

Changing Lives THROUGH EDUCATION

Santa María de Jesús, Guatemala



STEPS OF HOPE GUATEMALA



Christian Learning Resource Center

Annual Report 2024 & 2025

WHAT WE DO

OUR MISSION

Steps of Hope–Guatemala is a Christian learning resource center that supports the children of Santa María de Jesús by empowering them and their families to live an abundant life filled with educational opportunities. †



Tutoring Program

- Provide scheduled sessions several times each week
- Address learning gaps for those who attend public school
- Offer learning opportunities for children unable to access public education
- Promote mastery of basic math and reading skills
- Encourage recreation and interaction with classmates

Sponsorship Program

- Provide children with necessities to attend public school
- Purchase required school supplies, backpacks, uniforms, and shoes

Language Learning

- Teach English to improve future employment opportunities
- Tutor in Spanish required to graduate from public school
- Provide computers and internet access to facilitate learning

Community Outreach

- Provide professional dental care through a local clinic
- Organize surgery for children through medical mission teams
- Build bunk beds in local homes to enhance communal living safety



Steps of Hope

EARTHQUAKE RESPONSE - JULY 2025

Faith in the Midst of Crisis

In July 2025, a powerful 5.4 magnitude earthquake struck Guatemala, centered near our community in Santa María de Jesús. The impact was immediate and devastating; many families in our program saw their homes—often built from traditional adobe and cinderblock—severely damaged or collapsed. In the face of this disaster,

Steps of Hope shifted immediately from our usual education efforts to emergency relief.

Our local team spent the initial days in the community assessing the safety of our students, providing emotional support, and delivering essential supplies to those who had lost everything. Many of our own staff suffered harrowing experiences in the initial event but quickly turned to helping their neighbors!



Immediate Relief & Community Support

Beyond the physical destruction, the event caused significant trauma for the children, many of whom were terrified by the ongoing aftershocks. **Thanks to the overwhelming responsiveness of our US community,** we were able to provide emergency food kits, clean water, and temporary shelter materials. Our focus remained on ensuring that no child in our program went hungry or unsheltered while the town began the long, difficult process of clearing debris.

A Legacy of Generosity

The outpouring of support following the quake was nothing short of miraculous. Thanks to your donations, **we raised an amazing \$23,000 for relief efforts.** Spurred on by that momentum, we received an additional \$10,000 grant from the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR).

These combined funds allowed us to provide more than 100 families—nearly 500 residents—with weekly deliveries of essential food and water through the end of 2025. This crisis served as a powerful reminder of the resilience of our Guatemalan staff and the strength of our global partners. It is a wonderful example of God turning tragedy into hope. Thank you to each and every one of you who responded in this extra time of need.



MISSION TRIPS & VOLUNTEERS

Mission trips continue to be a vital spiritual force at Steps of Hope. Under the dedicated leadership of our board member, Dawn Schanne, these visits provide much-needed encouragement to our staff and children—but the impact on the volunteers is often just as life-changing.



Church Partnerships in Action †

In 2025, we were blessed by teams from Catonsville United Methodist Church and Glen Mar Church. Their members made a profound difference on-site by:

- Leading high-energy Vacation Bible School programs.
- Building and installing bunk beds for local families in need.
- Spearheading essential upkeep and maintenance at our center.

Most notably, several members of these congregations **joined us in Guatemala during the critical days and weeks following the earthquake**, providing invaluable labor and support for our recovery efforts.



A Global Community of Service

We are increasingly seeing the Steps of Hope family grow through individual volunteers. From across the United States and around the world, **individuals have traveled to Guatemala on their own** to lend their unique skills and hearts to our mission. For a week or a month, these solo volunteers have become an integral part of our daily operations and community outreach.



Join Us on the Ground

We invite you to consider a volunteer mission trip—whether you come with a group or as an individual. There is a place for your unique talents here, and as many of our past volunteers will tell you: **the Spirit will use you in ways you never expected.**

Interested in volunteering? Contact us to learn about upcoming opportunities for both groups and individuals. Travel not in the cards for you? You can still lend a hand! info@stepsofhopeguatemala.org

FAMILY & STAFF UPDATE

Many of you have asked when we might see Jessalyn back at our home churches in person. While she is eager to reconnect, the logistics of international travel currently present some significant challenges.

The family has been blessed with much growth! Vanessa turns three this August, and Eizaac will be a year-and-a-half old. **Traveling with two small children is a major undertaking**—and it's made more complex because the U.S. Government has not yet approved Manolo's travel visa.

The family remains hopeful that these administrative hurdles will be resolved soon, allowing them all to visit together. In the meantime, Jessalyn and Manolo are deeply grateful for your continued prayers and patience. **They look forward to the day they can introduce their growing family to the community that has supported them so faithfully.**



Muchas gracias to our amazing staff!



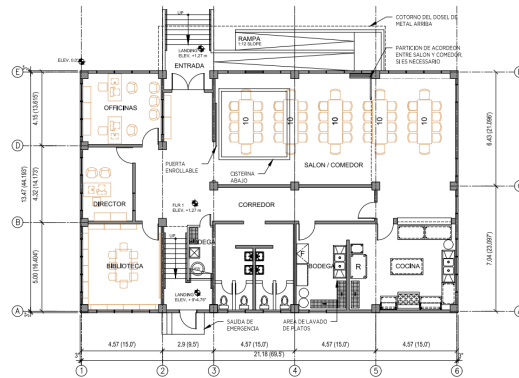
Full Circle: Students Becoming Leaders †

One of the most gratifying developments this year is watching our mission come full circle. Our original program participants—once young children in our classrooms—are now high schoolers and young adults.

Inspiring, too, **these students are stepping up to lead Bible school activities for the younger children.** Watching them transition from students to mentors proves we are nurturing future leaders. They are a true blessing and a living example of the fruit of your long-term support and God's hope.



THE STEPS OF HOPE–GUATEMALA BUILDING FUND



Our Journey So Far . . .

The idea for a new, purpose-built home for Steps of Hope–Guatemala began with Jessalyn’s vision for a larger space. Several years ago, we took a leap of faith and purchased land for a dedicated learning and community center. All told, you have **generously contributed more than \$200,000** so far to this effort. Amen!

We are continuing to collaborate with architect Mary Weiss, whose preliminary designs were shaped by insights from Jessalyn and our local team. To **ensure every detail aligns with regional standards**, we are working with a local engineer to meet all building and educational facility codes. (The designs shared nearby are examples; final designs are coming soon!)



Expert Partnership & Strategic Growth

Last year, EMI World—a global Christian design and construction organization with over 40 years of experience—reviewed our plans. Their assessment confirmed a strategic shift often seen in growing ministries: moving slightly outside the city center to allow for affordable, sustainable expansion.

While the new location is about a mile from our current home, the distance is no barrier for our families. Instead, it is a gateway to serving even more children.



Overcoming Obstacles

The road to construction has had its challenges. We are **navigating infrastructure hurdles**, specifically securing a consistent water supply—a common regional issue that requires creative, long-term solutions.

Additionally, our plans were paused last July following the devastating earthquake in Santa María de Jesús. As our team pivoted to immediate disaster relief, the visit from EMI World was temporarily postponed. However, we have officially restarted communications and are “rolling up our sleeves” to move forward. As final plans near, we promise to share the investment needed to bring this location to life. We pray for God’s continued blessings to make this dream possible.



Honoring Our Legacy

We are thrilled to share that, upon completion, our new facility will be named **The Jeff & Marge Odom Learning & Community Center**, honoring their lifelong devotion to mission work. Furthermore, our central gathering space will be dedicated as **The Chip Day Fellowship Room**, recognizing Chip’s extraordinary heart for the vulnerable.

Stay tuned as we continue this journey of faith and bricks! †

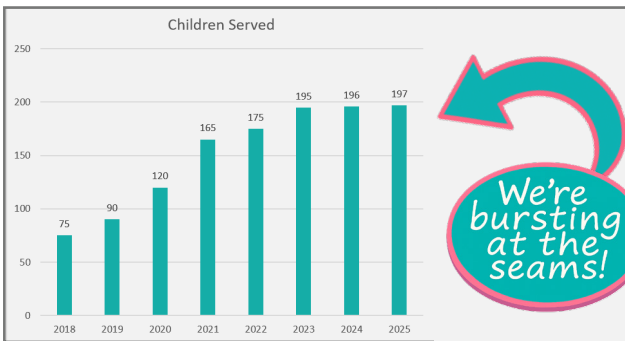


KEY METRICS

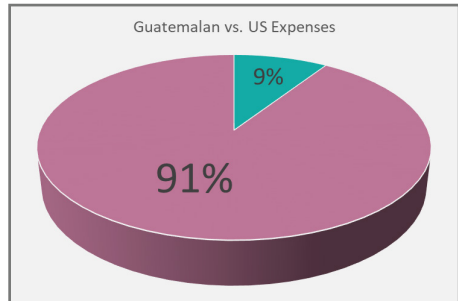
Just one caramel macchiato venti at your local shop = \$7.15!



2 fancy coffees
= 1 Week's Steps of
Hope Attendance



We're
bursting
at the
seams!



Special thanks to our many nonprofit partners including



SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM

Since our inception, Steps of Hope has been blessed to connect individual donors with specific children in our program. These personal connections are the heartbeat of our ministry.

Why Your Sponsorship Matters

In Guatemala, the cost of uniforms, books, and required supplies can often be an insurmountable barrier to education. While regular donations to Steps of Hope cover our \$100,000+ in-center operating needs—including most of Jessalyn's personal expenses—your sponsorship donations directly cover these fees, **enabling our participants to attend public school**. Without your generosity, more than 100 children would miss out on the life-changing opportunity of a school education.

A Connection Across Borders

If you sponsored one or more students, you should have received a personal note from our team along with an updated photo of your student. These updates are a small way to show the big impact you are making. Didn't receive your update? Please let us know! Email us at info@stepsofhopeguatemala.org so we can ensure you get your student's photo and letter.

Join the Program

Are you interested in becoming a sponsor for 2027? **We would love to match you with a student!** Your support provides the tools they need to succeed:

- \$75 supports an elementary school student.
- \$125 supports a middle or high school student.

This is our most popular program, so join the interest list for next year today by emailing info@stepsofhopeguatemala.org.

Thank you, of course, to our longtime church partners and their congregation members for their gifts of time, money, and prayers: Catonsville United Methodist Church, Halethorpe-Relay United Methodist Church, Glen Mar Church, Bethel United Methodist Church, & Weller United Methodist Church.



GROWING OUR SYSTEMS

A New Partnership with NeonOne

As we celebrate 10+ years of ministry and prepare for a capital campaign, Steps of Hope-Guatemala is upgrading systems. This summer, we are transitioning to the online giving portal NeonOne to manage our donor database, communications, and website. Consolidating these tools will save our volunteer team time and creates a seamless experience.



What Changes for You?

Give as usual, but note that our website links will now route through NeonOne instead of Network for Good. Giving online is secure and **more cost-effective than paper checks**. This system has a small added cost, but the time saved by integrating lets us direct more resources to Guatemala.

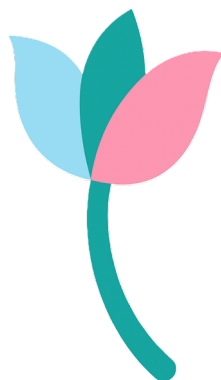


A Special Request: Give Directly

If you currently give through a local church earmarked for Steps of Hope or Jessalyn's mission, please consider switching to our new direct giving platform. And, as **most of Jessalyn's expenses are paid** through our Guatemalan arm, Asociación Pasos de Esperanza (APdE), direct giving helps in two additional ways:

Grow with us!

Personalized Gratitude: Partner churches often cannot report individual donor names. Direct giving ensures we can **thank you properly** and maintain accurate records. It's a timesaver for both us and your home church.



Organizational Health: Direct giving strengthens our 501(c)(3) standing on **IRS 990 evaluations** and helps us meet Maryland state acknowledgment requirements.

Help your full gift reach us: Please avoid third-party platforms (like Facebook, ChariotPay, Ren for Giving, etc.) which deduct fees. If your gift isn't being matched, give directly through our website. If you use a Donor Advised Fund (DAFgiving360-formerly Schwab, Fidelity, Vanguard), simply select **"recommend a grant" in your provider's portal** to give without fees. Contact us with any questions as you plan your giving. Watch your inbox this summer for the NeonOne rollout. Not on our newsletter list? Email info@stepsofhopeguatemala.org.

10 Thank you for helping us grow efficiently!

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Statement of Activity • January-December Annual

	2025	2024
Total Revenue	\$206,235	\$151,885
Donations, Grants, & Income for Operations	\$155,085	\$124,555
Donations, Grants, & Income for Capital Campaign	\$51,200	\$27,330
Expenses for US Operations		
US-based Expenses (see footnote)	\$18,238	\$17,463
Transfers to APdE* (sent to Guatemala, see below)	\$118,620	\$166,600
Total Expenses for US Operations	\$136,858	\$184,063
Net Surplus/(Deficit) US Operations Only	\$69,377	(\$32,178)
APdE Funds (Funds in Guatemala)		
Transfers from SoH-US*	\$118,620	\$166,600
Local Guatemalan Donations, GT Interest	\$2,598	\$234
Total APdE Funding	\$121,158	\$166,834
Expenses for GT Operations		
Program Expenses		
Tutoring Program	\$46,326	\$47,648
Sponsorship Program	\$14,187	\$16,420
Community & Family Support	\$18,585	\$10,521
Volunteer Program	\$4,467	\$5,727
Total Program Expenses	\$83,565	\$80,316
APdE Director Expenses	\$16,045	\$11,946
Facility Expenses	\$5,671	\$5,414
Vehicle Expenses	\$59	\$279
Administrative Expenses	\$12,338	\$10,212
Total Administrative Expenses APdE	\$34,113	\$27,850
Total Expenses APdE - GT Operations	\$117,678	\$108,166
Capital Improvement (Property & Construction)	\$2,327	\$7,322
Net Surplus/(Deficit) GT Operations Only	\$1,153	\$51,347
NET SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) COMBINED SoH & APdE	\$70,530	\$19,169

Statement of Financial Position • As of December 31, 2025

ASSETS	
Bank Accounts	
US Checking - Operations Fund	\$45,358
US Emergency Reserve Fund	\$46,000
US Money Market - Capital Fund	\$38,810
US Investments - Capital Fund	\$50,100
Total US Funds	\$180,268
GT Bank	\$54,816
GT Cash on Hand (Facturas)	\$102
GT Petty Cash (Recibos)	\$432
Total GT Funds	\$55,350
Total Current Assets	\$235,618
GT Property and Fixed Assets	
Total Fixed Assets (exc. land)*	\$21,031
Total GT Property (land)	\$62,180
Total Fixed Assets	\$83,212
TOTAL ASSETS	\$318,829

LIABILITIES & EQUITY	
Total Liabilities	
Liabilities	\$0
Equity	
Opening Balance Equity	\$13,112
Emergency Reserve Fund	\$46,000
Capital Fund Balance	\$88,910
GT Property - Equity	\$62,180
Retained Earnings	\$38,097
Net Revenue	\$70,530
Total Equity	\$318,829
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	\$318,829

* Fixed Assets include vehicles, furniture, equipment, computers, teaching materials, and kitchen equipment.

Notes Regarding Steps of Hope-Guatemala, Inc. Financial Statements

In order to comply with Guatemalan regulations regarding entities of this type, a government-recognized association called Asociación Pasos de Esperanza (APdE) has been established. Funds flow from Steps of Hope-Guatemala, Inc. accounts to the Guatemalan accounts of Asociación Pasos de Esperanza (APdE) controlled by Jessalyn Waddell de Mena, our missionary.

To the left is the "income statement," in nonprofit parlance, the "Statement of Activity" for 2024 and 2025 that outlines the flow and use of those funds. This presentation is simplified for space considerations; however, the full report is available by emailing info@stepsof-hopeguatemala.org.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Donate

- Visit www.stepsofhopeguatemala.org to use our official giving portal.
- Give a tax-deductible donation by check to Steps of Hope-Guatemala, Inc., 2208 Rockwell Avenue, Catonsville, MD 21228.



Steps of Hope

Jessalyn Waddell de Mena

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR & FOUNDER

US: 443-840-7890

GT: 502-3422-7582

info@stepsofhopeguatemala.org

Volunteer

- **Individuals:** Support daily activities for as little as one day or as long as several months.
- **Mission Teams:** Visit and participate in Center improvement projects or outreach to local families by assisting in projects such as bunk bed builds or roof, floor, and plumbing repairs.
- Join us in sharing the love of Jesus with the children and families in Santa María de Jesús!

Pray †

- We believe that the purest and most powerful source of HOPE is our faith in Jesus Christ.
- Our vision for Steps of Hope is to "Bring God's Hope to the Children of Guatemala."
- We thank you for being a part of that by simply including our mission in your prayers.



Steps of Hope – Guatemala, Inc. (U.S. EIN# 83-1046788) is an exempt organization as described in Section 501(c)(3) of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code.

Steps of Hope–Guatemala, Inc. does not and shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion (creed), gender, gender expression, age, national origin (ancestry), disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or military status, in any of its activities or operations.

www.stepsofhopeguatemala.org



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