

Unconditional Love



This month's reflection reminds us of a truth that is both simple and difficult: "Love begins where control ends." One of the greatest temptations, especially when we care deeply about someone, is to believe that if we just say the right words, make the right argument, or try a little harder, we can change the outcome. But love has a way of teaching us otherwise. It asks us to release the need to control another person's journey while remaining fully committed to them as they walk it.

This kind of love is neither passive nor indifferent. It listens. It encourages. It grieves. It celebrates. It leaves the door open and continues believing in another person, even when their path takes an unexpected turn.

As you read this month's stories, I hope you will be reminded that some of the most meaningful things we can give another person are not answers or persuasion, but the freedom to know they are deeply loved, no matter what tomorrow brings. Thank you for helping us build a community where love is given freely and hope is never withdrawn.

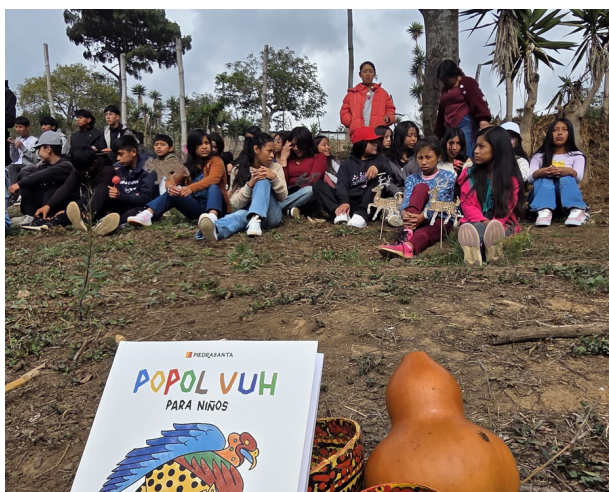
Eugene

Dream Center Updates

from Julio Galindo & Jemima Barrera

Honoring Our Heritage

This month, our students celebrated Popol Wuj Day, a special opportunity to honor the cultural heritage of the Maya people and reflect on the traditions that continue to shape our community today. The Popol Wuj (also known as the Popol Vuh) is one of the most important literary works of the K'iche' Maya. Often referred to as the sacred book of the Maya, it preserves stories of creation, history, and the worldview of one of Guatemala's Indigenous peoples.



To mark the occasion, our students walked together through the cornfields surrounding the village—a landscape that has sustained generations of Maya families and remains central to daily life. Along the way, they paused for readings, created artwork inspired by Maya traditions, and listened to the sounds of native animals recreated with traditional instruments. These experiences invited students to engage with their heritage through their senses, imagination, and shared community.

As we walked together, we were reminded that knowing our roots gives us a stronger foundation for the future. By honoring the richness of their cultural heritage our students are learning that their identity is not something to leave behind—it is something to understand, appreciate, and carry with them wherever life leads.

Growing in Knowledge and Character

At the Dream Center, we believe that education goes beyond academic achievement. Our goal is to help students grow intellectually, emotionally, and socially by equipping them with the knowledge and character they need to make wise decisions and build meaningful lives. This month, that commitment was reflected through both classroom learning and important milestones in our academic year.



Sexual Education Workshop

This month, our students participated in an age-appropriate Comprehensive Sexual Education Workshop designed to provide accurate information while encouraging respect, responsibility, and healthy decision-making. Through interactive discussions and activities, students explored topics such as human development, relationships, personal boundaries, consent, and self-respect.

In many rural communities, conversations about these topics are often limited or surrounded by misinformation. By creating a safe and respectful environment for learning, we seek to equip our students with the knowledge they need to make informed decisions, value themselves and others, and navigate adolescence with confidence.



Growing in Knowledge and Character

Second Unit Assessments

June also marked the end of our second academic unit, as students completed assessments that measured their progress across different subjects. These evaluations are more than grades—they help us understand each student's strengths, identify areas where additional support is needed, and ensure that no one is left behind.

Many of our students begin the school year with significant educational gaps due to the challenges they have faced throughout their lives. Because of this, we are intentional about regularly evaluating their progress and adapting our teaching strategies to meet their individual needs. Our commitment is not simply to help students pass exams, but to help them build the academic foundation, confidence, and critical thinking skills they need for the opportunities that lie ahead.



When love changed the story

Every student carries a unique story, and for many young people at the Dream Center, staying in school means overcoming challenges far beyond the classroom. Financial hardship and family responsibilities often force students to make difficult decisions about their future.

Earlier this year, Hugo told us he was thinking about leaving school. We encouraged him to stay, and after many conversations, he decided to continue his studies.

This June, however, Hugo returned to tell us his decision was final. The challenges facing his family had become too great, and he believed he needed to leave school. This time, instead of trying to persuade him, we simply loved him well. We hugged him, prayed with him, and thanked him for allowing us to be part of his journey. There were tears from Hugo and from several of his teachers as we said goodbye, making sure he left knowing he was deeply loved.

As Hugo walked away, he left his backpack on his classroom chair. It wasn't just a backpack sitting in an empty classroom—it was Hugo. That image stayed with us because we weren't simply losing a student; we were saying goodbye to someone who had become part of our family.



When love changed the story

Then something unexpected happened.

The following week, Hugo walked back through the doors of the Dream Center. He had decided to continue his education. While we cannot know everything that influenced his decision, we believe that experiencing unconditional love reminded him he did not have to face his struggles alone.

Hugo's story reminds us that our greatest impact is often found not in the arguments we make, but in the love we show. At the Dream Center, we want every student to know they are seen, valued, and never alone—even when giving up seems like the only option.



Celebrating those who make learning possible

Behind every lesson, every encouraging word, and every student's success is a teacher who has chosen to invest in the lives of young people. This month, we celebrated Teacher's Day by recognizing the dedication and commitment of the incredible educators who serve at the Dream Center.

For our teachers, the day begins long before the first class. Serving in a rural community means early mornings, long commutes, and adapting to whatever transportation is available. Some days we walk, other days we ride in the back of pickup trucks, and every day brings its own challenges. Yet these daily journeys are a reminder of our shared commitment to being present for our students, no matter what it takes.



To celebrate Teacher's Day, our staff took time to step away from the daily routine and simply enjoy being together. We shared breakfast, played games, laughed, and encouraged one another. It was a meaningful opportunity to celebrate the relationships that make our team strong and to thank God for the privilege of serving together.

We are deeply grateful for each member of our teaching team. Their commitment extends far beyond the classroom, and their willingness to faithfully serve our students continues to make a lasting difference in the lives of our community.





Dream Center Spotlight



Jemima Barrera School Principal

Jemima Barrera serves as the Principal of the Dream Center. Originally from Guatemala City, she holds a degree in Educational Administration and has spent many years working with children, adolescents, and young adults.

Her passion for education is rooted in the belief that every student has unique potential waiting to be discovered. Jemima is also a wife and the mother of two children and enjoys spending her free time watching movies with her family. These moments of rest and connection reflect the same values she brings into her work each day.

More than anything, Jemima has made a daily commitment to love and invest in the lives of her students. She believes in them, even when they struggle to believe in themselves, and continually encourages them to pursue the future God has for them.

Looking ahead - walking together

As we begin a new month, we look forward to our third academic unit and continuing to walk alongside our students as they grow academically, emotionally, and spiritually. We will also continue preparing our students for the September trip.

In the weeks ahead, we will keep investing in our teachers, supporting students like Hugo who need encouragement to stay in school, and creating meaningful learning experiences both inside and outside the classroom. Thank you for being part of this journey. Your prayers and support continue to make these opportunities possible.

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)