



*Lauren & Kevin Sanchez*

## *Amanda & Emily*

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In early 2017, when I moved to Guatemala, I was living on a little over \$1,000 a month. I was so motivated and was a single girl living on a very limited budget, that I *believe* I set a record for the fastest missionary ever at Cornerstone International to complete all four required trainings and fundraising to be “ready” for full-time ministry. I was deeply in love with Guatemala and excited to see what God had in store.

As our family has grown, so have our expenses. I think most missionaries would agree that fundraising can be one of the most challenging parts of this work. **That’s why Kevin and I feel incredibly blessed that our salary has been fully funded since late 2022. Knowing that our children and our needs are provided for allows us to focus wholeheartedly on the work God has called us to do.**



We are also so grateful that all 24 students in our afternoon scholarship program now have sponsors. This has truly been a labor of love, and we deeply appreciate every person who has partnered with us financially to make that possible.

With the creation of SEEDS, our Bilingual Christian Elementary School, we knew from the beginning that a sponsorship program would eventually be necessary. Currently, families pay just under \$20 a month for their children to attend. (With 23 students, the total revenue is \$460/month; however, our expenses are more than quadruple this.) Our staff has spent countless hours discussing tuition, trying to find a balance between financial sustainability and accessibility for families who desire a better future for their children.

We know we need to charge more to sustain the school and retain quality teachers, but our heart is to remain accessible to the average family in our community. In the middle of these discussions, a very young mother came to enroll her daughter. Out of respect, I have changed their names, but I want to share part of their story. Amanda, now 18, grew up in a Mayan community a few hours from here. Her childhood, if it can be called that, was extremely difficult—especially after her mother remarried and moved to Parramos. Amanda was only 10 years old at the time. She stayed behind with her younger sister and grandparents, even though she was experiencing ongoing sexual abuse within her family.

**At just 11-12 years old, Amanda became pregnant by a family member. When her grandparents found out, instead of protecting her, they blamed her and told her she had brought shame to the family. She was forced to leave and moved to Parramos to live with her mom, the only relative who would still speak to her.**

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Adjusting was incredibly difficult. Spanish was not her first language, and she was now a young mother—only 12 or 13 years old. She has been working and doing her best to raise her daughter, Emily, without even completing middle school.

Emily was one of the very first students to enroll in SEEDS.

Today, Amanda works seven days a week making tortillas to sell, earning about \$150–\$200 a month. **Despite everything she has faced, Amanda carries a powerful dream: that Emily would receive a quality education and have opportunities that she herself was never given.**

Stories like Amanda and Emily's are why sponsorship for our youngest students is so important. We desire for SEEDS to be available and accessible for families like Amanda and Emily's. Early education can change the entire trajectory of a child's life. It provides stability, opportunity, and hope—not just for the child, but for the next generation. We are so thankful for those who have already partnered with us. As we continue to grow, we are in need of sponsors for our younger students—children like Emily—so they can begin their education with the support they deserve. If you, or anyone you know, would be interested in sponsoring a pre-k or kindergarten student, I would love to chat more. You can reach me by iPhone message at 918-557-5661.

Thank you for being a part and for helping us invest in futures that are still being written.



*Lauren & Kevin Sanchez*

## *Support*

Thank you for your gifts and prayers. Reach us by email at [lauren.s@cimissions.org](mailto:lauren.s@cimissions.org)

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