Rescue Them From Hunger
Providing new hope and the love of Jesus to Guatemalan babies

Special Thank You!
Guard my life and rescue me;  
do not let me be put to shame, for I take refuge in You.  
Psalm 25:20
May He defend the cause of the poor of the people, and save the children of the needy...

Psalm 72:4
May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Romans 15:13
Last spring, you helped us meet an urgent need…

Executive Summary

Project Description
Your gift provided us with emergency aid, nutrition and medical care for starving babies. It also funded the shipping of baby care kits, which we distributed to needy moms along with Spanish-language Bibles.

Location
Impoverished rural communities in Guatemala.

Campaign Goal
$129,000 was needed to help fund programs that nurse starving children back to health and provide emergency aid for poor families.

✔ See page 12 for details!

Campaign Highlights
• In Guatemala, the simple joys of motherhood are often eclipsed by concerns over how to feed and care for the new arrival. Rescue Them From Hunger addressed these concerns by rescuing starving babies, and providing them with emergency aid, nutrition and medical care.
• Saving the life of a starving baby is just the first step of a long recovery process — a physical and spiritual transformation that will forever alter that child’s family.
• Over the past year, more than 5,000 babies were rescued and admitted to a 24-hour medical facility, administered by one of our Christian ministry partners, Carlos Vargas.
• Both mothers and babies stayed at the rescue center for 4 to 6 weeks, where they were cared for by a dedicated team of Christian doctors, nurses and trained technicians.
• While the babies received valuable nourishment and medical care, the moms also spent time at the center, receiving vital education on nutrition and parenting.
• Once each baby was released from the rescue center, the family was given a take-home package of milk, formula and nutritional supplements.
• Throughout the year, each mom brought her baby back for periodic checkups. This ensured that the malnutrition never recurred.
• Since our last report, 14,258 Guatemalan moms received baby care kits as part of our rescue campaign.

By rescuing these babies and restoring their health, you have energized the faith of their family and demonstrated the love of Jesus!
Children are a heritage from the Lord, offspring a reward from Him.

Psalm 127:3
SECTION I

THE NEED & THE SOLUTION

• Starving Babies on the Brink of Death
• Rescue, Recovery and Reintegration
The Need:
Starving Babies on the Brink of Death

One year ago, while Cross International was in Guatemala visiting a team of medical missionaries, word had come down that a baby girl’s life was in danger. We were told that if we didn’t get the baby to the hospital immediately, she might not survive the night.

When you learned about our rescue mission to save little Olga Vasquez — you responded! Strengthened by your prayers and empowered with your gifts of support, we were able to rush the baby girl by ambulance to the hospital. Your heart went out to her, as did the heart and soul of Carlos Vargas, a dedicated Christian missionary serving in Guatemala, who met us at the hospital entrance and gently carried little Olga into the admitting room. In that moment her fate was changed and God was glorified! (Read about Olga’s miraculous transformation on pages 6-7).

This rescue mission was just one of many that would follow, rescuing thousands of babies who might otherwise have died of starvation. We prayed for Christians like you to join us as we worked with our partners to rescue these little ones. And the response we received far exceeded our wildest expectations!

Carlos Vargas was surprised by the response as well. But Carlos has come to expect great things of God. Like little Olga, Carlos himself was once close to dying. He was told by his doctors that there was no cure for what ailed him. He had lost the ability to walk or use his hands. At the prompting of the Holy Spirit, Carlos prayed for three days and three nights. It was a heartfelt plea for forgiveness and mercy. “If I walk, I will dedicate my life to the poor,” he told Jesus. And God heard his prayer.

The next morning, Carlos Vargas was miraculously healed. He rose and walked outside to where he saw a plot of land for sale. Seeing it as a sign from God, he immediately bought the land with the intention of building a nursing home for the elderly — his first act of ministry.

Today, Carlos operates a rescue center to meet the material and physical needs of Guatemala’s poorest families. The center he founded is located in the southeastern city of Zacapa, and most of its outreach is centered in and around the department of Chiquimula, where the need is greatest.
The Solution:
Rescue, Recovery and Reintegration

The lifesaving work of Cross International partner Carlos Vargas began with long treks through the remote villages of southeastern Guatemala. There he found desperate mothers with tear-filled eyes coming out from their shacks and pleading for help. Because their babies were starving, they were eager for missionaries to help. Many took their little ones to Carlos’ 24-hour medical facility in Zacapa. Both children and mothers were admitted for 4 to 6 weeks, where they were cared for by a dedicated team of Christian doctors, nurses and trained technicians. The babies were given a regimen of fortified milk, vitamins, and carefully-prescribed medication. Mothers were fed three nutritious meals a day, and were also given dietary supplements to ensure that they could breastfeed their babies. The families were also referred to a psychologist and a nutritionist, to ensure that malnutrition will never recur. Carlos ensured us that all parents and babies, once released from the program, were given take-home medicine, as well as food for the family. He also explained that the parents were required to bring the little ones back for checkups periodically for the next six months.

By helping Cross International and Carlos Vargas rescue little babies, you have also demonstrated your faith in God and in His plan. You played an integral role in reintegrating these children into a renewed family unit, introducing them to the God who showed Carlos mercy and who extended His grace through His son, Jesus.

Over the past 12 months, more than 5,000 starving children have been rescued and brought to Carlos Vargas’ 24-hour rescue and recovery center in Zacapa, Guatemala.

Thanks to your generosity, these precious babies have been saved from malnutrition and certain death.
Take delight in the Lord,  
And He will give you the desires of your heart.  

Psalm 37:4
SECTION II

THE ACHIEVEMENT

• You Saved a Life
• A Dramatic Transformation
• A Christ-Centered Outreach
• Rescue Is Just the Beginning
• Project Budget
• Thank You!
Olga Vasquez: Answer to a Prayer

“I prayed to God that Olga would get well,” said Serafin Vasquez, father of little Olga Vasquez.

As you read earlier, one year ago, we traveled deep into the mountains of El Naranjo, in Corredor Seco, to rescue little Olga Vasquez, who was suffering from acute malnutrition. After a long trek through the jungle, we finally reached the place where the 2-year-old baby lived with her father, Serafin, and her mother, Olivia. Serafin greeted the rescue team but was initially resistant to the intervention. “I have no money!” he said. Serafin was desperately afraid that the missionaries would take the child and expect some payment before she would be returned. After a gentle explanation of the team’s intentions, Serafin called for his wife, Olivia, and both mother and child left with the team for the long trip to Carlos Vargas’ rescue and recovery center in Zacapa. There, Olga and her mom were both admitted into the program.

A year passed. Just last month, we had the blessed opportunity to meet little Olga once again. We fought back tears of joy as we walked down to the rescue center’s playground and saw the sweet child for the first time since the rescue. She was with her father, Serafin. Who was that sweet, plump little child standing beside him? Surely that child could not be the same emaciated little Olga we saw last year!

Gone were the telltale signs of malnourishment — the blank expression, the thinning hair and the tiny, emaciated arms.

Truly, a father’s heartfelt prayer had been answered!

Serafin greeted the doctors with smiles and respect — a much different greeting than the one we experienced when the intervention team first approached him a year ago. He looked on and answered all the questions as the doctors examined little Olga and checked for any signs of malnourishment. Olga passed the exam with flying colors! Father and daughter had plenty of time to spend on the playground before they had to leave for home.
After Olga’s health checkup, father and daughter enjoyed a few minutes more playtime at the rescue center before they began their long walk to the bus stop, which started them on their journey back to their home in Corredor Seco.

We looked on as Serafin shared a tender moment with his little daughter, Olga. These periodic health checkups at the recovery center are not only a vital part of the rehabilitation process for the child, they are also important bonding opportunities for the family.
A Dramatic Transformation

Jairling Esquivel: Part of God’s Plan

“She was so tiny!” said Carol Duque, director of Carlos Vargas’ recovery center in Zacapa. One year ago, we introduced you to Jairling Esquivel, who you may remember from the cover photo on previous campaign material. Just 20 days old at the time the photo was taken, baby Jairling was a victim of malnutrition because her mom, Claudia, couldn’t supply any breast milk for her baby.

Claudia, too, was a victim. At only 13 years old, she was little more than a baby herself. Just last month, Carol Duque allowed us to once again speak with Claudia and Jairling — and it was a joyous reunion. Jairling recently had her first birthday. When we smiled, she smiled back. It was a wonderful sign that she was recovering well. Claudia was smiling as well — although hidden behind her smile was a mask of pain that no 14 year-old should have ever experienced.

Claudia’s voice remained steady as she told us her story — of the systematic abuse she endured at the hands of her stepfather; how her little baby, Jairling, was conceived out of rape.

Joseph and his brothers (Genesis 50:16-20). When Joseph’s brothers feared that Joseph would seek revenge for their prior treatment of him, they came to Joseph and begged for his forgiveness. Joseph wept when he heard their appeal. He said to them, “Don’t be afraid. Am I in the place of God? You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good.”

*In spite of the evil inflicted by Claudia’s stepfather, the young mother considered Jairling a blessing from God.*

Claudia suffered greatly at the hands of others. But just like Joseph, she saw it all as part of God’s plan.
Claudia fought back the tears as she openly recounted her struggles as a teen mom. Just 13 years old when she arrived at the rescue center, her young body wasn’t able to produce enough breast milk to feed her baby girl. Thanks to your support, Claudia received dietary supplements to build up her frail body. Now, she can breastfeed her daughter for the first time.

Jairling needed little prompting to smile for the camera. Desperately weak and malnourished when she arrived at Carlos Vargas’ rescue center, little Jairling turned out to be a bright, chubby little girl who was full of energy!
A Christ-Centered Outreach

When you gave to help rescue malnourished children in Guatemala, you also blessed ministry partners that are doing everything they can to help Guatemala's poor. Here are some of the many faces who work behind the scenes to do God’s will.

Celeste Flores, nutritionist

“The children come in sick and they are crying. When they leave, we are crying because the children are so happy.”

Carol Duque, rescue center director

“When the little babies arrive here, they have often lost all motor skills. They have lost the ability to walk, to stand and to move properly. When they leave, they can walk again. It is a true miracle.”

Robert Morataya, physician

“What I like best about my job is that here we treat the whole family, not just the child who is sick. We offer new hope to those who need it most.”

Edwin Oliza, senior physician

“I have my own practice and the rescue center would send children to me. I have always been in close contact with the doctors here. In any other hospitals, the attitude would be, ‘patient in bed 5.’ Here, it is ‘Victor.’ Here, we rejoice together with every success, and we weep over every setback.”
Rescue Them From Hunger | Project 1580

Rescue Is Just the Beginning

Over the past 12 months, thanks to your incredible generosity, more than 5,000 children have been placed in the rescue program you helped finance. But rescue is just the beginning. Part of your funds also went towards a long-term plan that ensures continued health and well-being.

**RESCUE**
The baby spends the first 4 to 6 weeks at the recovery center. While the baby receives valuable nourishment and medical care, the mom also spends time at the center, receiving vital education on nutrition and parenting.

**RECOVERY**
Once the child is released from the rescue center, the family is given a take-home package of milk, formula and nutritional supplements.

**REINTEGRATION**
Parents are required to bring the baby back for periodic checkups. This ensures that malnutrition never recurs, and that the baby grows up strong and healthy, as God intended.

**UPDATE**
Since our last report, 14,258 Guatemalan moms received baby care kits as part of our rescue campaign. These kits, which included common baby items we take for granted here in the States, were welcomed as blessings from God by these impoverished mothers. The outreach was led by Cross International partner Jorge Gramajo, who distributed the kits in and around Escuintla.
**Project Budget**

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**TOTAL PROJECT COST**  $129,000
Thank You!

Your gift has had an incredible impact on the lives of severely malnourished babies and their destitute families in and around southeast Guatemala. Without the support of compassionate Christians like you, dedicated Cross International partners like Carlos Vargas and Jorge Gramajo wouldn’t be able to carry out their life-changing programs.

You, along with Cross International and other loving Christians, support these wonderful missionary partners, and they should be blessed for the role they play in saving lives as well. So many dedicated Christian doctors, nurses, technicians and caseworkers work night and day to comfort the suffering and end the malnutrition epidemic in Guatemala.

Thank you for helping them do God’s work and save precious lives!

God Bless You!

This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of the Lord’s people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God.

2 Corinthians 9:12
Our Mission

We mobilize the global Church to transform the poor and their communities materially and spiritually for the glory of Jesus Christ.

How We Serve

Rather than create new institutions to distribute aid, we support existing ministries and churches already serving the poor. In addition to being the most cost-effective way of helping the poor, empowering these ministries allows us to support the Church’s spiritual mission and its important position of leadership in poor communities.

Good Stewardship

We consider every gift we receive as a precious resource from God. We direct every donation to its intended project, provide honest and accurate reports to our donors, and keep overhead costs to an industry low. We handle funds with utmost integrity and hold our ministry partners in the field to the same high standards by asking them to document costs and the impact of their outreach. These detailed accountability measures have earned us ongoing accreditation by the following organizations:

For detailed info about the impact of Cross International’s global mission for the poor, go to CrossInternational.org/Impact.