

Dream Big!

There are times when you have a dream and you just have to go for it. But, the bigger the dream, the harder it is to take that first step. El Hogar has been planning something big for years and we are boldly taking the first steps forward!

El Hogar has been providing a home and education for children and young adults in Honduras since 1979 with the aim of lifting them out of extreme poverty. Over the years, young children have been brought to us by churches, government agencies, families and word of mouth often having suffered abandonment, abuse, violence, malnutrition and/or neglect. The stories are heart wrenching. Once the campus gates close, shutting out the chaos of the streets of Tegucigalpa, they find themselves surrounded by love and hope. Our boys and girls receive the housing, clothing, food, education, healthcare, love and safety they need to grow into their full potential.

The residential Primary School is in downtown Tegucigalpa and serves children from 1st to 5th grade. It is the most joyous place on earth. The kids attend school, have rigorous chores, play “full contact” soccer, make breads and treats in the bakery and learn about being a part of a loving community with an Episcopal foundation. They don’t have a care in the world about what they don’t have. They know that they have love and protection and that is all they need.

Upon graduation from Primary School, boys can choose to go to either the Technical School in the Ameriteca Valley or the Agricultural School in Talanga. At the Technical campus, students attend middle school academic classes in the morning and technical workshops in the afternoons. They can choose between welding, carpentry and electrical career paths. Boys that choose our Agricultural School work in either animal husbandry or crop

production in the mornings and attend academic classes in the afternoon. The farm produces the majority of the protein and vegetables consumed on all 4 campuses. Girls move on to our girl's campus in Santa Lucia where they attend a private middle and high school.

Our Executive Director in Honduras, Rev. Matt Engleby, has a vision and it is big. He dreams of educating all of our kids through 12th grade. He dreams about improving employment opportunities for our graduates. He dreams about a path to University for all of our students. He dreams about a self-sustaining high school model in which young people graduate with marketable entrepreneurial skills. He dreams about helping mothers and the families of our kids with education, healthcare, job training and safe shelter if needed.

These dreams will become reality when, in February 2021, we will open a new co-ed residential grade 7-12 campus on our farm in Talanga. This school will offer a first-rate academic education, agricultural and industrial vocational classes and small business/entrepreneurial training. Our graduates will be well prepared for University study. Our construction plan includes ongoing farm operations to produce the food we consume as well as enterprise and business opportunities so our students can benefit from hands on learning experiences.

At the same time, the Honduran Government, having adopted The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, is requiring that young children be placed in residential care only until a relative or primary caregiver can be found. This initiative has forced El Hogar to look closely at how we do business and has made us look closely at ourselves. We see this as another opportunity to dream big! To better comply with The Rights of the Child regulations, we will transition away from a residential primary school program and into a day school model with a

residential option. We agree that if there is a mother or other primary caregiver in the child's life, the child should live with her/him.

I have led several service trips to El Hogar and am planning an adult trip in late Oct or early Nov. or possibly in the spring. If you are interested, please let me know. I promise that you, and your perspective on life, will be changed forever. It is a place of unimaginable hardship but also a place of unlimited hope, love and joy.

Want to hear more? The Reverend Matt Engleby is coming to St. John's on June 9th! We are excited to present our 2021 plan to our Mid-Atlantic donor base and I encourage all of you to attend to learn more. Details to follow. On June 10th, Rev. Engleby will assist during services and speak at adult forum. Experience the Episcopal tradition through a slightly different lens.

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