



PORTRAITS OF
PROMISE

ORPHAN'S PROMISE NEWSLETTER | MAY 2023

A Backpack Miracle

Karen loves to learn. She wants to be a teacher when she grows up, and her voracious appetite for knowledge is finally being nurtured through her teachers. But not too long ago, Karen didn't have the opportunity to learn in a classroom. Often, she didn't even know when her next meal would be. Come with us to a small rural community in Guatemala to discover how a backpack brought hope to a little girl across the globe.

**These are the stories.
These are the souls.
These are the portraits of the
lives we're changing.**





LIFE IN RURAL GUATEMALA

Karen lives in a small town of about 4,000 people called San Lorenzo in the Sacatepéquez region of Guatemala. It is near the side of Guatemala that meets the Pacific Ocean, and San Salvador is the neighbor to the south. It's a rural area covered in dense vegetation. Karen lives with her parents, Pablo and Lidia, and three younger siblings. There used to be six children in their family, but two of Karen's siblings passed away. Now, Karen shoulders the responsibility of being the oldest child. She helps with chores, taking care of her little brothers and sisters. When Karen has the supplies, she is the primary person who makes corn tortillas to feed everyone.

Karen and her family live in a tiny house made of block and zinc laminate with a dirt floor. There is only one room, so they all share that space at night. They use the small, covered outdoor area as a kitchen and a place to eat together. Food is scarce for their family, and Pablo and Lidia struggle to make enough money to feed their children.

UNICEF reports that children in Guatemala “are particularly vulnerable, with 68% of them living in poverty.”¹

Like many families in Guatemala, Pablo is a day laborer, but there is not always enough work to go around. He usually works in the fields. Sometimes, he finds a job as a bricklayer or goes to the city dump to scavenge and find materials for recycling.

Working at a dump can be very dangerous, as there are toxic fumes and hazardous materials. Thousands of people in Guatemala spend their days working at the city dumps, which “is incredibly dangerous, and the pay is terrible.”² This income instability made it difficult for Pablo and Lidia to provide for their family. During the pandemic, things became even more dire. Their circumstances weigh heavily on Pablo, and he struggles with an addiction to alcohol. When Orphan’s Promise heard about their needs, our local partner One-Way Community reached out to provide emergency food supplies.

A BACKPACK FOR KAREN

After the pandemic restrictions lifted, the government allowed children to start attending classes through a hybrid model. Although Karen was eager to learn, she had to bring her own supplies in order to attend. A backpack, books, and school supplies, like pencils or paper, don’t cost much. But for Karen and her family, it was an insurmountable barrier during a time when they were barely able to put food on the table. We know how critical education is to equipping kids with the tools they need to change their future.



With help from partners like you, we provided Karen with a backpack and the supplies she needed so she could start going to school consistently.

According to USAID, *“formal education is the most reliable and effective means to reduce poverty and advance socioeconomic development.”* USAID reports that, on average, Guatemalan children attend only four years of schooling and only three out of 10 students graduate from sixth grade.”³ There is an extensive lack of educational opportunity in Guatemala, and this lack drastically affects a child’s ability to find and sustain a job as an adult.

All that can change with something as simple as a backpack. It might not look like much, but for Karen that backpack holds the promise of a new future.



INCREASE YOUR GENEROSITY!

The most effective way to give and maximize your gift is to give a recurring monthly gift. If you’d like to become a monthly partner with Orphan’s Promise, please fill out the enclosed “You Pledge, We Pledge” form and return it in the Business Reply Envelope.

We’ll count on you to ensure our commitment to these children is fulfilled!

If you’d like to give a special gift to Orphan’s Promise, there are four easy ways you can give:

Give online by visiting **OrphansPromise.org/Promise**

Text **PROMISE** to **71777** and give from your mobile phone

Call **1-800-818-4016** to give by phone

You can **mail a check** made out to Orphan’s Promise to:

Orphan’s Promise
977 Centerville Turnpike
Virginia Beach, VA 23463

Thanks for your generosity.
We look forward to making a difference together.



HOPE AHEAD

Karen has a great desire to study and now has the attention she needs from her teachers. She's rapidly learning core subjects like math, writing, and language. When she first came to school, her teachers said that she was quiet, worried, and upset from the daily stress of her family's economic situation wearing on her young spirit. But now that she has settled in and is in a stable environment, with regular nutritious meals and mentorship from her teachers, she is flourishing! Karen says she now feels calm, free, and peaceful. She's also more talkative with her teachers and very diligent with her studies. She wants to be a teacher when she grows up, so that she can give other children the same opportunity she received. Her favorite color is pink. She also loves watching Superbook and enjoys painting.

"Thank you for all you do for me and all the children. Donors help us a lot," Karen said.

Brenda, our Orphan's Promise coordinator, shared: *"Many miracles have happened in this project. The One-Way Community (OWC) team is wonderful. They serve children and families in an extraordinary way. The partnership with Orphan's Promise makes [even more of an impact]. That is why we have seen many lives ... transformed. It is [through teamwork with] God, our donors, Orphan's Promise, and OWC."*

Your partnership makes change like this possible. Thank you for coming alongside kids like Karen and giving them the consistent, stable environment they need to grow and flourish. A backpack might not seem like a miracle, but it makes all the difference for a little girl like Karen who is desperate to learn.

Thank you for giving little ones like Karen access to education so they can thrive.



1. UNICEF, *Being Prepared and Acting Fast: A Series of Case Studies on UNICEF's Role in the Delivery of Effective Social Protection Responses to COVID-19*, October 2021, <https://www.unicef.org/media/110771/file/Guatemala-Case%20Study-Being-Prepared-Acting-First-2021.pdf>.

2. Benjamin Reeves, "The Humanitarian Crisis in Guatemala City's Immense Garbage Dump," Vice Media Group, March 25, 2014, 8:00, <https://www.vice.com/en/article/vdpbxm/the-basurero-is-burning-life-at-the-gates-of-hell-in-guatemala-city>.

3. "The Guatemalan Poor and Its Garbage Dump Education System," Council on Hemispheric Affairs (COHA), August 4, 2009, 11:05, <https://www.coha.org/the-poor-and-their-struggling-education-system/>.



give us a call: 1-800-818-4016

orphan'spromise.org

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