

As I mentioned in the newsletter, the responses to our questionnaire were phenomenal. As we aim to offer you a deeper look into the lives touched by Education and Hope, we'd love to share more of these responses in occasional email updates. We ask that you take a moment to visit our website to add your email address to our database. In the meantime, I have included a brief sampling of the many comments we received, and a moving response written by one of our university students. Also an important member of our administrative staff, Violeta experiences the program from inside and out.

Education and Hope is a place to eat, study, celebrating birthdays and tables for birthday cakes, desks for doing homework, playing after class, showers for all the kids. **(Julia Maria, age 4)**

Education and Hope means helping people who don't have anything to eat, no shoes, no backpacks, no clothes. **(Evelyn, age 9)**

Education and Hope has changed my life because now someone celebrates my birthday and gives me a present. And my mom works here and is able to provide us with food. **(Blanca, age 11)**

Education and Hope is more than just the place where I work; it's the place where I have the opportunity to guide young men and women on an academic level as well as on a moral level; where, through advice and teaching, I have the opportunity to create within them a better vision of themselves in the future. So that one day they will find dignified jobs, and, with strong moral values, become good people who are able to build strong families and strong communities. **(Jose Carlos, teacher)**

Education and Hope is the place where I know that I am not alone and that I am important to someone. **(Alejandro, age 16)**

Education and Hope is the place where people come to find the hopes that they had lost. It also means help for those who are sick, even if it's only a tiny little cut. **(Irma, 12)**

Education and Hope is a family; full of dreams to share; where we find love, understanding, appreciation, hope, warmth; something big and marvelous; incomparable. Miracles of God in the lives of all of us that form part of Education and Hope, that each day we might wake up and have something to receive and to share. The hope of being able to receive an education, to be able to better our economic situation and our way of life. It is our home and it has many loving, affectionate members. **(Herminia, cook)**

What do you hope to do with the education that you have received?

Make pizza. **(Wesley, age 5)**

I want to be a lawyer or a journalist. I would also like to be a woman like Julie who is able to help so many children in need make their dreams come true, just like she helped me. To those who have helped us: You are angels sent by God. Thank you for the generous hearts that have enabled you to reach out to us for all this time. I ask you to continue doing what you do. I want to be just like you. **(Silvia, age 14)**

In the future I hope to be able to contribute to the development of our society and help people in need who suffer just as I did. I want to help put an end to all the many broken-hearted people who have no one to call a friend. **(Alejandro, age 16)**

Thank you for helping us and for giving us ice cream. (*Otoniel, age 9*)

I want to share these words with each one of you that sustain our program: thank you for everything you give to us. We are so happy because who would ever imagine that people from another country would help Guatemalan children? We will always be grateful to you and to God for allowing us to see the light of a new day each morning. You have blessed us in so many different ways. Thank you for giving us the hope, happiness and education we deserve. (*Margarita, age 17*)

Magda Violeta Sac Racancoj, age 20, Third Year University Student, Admin. Staff

What does Education and Hope mean to you?

Education and Hope is my second family that, without a doubt, God put in my path. It is an enormous blessing that truly represents hope in my life. Education and Hope is so much a part of who I am that I feel as if it's an actual part of my body. It's like my eyes because only through Education and Hope can I see the future that I hope for in my life. It's like my heart because through it I have been able to understand what it is like to feel love, and I am beginning to learn how to love. It's like my hands and my strength because it's there when I'm hard at work, the ambition in the things I do. I feel like it's my mind because this blessed place is the reason I have the opportunity to study. And, without a doubt, Education and Hope is my will because it makes me want to keep pushing forward knowing that someone is supporting me unconditionally.

How has Education and Hope changed your life?

Education and Hope has transformed my life completely. I not only have a good job where I can put to good use the skills I have learned, but I am also fortunate enough to study in a place I always imagined was beyond my reach: a private university. For someone of meager means in Guatemala this is something extraordinary. Here at Education and Hope I have met exceptional people like Julie, I have good friends and I learn new things every day. I could never have imagined how fortunate I would be someday to find a place like this that is so deeply a part of all of us involved, and that also makes us feel that we are an important part of the program as well.

What do you hope to do with the education that you have received?

My quality of life and that of my family and all those around me will definitely improve. For someone who belongs to a home plagued by violence, poverty and machismo, the only thing you desire in life is to feel capable of defending yourself, to not have to depend on someone else who feels they have the freedom to mistreat you. I believe that these things are all part of a chain. When people are able to better themselves this means they are interrupting the degrading cycle of sub-development in our country, and they will be able to contribute to its positive change.

What would you like to share with the people who have helped us?

Thank you and a thousand more thank yous, forever. We will always be indebted to you, for the rest of our lives. It is magnificent to think that there is someone who without knowing you... supports you; without talking to you... understands you; without seeing you... believes in you; and without knowing who you are or where you come from, knows that you will achieve great things and offers you the opportunity to do so. Blessings on all of you. Know that as you live you are present within all of us.