

APRIL 2019 ISSUE

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TRIP TO HONDURAS

BY WILLIAM REYES

Over the course of my life, I have frequently visited Honduras, the beautiful country that my parents come from. In addition to family time together, we have taken road trips to explore delightful beaches, water holes and sights in this mountainous country. Although I deeply cherish all of those trips, my most recent visit in February meant just a little more to me. This time I was able to use my platform to bring Hearts of Empowerment along for the ride.



Honduras is a country filled with alluring sights. From its tasteful foods and thrilling culture to its humble, hardworking men and women, Honduras is a land of adventure. I write these descriptions with an enormous joy and pride, knowing my fellow Catracho's feel the same. At the same time, I write this with the consciousness and understanding of the troubles that my fellow countryman face.

Violence, lack of education, and unemployment are the cancers that cripple those trying to prosper. Day by day, the will of those trying to succeed diminishes with the countless obstacles they have to overcome. Throughout my multiple visits over the years, I have witnessed all of this firsthand. It is what lead me to believe that Hearts of Empowerment can make a significant difference.

During my two-week trip, I directly impacted others in a way I didn't think was possible. I arranged meetings across the country with three different organizations: two orphanages (Hogar San Rafael and Hogar La Esperanza) and a public school (Escuela Guaruma).

These organizations opened their doors to me as I met with their directors, professors, psychologist and of course the loving children at each location. The conversations we had were extremely successful. After gleaning from each other, I gained insight into the difficulties they face on a daily basis.

Hearing their stories stirred my heart. Across the spectrum, some young children are abandoned



while others lack the basic necessities including school supplies. At the end of each meeting, I met with the fun-loving kids and gave something back. Not only did we have a pizza party, but we made a much-appreciated clothing donation to each organization. This gesture went a long way; the smiles and excitement shared between them was overwhelming.

I'm grateful to share that Hearts of Empowerment will continue to support these organizations and their causes. We look forward to hosting future events to assist these organizations as they look to empower their community as well.

This is what it's all about.

HORTONS KIDS

BY EDITORIAL TEAM

In the midst of Southeast D.C., you'll find a group of the most committed volunteers. They spend their days assisting children in one of the most under resourced communities. Here at Horton's kids, they serve 500 children in grades K-12 living in Wellington Park. This phenomenal organization provides academic, youth development, health and basic needs to prepare them for college and life after.

Hearts of Empowerment was invited to spend the afternoon as they were hosting their seasonal book fair.



Members of our team spent the evening learning about their challenges. We helped kids pick out their favorite books and even had an intense game of one-on-one basketball outside. The joyful children claimed they could beat anyone on their court. This was a challenge our team couldn't resist.

"For us, it's all about having a positive impact on others. We were able to help and share a moment with the kids. It's what we love to do!" shared Amber Berry.

To learn more about Horton's Kids, visit their website at <http://www.hortonskids.org/>

LIFE IS A GIFT

BY EDITORIAL TEAM

You would've thought it was Christmas. Donated gifts started piling up on each other; from Lego's, coloring books, to your amazing spider man action figure; an array of toys started to fill the six large boxes. This was a true reflection of the amazing effort made by our community to provide a gesture of love and hope to the kids at INOVA Children's Hospital.

Life's A Gift took place at Zaaki's Restaurant and Cafe. A fun-filled day featuring corn-hole, a giant Connect Four game, and of course, everlasting conversations. Music gracefully flowed through the outdoor patio

keeping everyone upbeat. This was beautifully fitting for a bright, spring day.

"We were excited to partner with INOVA Children's Hospital. The feeling of successfully bringing the community together and gathering hundreds of toys is indescribable," stated Correy Faciane.

A week later, the Hearts of Empowerment team paid a visit to the Children's Hospital to drop off the profusion of gifts. Thanks to the generous virtual donations received, two additional boxes of toys were purchased along with a special surprise, a Nintendo Switch and Ipad! Needless to say the children and staff were ecstatic.

We'd like to thank everyone for their continuous support and contributions!



COMING SOON!

Stay tuned as we'll be announcing our
Summer 2019 event shortly

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