

September 27, 2018

Dear Friend,

Sometimes, the hardest stories to believe are the ones that bring forth hope.

If you walked into Profesora Silvia's classroom at Nazareth Special Needs School, you might think she is a veteran teacher. She juggles lessons for eight children with visual impairments, Down's syndrome and various learning disabilities. By recognizing each child's unique talents, she finds ways to connect with them all.

You might be surprised to learn that Silvia is NOT a veteran teacher but a woman intimately aware of the challenges these children face. In fact, this is her first year in the classroom.

When Silvia graduated from 6th grade in 1981, she began working in the home of another family, caring for their children. This was her work until she got married and had two children of her own. Michael, the eldest, was left blind after an emergency surgery when he was a baby.



When it was time for Michael to attend school, Silvia enrolled him at Santa Clara Bilingual Elementary School so he could receive a faith-based, bilingual education. She realized quickly that she would need to further *her own* education to help her child succeed. So, she went back to school complete her high school diploma.

Silvia's world was turned upside down again in 2010. Like many women in Honduras, she unexpectedly became a single mom. She needed a job urgently, had little experience, and had no idea where to begin. In her most desperate moment, she found hope at Nazareth Special Needs School, where she was hired to help with the vocational workshop.

Within the year, Silvia's sister passed away, leaving behind a 5-month old son. Silvia took her nephew in as her own child. She struggled deeply during these years while she dealt with all the challenges you might imagine along with life-threatening medical concerns for her son, Michael. Time after time, when Silvia was in need, she was lifted up by her faith, by her church family, and by the generosity of supporters of the Olancho Aid Foundation, just like you. While supporting Michael through 3 surgeries, she continued to work, finished high school, and kept her boys involved at church by singing with them in the choir.

When Michael began high school, Silvia took another leap. She enrolled at the university. The promise of education for her children motivated her, and pursuing a degree in education was a means to better provide for them. Upon graduating in 2017, she became a teacher at Nazareth.



Today, Silvia is one of 125 Honduran employees serving more than 800 students at Olancho Aid schools in 2018.

Like Silvia, Olancho Aid has recognized that only through education, will young people and their families be able to lift themselves and their communities out of poverty. Providing education to these students is only possible with your support.

In the coming year, we at Olancho Aid, will focus on three main objectives. First, we will expand our services to children most in need, by increasing the number of seats designated for children in need of scholarships. Second, we will invest in the quality of the education of our schools through accreditation as an international school. This commitment will result in more opportunities for our graduates to attend U.S. universities and to qualify for employment in Honduras. Our final focus will be on developing faith formation programs for families in partnership with the Diocese of Juticalpa.

Across all four Olancho Aid schools, the average daily cost to cover a child's scholarship is \$10.25. That means you can provide a week of education for \$51.25 or a month for \$205. Will you help us by making a donation to support life-changing, faith-based education for a child?

Silvia had a difficult time talking about her story, but she knew that sharing it might touch the hearts of others. We bring her story to you, so you can better understand how much your support means to her and to so many others. We pray that you will help us make quality education more accessible to more children in Honduras.

Sincerely,

The Olancho Aid Foundation Board of Directors

Susan M. Nedya, M.D. *DJ D'Amico* *Jaqueline C. Lars* *Robert R. Smith*
Lisa Lebon *Matthew* *Anne Foley (SS)* *[Signature]*

PS Learn more about Silvia by subscribing to the monthly newsletter at olanchoaid.org/connect/.