
THE POTTER'S HOME

July 2020 - Ministry Update

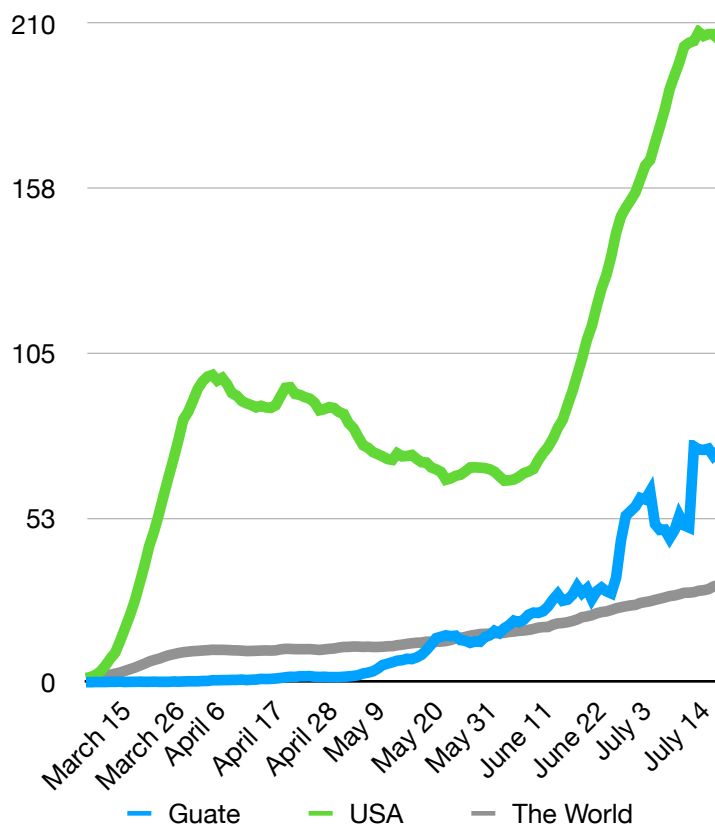
Hello from Guatemala! It's been over 4 months of quarantine here, and we thought that you'd enjoy an update about what's going on here. First of all, our family is doing well, and although the number of cases of COVID is increasing in the country, we're doing ok.

Our government has been even more strict than in the United States, so there is a curfew every night at 6 PM, and no one is allowed to be outside after that. And most weekends we're not supposed to go outside at all, although right now we're allowed to go outside on Saturday mornings. Masks are (of course) mandatory. Travel is very restricted with police checkpoints between the different departments (or counties) of the country. We had a trip to the United States planned back in May, but the airport has been closed since March, and they don't have plans to reopen it anytime soon.

As for number of cases, there are over 40,000 in the country. This might sound low when compared to the United States, but this is a small and poor country, and the hospitals are overwhelmed with people. Many patients who need respirators have to sleep on the floor in the hallways of the hospitals because there's just not any room left. And unfortunately, even though there are lots of restrictions in place, the number of cases has been steadily climbing. I made this chart comparing the daily cases in the United States and Guatemala.

All these closings and travel limitations have greatly affected many people, and many are out of work. There's no social security, so it's been very hard on many families. Many people now stand outside along the road waving white flags as a way to show that they need food. It's hard to be surrounded by so much need, and to be honest it

**Daily New COVID-19 Cases / Population
(7 Day Averaged)**



can feel overwhelming to want to help but feel like we're not even making a dent in the situation.

For us, it's been very humbling to see the faithfulness of all of you. *Thank you for your continued support for us and our girls here in Guatemala.* We know that there is a lot of uncertainty about the future, and many have already lost jobs or have received pay cuts. So we're so incredibly grateful for the support. And we're so grateful for the new people who have reached out to us during this challenging time to help us. Thank you!

Please keep Guatemala in your prayers as this has been such a hard time for so many families and ministries around us.

Our Girls

So what have we been up to these last few months stuck at home??? The schools soon realized that this pandemic was going to stick around for a while, and in May our girls started receiving classes remotely. We typically have 4 Zoom calls going on simultaneously every morning. Even Margaret connects daily with her teacher and classmates to get new instructions and homework to be working on.

Other than classes, we're spending lots more time here together than we normally get. We're learning to cook lots of new foods together, working on home projects, and playing games together. We even completely destroyed our Uno cards from overuse! Oh, and our garden has never been so beautiful. It's so different from the normal busy routine, and it's allowed us to build relationships with each of the girls. Yuliza is amazingly good at working with them, and we feel more like a big family than ever before.

We're also spending time together in Bible studies, and right now we're reading the book, "The Pursuit of God" by A. W. Tozer. It's really been great at working on our personal relationships with the Lord. Our good friend Erika's father, Pastor Basilio, has been helping us with weekly Bible studies for about 5 years, and he still connects with us every week remotely. It's been a huge help!

Oh, and birthdays! Isabella had her first birthday in April, Carlos turned 30, Ana turned 18, Karla turned 16, and Maria had her 19th birthday. So we've been eating lots of cake! Ana becoming an adult was exciting as we met her when she was just 6. It's so much fun to see our kids growing up!

Carlos lived with us for a number of years, and he is still working as the guard at the school where most of our kids (use to) attend, and we're so happy to see him grown up and established in a job. Although he says that it's pretty quiet and lonely guarding an empty school 24 hours a day.



Julio, Alfonso & Martin

Last newsletter I mentioned that Julio had entered an alcohol rehab center, and we're so happy that he has been out for about two months and is doing great! It's so wonderful to see him not only sober, but seeking the Lord. He's a completely different guy!

Also, as I mentioned in our last update, we had been able to start a relationship with Alfonso again over Christmas. It was such a hard time almost three years ago when we had to ask him and Julio to leave our house, and so to start the relationship with him again was wonderful.

As we saw that Julio was doing so much better, we prayed that Alfonso would desire to get help, too. During the lockdown he kept getting into more and more trouble, and drinking more and more, which pushed us to pray more and more for him. Then about a month ago he said that he had had enough and asked us to help him. And not only Alfonso, but his brother Martin also has been struggling with alcohol and asked to get help too!

The problem was that, to get him here, we had to get past two police checkpoints. So our friend Edwin left at 4 am when the curfew ended knowing that the police can be a little slow in the morning. He picked them up and quickly dropped them off with us before racing back home past the checkpoints again before the police arrived at their stations.

They've been at the rehab center for about three weeks now, and it's been a struggle for them both. They need your prayer as they fight this addiction.

We're also looking for a place near our house where they can live when they leave the center in October. We'd like to keep them here close to us, and far away from the family and friends from their own town which are a bad influence on them. Please pray that we can find a good place so that we can continue to invest in their lives and be a support for them.



Margaret & Isabella

Isabella is now walking around and wants to be in the middle of everything all the time. She's such a social and goofy little girl! And Margaret loves reading in both English and Spanish. She has the most beautiful handwriting and loves Math. Both are very tired of being stuck inside.

Margaret is excited about losing her baby teeth, while Isabella is excited that her baby teeth are finally coming in.



Thank You!

Thank you for your continued prayers and support for us! We're grateful for God's goodness and for all of your help. We're so blessed to be able to serve the poor, lost, and less fortunate here in Guatemala. It's a rare privilege to be able to do what we do. Thank you so much for making it possible!

We have not been able to continue the Sunday morning breakfasts and Monday night Bible studies as all meetings are still prohibited. Most shoeshiners have gone home as there isn't work here, so we try to meet individually with the families and kids that are still here to help them during this difficult time.

Here are a few prayer requests for us:

- Please pray for Martin and Alfonso at rehabilitation; pray that they would heal spiritually and physically.
- Please pray for the country as it struggles containing the virus and treating the sick. Please pray for all the people struggling to have enough to eat during this time.
- Please pray for our girls: Sandra, Maria, Ana and Karla as we've all been stuck together for such a long time. Pray that even in the middle of everything and when we feel like our lives have been put on hold, that we would grow in the Lord and as a family.
- Pray for Margaret as she misses her friends and playgrounds a lot, and for our family. We'd love a break! Pray that we will always be faithful to the call that the Lord has placed on our lives.
- Pray for our situation with immigration. We started a process almost a year ago with Yuliza's paperwork, and still haven't gotten things resolved. The trip in May that was canceled was necessary, and we can't do much but wait and pray.

Thank you so much and God bless,

Brent, Yuliza, Margaret & Isabella

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If you wish to partner with our ministry, tax-deductible donations can be made out to "NACC" with "Guatemala Missions" in the for field and mailed to:

North Austin Christian Church
1734 Rutland Drive
Austin, TX 78758

