



**Send a Child
to School**

for as little as
\$48 per month

Help us continue
to plant seeds
in Guatemala.

Sponsor online at
[puravida.org/
education](http://puravida.org/education)

Scholarship Success Story: Yesica

At the age of 9, Yesica applied for a Pura Vida scholarship in order to continue her education beyond third grade. Yesica's parents could not afford to send her to school, but really wanted her to go somehow. That desire plus her natural aptitude qualified her for one of our scholarships.

Pura Vida extends an offer to all students in the program: we will do our best to support you for as far as you can continue in school. Yesica took that to heart. Nine years after she was accepted into the program she graduated from high school with a focus in accounting.

After graduation she began working at one of the largest banks in Guatemala. She knew she wanted to keep progressing, so with a university scholarship from Pura Vida she graduated in 2023 with a bachelor's degree in business administration, studying on the weekends and working on the weekdays.



**"I have
reached the top,
but I can continue to
improve and surpass
the unimaginable.
Thank you very much,
Pura Vida!"**

Yesica is now a customer service representative at Banco Industrial and loves her job because of what she sees as a 'culture of innovation' that is practiced daily. She says that Pura Vida fostered perseverance and tenacity in her, and that dreams only come true when one works and dedicates themselves to it.

**"My goals are to have a
successful professional life,
help my family, and
serve society."**

Yesica is a shining example of the possibilities of our scholarship program. This doesn't happen with all of our students, but you never know which ones will respond in an astounding manner. If you don't already sponsor a student, consider joining us.



Partner with us as a 'Friend of Pura Vida'

Schedule a
monthly donation
online at
puravida.org/donate



These days it seems like everything is based on a monthly subscription. A few dollars here for movies, a few dollars there for music. Have you ever wondered why this model is so prevalent? It's probably because it provides a stable source of revenue. Stability allows an organization to move towards sustainability.

To make more stories like Yesica's possible, we need your help. Your recurring monthly donation is predictable and sustainable income for Pura Vida, which helps stabilize and grow our programs. It also allows us to focus more on our mission than fundraising.

This spring and summer we have the goal of adding 20 new monthly donors at the \$5, \$10, or \$15 per month level. These amounts

may seem small, but over time they can be significant. Your monthly donation will help us strategically plan for program growth, and provide predictable funding in response to special needs.

Consider involving yourself with our mission on a monthly basis. In the end, your monthly donation will help make the dream of education a reality for more children in Guatemala. And that's far more valuable than the benefits of any subscription plan on the market right now.

"Set it and forget it"

You can set up your monthly donation in minutes at puravida.org/donate. You can modify your subscription yourself at any time using the secure interface. **Thanks for your support!**

Pura Vida Ministries is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with programs in Guatemala.

The mission of Pura Vida is to facilitate the sharing of resources with communities in Guatemala in a meaningful, respectful, and long term way. Our primary focus is on providing educational opportunities for children in rural villages through scholarships, tutoring, and support of local schools. We encourage others to work with us as we give our time, knowledge, and resources to help poor rural communities attain a standard of living in which their children can thrive.

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(in chronological order)

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- Laura Richards
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- Ken Fong
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Laura Richards
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Mary Sue Alexander
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Danilo Lopez: From Student to Staff

I'm Danilo Lopez. I am originally from Lemoa, Guatemala. I have six sisters and three brothers.

At the age of 6 I started studying at the public elementary school in Lemoa, with lots of dreams and goals. In 2008 I was 14 years old and in sixth grade. Due to my excellent academic record, my teacher told me that I was a good candidate to continue my studies in middle school. She told me that I would have to talk with my parents to see if this was a possibility.

Since my parents never had the opportunity to attend school, they cannot read or write. As a result, they don't have formal and stable jobs. My father sells ice cream on the street, and my mother runs the household, making palm braids to help with household expenses. If I wanted to continue my studies, I would have to be creative.

I told my parents about the possibility of an educational scholarship that could cover much of the cost of my studies. They decided that if I really wanted to continue studying, they would support my decision, and continue to support the rest of the family while I studied. I would have to work to cover any additional expenses, since they had no income to spare. My decision was "yes."

Soon afterwards I entered 7th grade at the John Wesley School in Santa Cruz del Quiché with a Pura Vida scholarship. I traveled by bus every day from Lemoa. In 2013, I graduated High School with a major in Business Administration.

In 2014, with the support of Pura Vida, I began my higher studies at the Rafael Landívar University, Santa Cruz del Quiché.

After three years in the Business Administration program, I obtained my Associates Degree. My next goal was a Bachelor's Degree. In 2019, I passed the exam for my Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration.

During those years I worked as a street ice cream vendor in Zacualpa and other towns to cover some of the expenses of my studies. At the end of each school year, I traveled to the city of Guatemala where I worked daily as a counter clerk at a shop. I also sold tamales on the weekends.



Danilo, with his parents, receives a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration in 2019.



In 2014, Pura Vida approached me for help with supervising construction projects. Since then, I have dedicated myself to supervising each of the projects that have been carried out in the communities of Lemoa, Chichicastenango and Santa Cruz del Quiché.

These projects are aimed at families who live in very precarious situations with limited resources. The primary purpose is to improve the quality and way of life of the members of the families, especially the children.

I also carry out socioeconomic studies for program beneficiaries. This helps us find children in the situation I was once in, with limited resources but lots of dreams.

Danilo is the local Construction Project Supervisor for Pura Vida, and is well-known to our groups that travel to Guatemala.

Are we making a difference?

Pura Vida board member Charlie Bouchard traveled to Guatemala in February with a work team from First UMC of Loveland, Colorado.

This year the team from FUMC Loveland in Colorado joined with a group of Veterans led by Jon Schmidt to work on two home sites. Great work was completed on both sites. The Loveland team worked on completing the second half of a home, while team Schmidt went from the ground up to complete the bottom half of another build. As in years past, we left a small physical imprint for the betterment of those in rural Guatemala, while those in Guatemala left an enormous impression on the hearts of all team members. We set out to give, but received so much more in return. This year we had the added bonus of Veterans being a part of our trip. It is safe to say that it was mutually beneficial to all.

Often on these trips, it is easy to get overwhelmed by the need and wonder if we are making a difference - hence the opening quote. On this trip, our old interpreter and friend Raul joined us on his own time (a four hour round trip from his town), to work for a day with us. I took advantage of the opportunity to ask him the question: "Are we making a difference?"

Raul replied with a story. In 2001 he was an 18-year-old unqualified interpreter. The school in his town had over 100 students with two teachers and two rooms. Each

"The true meaning of life is to plant trees, under whose shade you do not expect to sit"

— Reshma Patel

teacher taught two grades in the same room, with half the class facing one way, while the other faced the other way.



Carolyn Bouchard with children in Guatemala on a 2024 Pura Vida work trip with FUMC of Loveland.

Today, there are over 1,000 students in the school with a teacher for each class. He emphasized that the government has done little to help, and the improvements have everything to do with volunteers working hard in his community.

What Pura Vida is doing in the rural Guatemala is similar, as anyone who visited the John Wesley School can attest to. It is like a drop of water falling

into a pond - the ripples continue for a long way. We are helping nurture and educate tomorrow's leaders, and that is a long term game. We may never sit under the shade of the trees we plant, but be encouraged that profound differences are being made in lives in Guatemala as a result of the work being done.

Many thanks to all who participated and for the great leadership we had on our teams.

Trips to Guatemala from June - November 2024

Trips are filling fast for you to join us to visit the beautiful country and people of Guatemala. Each trip offers opportunities to share our time and resources with our partners in Guatemala and develop meaningful contact between cultures — beneficial to both sides. Pura Vida allows the local indigenous communities to identify the needs — we simply come, work, share — and see projects through to the end.

Construction

• **June 7 - 16, 2024:**

Highlands UMC Guatemala Work Trip

• **July 4 - 13, 2024:**

Guatemala English Camp and Construction

• **November 3 - 9, 2024:**

Guatemala Insight Trip

See online: puravida.org/trips for more details, to apply to join us or schedule a Guatemala work trip.

Sponsor Profile: Kathy & Dale Balu



Dale and Kathy Balu with their sponsored student, Vero, and his family.

Dale and Kathy Balu have been with Pura Vida for a very long time, and say they "love supporting the mission." But the first time they traveled with Pura Vida to Guatemala, Dale was not so sure. As chair of the mission committee of his church, he was not convinced Pura Vida's work could compete with other mission priorities. He also felt like he needed to see that we were using our donations well.

They went on the trip and fell in love with the Guatemalan people and the way Pura Vida worked with them. Dale especially appreciated Pura Vida's low overhead. They came back from the trip energized and began supporting students in response to their experience.

"You will be blessed beyond your expectations being a small part of this great mission."

Dale and Kathy's love for the Guatemalan people compelled them to "give back a small part of what God has blessed them with". They say they find it personally rewarding to be a small part of our work. "Small part" is debatable. Dale and Kathy have sponsored 19 students through the program and are currently sponsoring nine more. We are grateful for their long-term commitment to our work in Guatemala.



Pura Vida Ministries
PO Box 631370
Highlands Ranch, CO 80163

Provide a scholarship
to make dreams
a reality.



Help us plant seeds for children and families in Guatemala

A Pura Vida scholarship nurtured Yesica's dream from 3rd grade through university.



Here are some ways you can help us maintain and expand our programs:

SPONSOR A STUDENT –

The average student in rural Guatemala drops out of school by the time they reach 3rd grade. Your sponsorship can help them get to high school and beyond. Make a dream come true – sponsor the education of a student in Guatemala. [puravida.org/education]

TRAVEL TO GUATEMALA WITH US –

“Travel with a purpose” is a good way to describe what our international work trips are all about. Our emphasis is on developing and maintaining relationships with local communities and sharing our time and resources with our partners in Guatemala. Team experiences include building homes for families in need, teaching English to local students, and seeing first-hand the work we are doing in Guatemala. [puravida.org/trips]

DONATE ONLINE –

Support our Unsponsored Student Fund, which lets us keep more students in school while looking for sponsors. You can make a secure donation online at the link below. [puravida.org/donate]

LEGACY GIVING –

Help sustain our work in Guatemala far into the future by making a contribution through your IRA RMDs, wills, securities, and life insurance. [puravida.org/legacy]

ENDOWMENT CONTRIBUTIONS –

Do you want to make a really long-term investment? Our Legacy Endowment will one day give us flexibility to improve our programs and increase our level of support in Guatemala. Since this endowment is in the early stages of funding, we can really use your assistance in getting it up to speed. [puravida.org/endowments]