTM that we were introduced to the leaders mentioned above. Watch this informative video: [littlewayguatemala.com](http://littlewayguatemala.com) to learn more about CTM.

CTM Guatemala uses the image of a loom upon which grassroots leaders can weave transforming grace of

the gospel into their communities. A loom is certainly needed in order for a master weaver to create works of art. However, a master weaver also needs hands with which to do the weaving upon the loom. This is where we see the incredible synergy between the work of CTM Guatemala and Hands of Hope. As we lean more into the unfolding tapestry that is the Hands of Hope story God is weaving for his glory, we have discerned a call to develop a more formalized relationship with CTM Guatemala. The formalizing of this partnership will simply name what has already been in place and will be the most effective way to allow us to continue to serve the ministries we have been richly blessed to come into relationship with.

Sincerely,  
JP & Suzanne Koop  
Brett & Greta Huizenga



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## Why Support Our Ministries?

We believe that continuing to work as we have in Guatemala while formalizing our partnership with CTM Guatemala is the best way to continue participating in the tapestry of grace that is our collective story with all of you. Thank you for supporting us in our shared vision of Christ-centered social and spiritual renewal in beautiful Guatemala.

The overhead expenses of Hands of Hope Int'l are completely covered by one of our founders. This allows every dollar you donate to go directly to the specified ministry. We commit to making sure the money you have entrusted us with is used solely for the glory of God and furthering His kingdom.

**YOU CAN SUPPORT HANDS OF HOPE INT'L  
AND OUR PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS BY  
MAILING DONATIONS TO:**

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