



Rita Peters is an ordained pastor and the co-founder of Impact Ministries, working with her husband as missionaries in the interior highlands of Guatemala.

She was born in Argentina to a German Mennonite family, immigrated to and grew up in Canada, and married Les Peters after studying at Bible School. They have two children born to them, three adopted from Haiti and one adopted in Guatemala.

With her life in the hands of God, Rita has become a vibrant and outspoken communicator of the awesome attributes of God. To learn how you can receive a copy of Rita's book, please visit inaweofGod.ca



The Sweetest Words for Missionary Ears

By Rita Peters

The mayor of the small city of Purulhá asked if I would have time to visit a community that had neither a school, nor a church. Having been called to Guatemala to help in exactly such a situation I would definitely make the time!

At the arranged time we drove to the end of the road and climbed up a muddy hill in order to reach the 'center of town', a community hall that consisted of a few poles in the ground and a thatched roof overhead.

When we arrived, a crowd soon gathered. Barefoot mothers with babies tied on their backs took the makeshift seating. Small, poorly clad children sat on the dirt floor. The men, dressed in clothing identifying them as agricultural workers, crowded in behind.

The mayor spoke to the people in their indigenous Kekchi language. We had no idea what he was saying when suddenly, he turned, and asked me to speak.

I thanked them for inviting us, explained who Impact Ministries is and explained that we provide Christian schools for communities who extend an invitation to us.

As this tiny village also had no church, I emphasized our priority to teach the children to know and love God. I wanted to be completely transparent and leave no surprises for them in discovering that along with an excellent academic schooling their children would be invited to give their lives to Jesus.

Our schools provide both a strong academic and spiritual education. Every morning, the school day begins with a time of worship. Scripture is read and the students are taught to lift their voices in prayer to the Lord.

God has been so faithful. The majority of our students come from non-Christian homes and yet, most of them embrace the Gospel and the Saviour. A few students encounter opposition in their homes, testing their faith, and many emerge even stronger in the Lord. Sadly, some leave when their faith falters. Even then, we trust that the seeds that were sown will one day come to fruition.

Our school parents sign a document agreeing to the spiritual training their children will receive. We believe that full parental support is of utmost importance.

After explaining these principles to the assembly, the head of this community stood and spoke the sweetest words that any missionary would wish to hear. *"If you come and start a school for our children, then we want you to teach us as well. We will all become Christians. That is no problem. We just need you to tell us, because we have not heard. No one has come to teach us."*

The community provided the land, we built the school, registered it with the Ministry of Education and began classes. At the same time, a cell group began and is now flourishing. This village continues to seek the Truth with open hearts and it is such a joy to watch the Gospel take root.

Stealing Pencils...and the reason why

By Julie Sawatzky de Lem

His name was Edgar. He was one of approximately 20 children in our grade one class in Chicoy that year. He was most often dirty, but then again, they all were.

His only footwear were leaky rubber boots full of holes, as they are the cheapest option. His clothes were just scraps of fabric; in fact, he often wore pants that were old and tattered, with holes in the fabric.

All of these statements were applicable to the majority of the students we had in our class that year, but there was one thing about Edgar that stood out.

Edgar would ask me for a new pencil every single day. Yes, you got that right, every day. He would come up to me with just a stump of a pencil, less than an inch long. Sometimes he would come empty handed, and he would ask me for a new one. Of course I would give him one! The poor kid couldn't do his work without it. And he obviously didn't have the option of buying his own. But it was rather confusing. Sometimes I would harp at him, asking him what had happened to the pencil I had given to him the day before, but his response was always the same. SHRUG. With his innocent little eyes looking up at me, I couldn't do more than remind him to take care of his new pencil and let him go back to his desk.

Later that year we found out the reason.

After school hours he would head over to the neighbouring public school and sell his pencil for a few cents. With that money he would hopefully be able to buy an egg to help feed his family.

One egg.

For his family.

My heart breaks even now, just remembering it. How could a family live on so little and share an egg between three, four, or maybe even five people?

Stories like this one make me SO grateful for Impact Ministries. Because of Impact Ministries, Edgar received a hot breakfast every day. Because of Impact Ministries, he was able to attend school even though he didn't have enough money for school supplies and a uniform, which are requirements for public schools.



Because of Impact Ministries, there is a way out of the cycle of poverty. Because of Impact Ministries, there is hope for a better future.

I realize that I mention Impact Ministries a lot in the previous paragraph – but I want to clarify that Impact Ministries is just a vessel that the Lord is using to love on, bless, and lift up Guatemalans.

Often times, when I try to sum up my role in Impact Ministries, I find that my attempts fall flat. I am an administrative assistant. What does that even mean? I am by no means a preacher or an evangelist. But I am a part of something big. I am able to see up close what the Lord is doing, the many ways in which He is moving! As I create spreadsheets and draft emails, I know that I don't need my work to be glorified or even recognized. I just need to do it all, 100% for HIM. He is doing great things here in Guatemala! I know greater things are still in store!

What a blessing and privilege it is for me to play a part, however small, in what is unfolding here by God's grace!

Support a Class



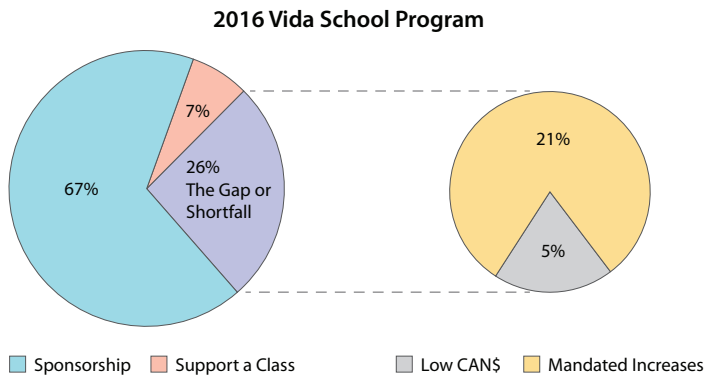
The impact our Vida schools are having...

Impact Ministries began with one school over 15 years ago! By God's grace, we have now grown to 10 schools and more than 1600 students. We believe that educating children is key to influencing change in society.

The strong academic education our students receive is only part of this. Through our dedicated teachers the students also learn to know and love the Lord, and this is changing their lives! Each day begins with a devotional time of worship and prayer. As the children lift up their voices in song, God's presence is felt! Then when the children go home, they share what they have learned, and the parents become hungry to know more. This has led to whole families coming to know the Lord, churches growing and communities being impacted for Jesus.

The challenge Impact Ministries is facing...

We have been facing the challenge of the falling Canadian dollar which affects our ministries in Guatemala. Our long standing desire to increase our teachers' salaries has now become urgent with new Ministry of Education salary level requirements. These factors have required us to raise more funds for the operation of our schools.



▼ Walter and Rhonda Wiens with their class.



Your opportunity to help...

In 2015 we began our new Support a Class program in which North Americans are invited to partner with a class in one of our schools. This will give them the opportunity to celebrate their class's milestones as the children progress through their school years and on to graduation.

We invite you to become a partner in this exciting program by supporting a class at \$50/month. Please pray about how God would have you respond. We encourage you to share with others who may be interested in this opportunity. Thank you to all those who are already supporting a class! Together we are making a difference!

To fully fund operating expenses for the classes we need 10 supporters for each class. Our goal is to bring on 40 new supporters each month in 2016. Will you be one of them?



Added Bonus: Through a generous donor, we are currently able to add an additional one-time amount of \$400 to our Support a Class program each time someone signs up to be a monthly donor. **To donate,** click on the donate button at www.impactministries.ca

The young indigenous people of rural Guatemala that we serve face poverty and hunger on a daily basis. According to the World Food Program, Guatemala has the fourth highest malnutrition rate in the world, the highest in Latin America. For many of our students, the meal they receive in one of our schools is their only meal that day. The provision of this meal is made possible through our child sponsors and through those who support a class with Impact Ministries. Thank you!!



▼ Brad Boschman joining in the class visit.



Some of our class supporters have had the privilege of visiting their class already in 2016. This brought smiles to the faces of the children!!

photo credits: (left) Christian Stonehouse, (above) Elaine Wat.



*(top) **Vida Nueva school construction progress.** Thanks to some generous donors, the construction is moving forward. On the far right is the kitchen, where our cooks will be preparing the daily meal for the children.*

photo credit: Tim Weaver

*(middle) **New classes being built at our Vida Nueva school.** We are thrilled to be bringing the Gospel to this area where there is a hunger for the life changing power of Jesus.*

photo credit: Walter Dubon

*(bottom) **Very first row of cement block going up on baby home,** part of the first phase of the orphanage.*

photo credit: Walter Dubon

Become a Prayer Partner

For many years, we as a ministry, have said that nothing significant will happen apart from God. We have all seen His blessing on the work of the ministry over the last 15 years. However, as we enter the next 15 years of ministry we feel compelled to call people to become prayer warriors for Impact Ministries. We want to focus on asking God to lead, guide and direct the work. There are many amazing opportunities and challenges that lie ahead in the coming years and we need people who are willing to lift up Impact Ministries' prayers and petitions to the Lord. Would you join our team of prayer partners? As part of this team, you will receive between six and twelve email prayer updates throughout the year so that you can be praying and receiving news on answered prayer.

~ Ephesians 6:18

To sign up: www.impactministries.ca/prayer

Les and Rita Peters' Upcoming Trips to Canada

■ May/June 2016

Les and Rita plan to be in BC from May 20 – June 20. To book a meeting with them please contact Sandra Stephenson at sandra@impactministries.ca. If you would like to arrange a speaking engagement for Les and Rita, please contact Mel Jackson at friends@impactministries.ca

■ October 2016

Les will be in Canada for Friends of Impact events. If you would like to host an event, or have Les speak at your church/Christian school please contact Mel Jackson at friends@impactministries.ca. Events will be posted on our website on our Events page. Be sure to check as we get closer to October to find an event near you. www.impactministries.ca/events

Contact Us

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If you would like to receive periodic news and updates via e-mail please visit <http://eepurl.com/dgnc> to add your address to our list.

