

✦ What Fills Their Days Shapes Their Lives ✦



This April's reflection invites us to consider what fills the space within our lives: **"When our lives are active and occupied in the name of doing good, there is little space for violence and doing harm."** For many of the children in our community, violence and hardship are not distant ideas, but part of their daily reality — shaped by household brokenness and patterns that have long been accepted or left unchallenged. Left unfilled, that space does not remain neutral; it continues the cycle. But we are seeing something different take root. Each morning begins with breakfast at the Dream Center, where children — including many from the elementary school — arrive and are met with joy, consistency, and care.

They are welcomed by teachers who know them, who see them, and who are genuinely excited to be with them. In a place where many have not consistently felt it, they are beginning to experience what it means to be loved. Over time, that changes something. What fills their days starts to shape their lives. It is slow, and often unseen, but it matters.

We are grateful to be part of a work that gently interrupts what has been and opens the door to something new.

Thank you for being part of this with us.

With gratitude,

Eugene Gicheru

Dream Center Updates

from Julio Galindo & Jemima Barrera

Honoring Women, Dreaming Future

March gave us a meaningful opportunity to celebrate

International Women's Day with our students.

We didn't just talk about the importance of women—we invited our girls to imagine their future.



As part of the celebration, each of them dressed up as who they dream of becoming one day. We saw future teachers, doctors, professionals, and leaders step forward with courage and excitement. One by one, they stood in front of their classmates and shared their dreams—putting words to hopes that, for many, had never been spoken out loud before.

They then walked in a small “parade” in front of their peers, not just as a fun activity, but as a powerful declaration: this is who I am becoming. Each student received small gifts, but more importantly, they received something even more valuable: applause, encouragement, and affirmation from their teachers and classmates. Together, as a community, we made a shared commitment—to support them, to believe in them, and to walk with them as they pursue those dreams.

In a context where many limitations are often placed on what girls can become, moments like this matter. Because when a girl dares to dream—and is surrounded by people who tell her “you can”—something begins to change.



Understanding Each Student: IQ Assessments



This month, we carried out IQ assessments with all of our students.

This was not about labeling or limiting anyone—it was about understanding them better.

Each child comes to us with a unique way of learning, processing, and responding to the world. These evaluations help us:

- Identify strengths that can be developed
- Detect learning challenges early
- Adapt our teaching to meet each student where they are

More than anything, this process allows us to know our students more deeply so we can work with each of them in an individualized way. This kind of approach is essential for making learning truly effective—because meaningful education happens when a child is seen, understood, and supported according to their specific needs.

We have already begun to see progress when compared to the first time we conducted these assessments. That growth encourages us and reinforces the importance of continuing this process intentionally.

In the coming weeks, we will also be sharing these results—something that fills us with excitement and hope. They not only reflect each student's unique abilities and areas for growth, but also allow us to celebrate the progress we are already beginning to see.

These assessments were carried out by Lina Gicheru, to whom we are deeply grateful. Lina invested her time, expertise, and care into the lives of our students, spending seven days in Guatemala conducting these evaluations.

Her contribution has been invaluable—not only in what we learned, but in how it will shape the way we teach, support, and walk with each student moving forward.



Holy Week: The Week Leading up to Easter

The last week of March and the first days of April also marked a school break in observance of Holy Week—the week leading up to Easter. This is a deeply significant time for our community and for many families in the village. Traditions, gatherings, and moments of reflection shape these days in a way that connects faith with everyday life.

Holy Week invites us not only to remember, but to act. the story of Jesus is not only about salvation—it is about justice, dignity, and love in action. Jesus stood with the poor, the excluded, the overlooked. And following Him means doing the same.

For our students, many of whom live in contexts marked by hardship, this message is deeply personal. It reminds them—and us—that faith is not passive. It calls us to love our neighbor in real, tangible ways.

In Guatemala, Holy Week is not only observed—it is deeply lived. Across the country, communities take part in long-standing traditions such as colorful alfombras (intricately designed carpets made of sawdust and flowers), solemn processions through the streets, and gatherings that bring families and neighbors together.





Dream Center Spotlight



Kitchen Staff

Elena Castro



This month, we want to highlight Elena Castro. Elena has faced rejection in her community for never marrying, but her story reflects something far deeper than those expectations. After her brother-in-law passed away, her sister Rosalia fell into a deep depression that has affected her health to the point of being unable to get out of bed.

In the midst of this, Elena made a courageous decision: she stepped in to care for her nieces, loving and raising them as her own. One of them, Yesica, is set to graduate this year.

Her work at the Dream Center makes this possible. Every day, Elena prepares nutritious meals, following proper hygiene standards, knowing that her work not only supports her family but also serves her entire community. We are deeply grateful for Elena—her life is a powerful example of love in action.

Looking ahead - walking together

As we move into April, we are excited about what's ahead.

We will be celebrating Book Day, encouraging our students to deepen their love for reading, imagination, and learning—opening doors to worlds many of them are just beginning to discover.

We will also be closing out the first academic unit, a milestone that allows us to evaluate progress, celebrate growth, and continue strengthening each student's learning journey. Each step forward—no matter how small—is part of a much bigger story.

If you would like to support this work during 2026 —whether by continuing or increasing your giving or by joining us for the first time—you can do so here: [Donate here](https://www.greatcommissionoutreach.org/donate)