

With GOD

Act justly. Love mercy. Walk humbly with GOD.



Act justly. Love mercy. Walk humbly.

These days, it seems like you see this verse everywhere: Wall-hangings, t-shirts and mugs all encourage us to live out these truths described in Micah 6:8. And when we launched the Micah Project in Honduras in 2000, this verse seemed to perfectly describe the transformation we wanted to see in our young men.

But for the sake of symmetry—like making this saying fit nicely in the space provided on the front of a t-shirt—it seems to us that the most important part of this verse too often gets left out! The verse encourages us “to act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly **with our God,**” but that last phrase so often disappears when it becomes a decoration.

Yet if we forget God, these three requirements morph into an impossible to-do-list that even the best of us couldn't complete. Humility requires that we recognize that we cannot do good on our own. Without God, we at the Micah Project would not have the grace or wisdom to work day after day with street-connected youth and former street kids. Without God, we would not experience the miracles of healing we're seeing every day in these lives that experienced so much brokenness while so young.

Walking humbly means recognizing that without our Savior's amazing grace, any one of us could be puffing on a bottle of yellow glue, like so many kids on the streets do, attempting to numb ourselves to the pain of this world.

Without God, we could neither act justly nor love mercy. . .

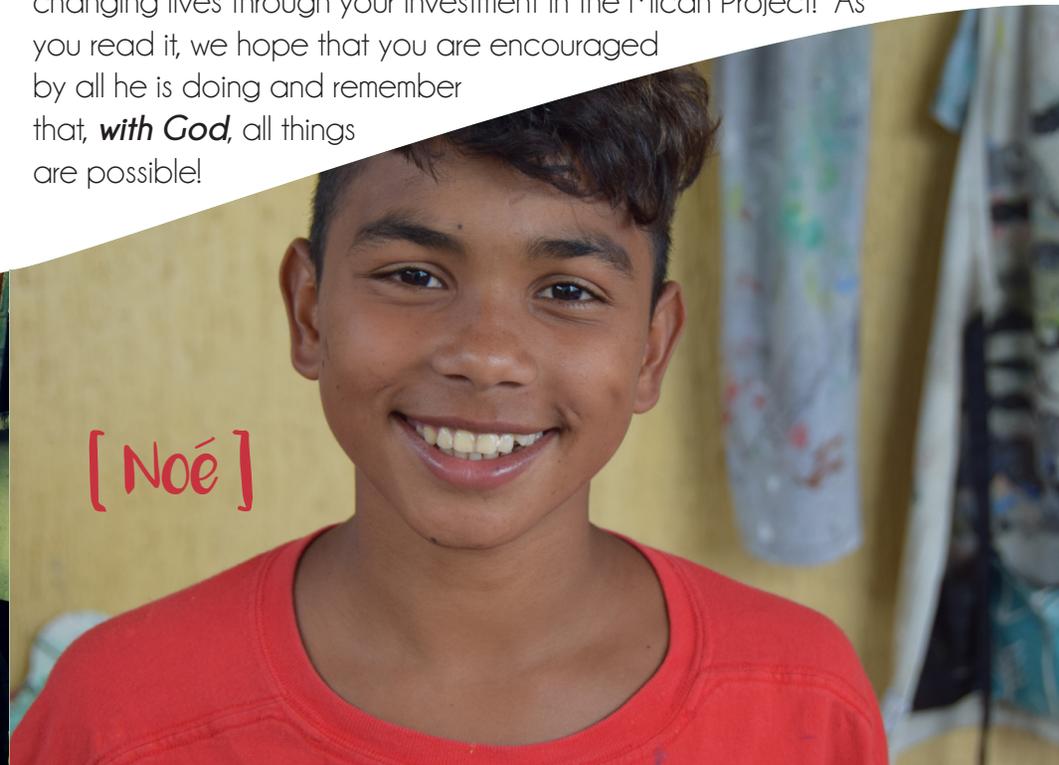


Working with kids on the streets is not an easy task. When we met Noé, pictured below, we honestly feared he could die on the streets of Tegucigalpa. His life had been hard—full of abandonment and heartache—and he was thoroughly steeped in street life, totally consumed by the power of his drugs every single day—even at the tender age of 11!

Yet today, God's grace is saving Noé. Though he still faces many challenges, he's surrounded by Christians who love him wildly, he is studying hard in our home-schooling program, and he has numerous opportunities to follow his passions and heal from past trauma. **With God,** Noé is a new person! As we focus on God and let Him lead our steps, God truly does miraculous things.

So, we move forward. We act justly on behalf of street-connected kids. We love mercy and live out grace. But, most importantly, we do this with our minds and hearts fixed on God, who helps us do all good things.

And we are SO grateful to you for walking humbly with us as God calls us to continue to extend his love to the “street kids” of Honduras. We have prepared this new booklet so that you can see the many ways that God is changing lives through your investment in the Micah Project! As you read it, we hope that you are encouraged by all he is doing and remember that, **with God,** all things are possible!



Chapter 1

The Streets

Micah's ministry begins on the streets. We approach a group of eight boys huddled on a sidewalk that is partially protected from the elements by the building that overhangs it. We know most of these kids. They've banded together for companionship and protection.

Living on the streets is not easy.

We can't let the dirt or the smell of the noxious fumes of yellow shoe glue that they are inhaling out of old soda bottles stop us from putting our arms around them and showing them we see through all of the street grime to the children beneath. How do we show these boys that we truly love them? We first sit with them in the plazas and alleyways of Tegucigalpa; sharing a meal with them as passers-by glance at us cautiously and wonder why we are wasting our time with these "burnout kids."

We begin to listen to their stories, even when in their mistrust, they reveal them slowly over the course of weeks or months. There are as many stories as there are kids: Pablo is fleeing from violence and addiction in his broken home, where he was definitely *not wanted* by his stepdad.

Incarnational ministry means weeping with the lost, holding dirty hands and wiping tears from grimy faces.



Jorge lost his parents when they were killed by gang members for not paying an extortion levied on his dad so that he could continue to drive his taxi through gang-controlled neighborhoods. Carlos is a second-generation street kid; his mom was living on the streets as a teenager and became pregnant while selling her body in exchange for food. She was later killed in a gang shootout in which she was an innocent bystander, leaving Carlos to be raised by his drug-dealing grandfather, until he was old enough to hit the streets himself at the age of eight.





Because they live in fight-flight-or-freeze mode, we can't do a hard-sell on this group of boys to convince them to join the Micah Project. First, they need to get used to seeing us. Then, our street ministry team will invite them to play soccer for an hour or two on a rented court a few blocks from their corner. A couple of weeks later, we may invite a few of them to come out to the Micah House for lunch, followed by a swim in the local pool down the road from our property. A member of our street ministry team will sometimes take them to the clinic that we support next door to our property, to treat a wound received on the streets or to get medicine for a sickness that racks their malnourished bodies.

In order to survive, street kids have to be quick judges of character. When they come out to visit the Micah House, they are sizing us up to see if we are as loving as we say we are. They spend some time with the other Micah boys and our staff greets them warmly. As the afternoon winds down, we notice that the boys often begin to get anxious—several hours away from the yellow glue, and their bodies begin to cry out for those toxic fumes that help them retreat from the reality of their lives.

But over time...



we will be able to push a little harder. We will ask them to consider leaving the street behind and join the Micah family. More often than not, they say no—for weeks, months, and even years on end. But eventually, we break through those walls that they have built for themselves, and some will make the decision to stay for a night at Micah. Then, prayerfully, that night turns into two nights, then a week, then a month. . .until it finally becomes their home.

You can't sit with a homeless kid on the cardboard box he uses as a bed and go away from the encounter unchanged...



Chapter 2

Why Micah?

When the Micah Project was founded in 2000, we wanted the ministry's name to reflect our goals and values. By God's grace, we have devoted ourselves to justice, mercy and humility. The book of Micah focuses on these themes, and our theme verse specifically

teaches us to, **“act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with God.”** In serving street-connected youth, we will always fight for justice and stand up for the vulnerable; strive to live out God's grace in all areas of ministry; and humbly recognize that we do all of this with the Lord's help, by His faithfulness, and according to His perfect timing.



At the Micah House....

we provide a home to boys and teenagers who have spent difficult childhoods on the streets of Tegucigalpa. We work to maintain an atmosphere at the Micah House that is as familial as a group home can be. Each child is treated as an individual, and our policies reflect that. As each boy walks through his unique process and fights unique battles, our staff of Christian adults work to love them in unique ways. At the Micah House, we offer a homeschool program until high school, when the boys attend a private Christian school. We also offer a variety of activities, and each child has the opportunity to choose in which extracurricular activity he'd like to involve himself. Each moment at the Micah House requires communion with God, patience and humility. We are constantly learning and evolving as we serve these vulnerable, yet resilient guys.



The Micah House has developed a personality of its own. The young men take pride in decorating their bedrooms to their tastes, and they rearrange them constantly. Our classrooms have filled up with projects and posters, and throughout the house, the walls are filled with art work from our painting class!

In this group home, we have created a safe place both physically and emotionally for the boys to grow and mature. It is here that they are truly learning about the joys and challenges of what it takes to be a dynamic and growing family.

In the Micah House, each day is full of learning, playing, sleeping, eating, and a bit of joyful chaos!



Chapter 3 Men on a Mission

Last year, Hector was the oldest resident of the Micah House. His mom died in a car accident when he was a young boy, and his dad, who lost his leg in the accident, was forced to sell bottles of water out of a wheelbarrow on a street corner in order to survive. Hector followed his older brother to the streets, huffing yellow glue for three years until joining Micah in 2008 at age 12. His brother was eventually killed by the gangs while still on the streets. Tragically, his dad passed away of a heart attack in 2012, and his step-mom died in 2014, leaving him with no immediate family except for the Micah Project.

In spite of the multiple tragedies of his childhood, Hector has a gentle heart and a desire to serve the Lord. In 2017, he graduated high school at the age of 21. This spring, he had the opportunity to serve refugees in the Middle East with a Christian organization called "Youth with a Mission." Now back in Honduras, Hector wants to become a soccer coach and use that to minister to kids living in poverty.

Guys like Hector are the reason we opened the Timothy House in 2004. It is a place where young men like Hector can transition out of the Micah House to a home in which they have increasing independence as they take responsibility for their own lives, but do so in an environment of mentorship and mutual support. The young men living in the Timothy House are either in college with majors such as pre-med, English, international business, and finance, or are learning trades such as welding and electrical work.



Since our founding in 2000, the Micah Project has had 30 young men graduate from high school and 12 graduate from college. Others have received certificates in graphic design, furniture-making, international and national missions and culinary arts—to name a few!



Chapter 4 Never Too Late

The story of the Micah boys we have told up to this point really works best if we can help the boys off the streets before the age of 16. That way, we have a few years to get them caught up in their education before they become adults. But the harsh reality in Honduras is that there are hundreds of young men over the age of 18 who are living—and too often dying—on the streets.

Stephen Kusmer came to the Micah Project in 2011 to become a missionary to the streets, and he began to get to know the stories of this older street youth population. He realized that many of them have been on the streets since they were little boys but simply never had the opportunity to leave the streets permanently. Though you would think that a young man who has been on the streets for over ten years would be hardened to the point of giving up completely, Stephen still saw hope in many of these lives.

Out of these relationships, Stephen spearheaded our newest program: the Isaiah House. This house, which was inaugurated in August 2015, can accept up to 12 of these older guys, providing a program of drug rehabilitation, discipleship, job-training and transition to independent-living.

Rather than telling the story of the impact of the Isaiah House on these lives ourselves, we've shared the testimony of Selvin, who had lived on the streets for seven years before joining the Isaiah House in 2015.

Keep reading! →



The Timothy House is led by Rony C and Olvin P, who are mentors and guides to the young men. Rony and Olvin provide Christian care and advice to the Timothy guys. Another big way they help is when the guys are looking for full-time jobs. Searching for a job is no easy task in a country with huge numbers of unemployment and underemployment. Through these challenges and others, Rony and Olvin are loyal and hard-working.

Hector lived in the Micah House for nine years before his discipleship program with "Youth with a Mission" and upcoming transition into the Timothy House. Thanks to this home, Hector won't have to make his way into adulthood alone. He'll be surrounded by the Micah family and specifically supported by the staff and residents of the Timothy House, who will spur him on toward love and good deeds.



The theme verse for the Timothy House explains what we desire for these young men as they take the final steps toward adulthood: "Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity."

[1 Timothy 4:12]

“I give thanks to the Lord because now I can say to all of the people who believed when I was in the streets that I would never be able to change, that with God, all things are possible. I can tell them that they were wrong to judge me, because God has made me into a new creation. Now, I give thanks to Him every day when I open my eyes in the morning. I believe that He is alive, and I trust in Him with all my heart. Now, I have a family: this group of brothers to support me, a father [in Stephen], which I have never had before. When I was on the streets, I felt anger and hatred towards people, but now I have joy in my heart because God has given me this new family.”

Here's Selvin!



Last year, Selvin graduated from a trade school to become a barber. When he was still training, in order to “give back” and show his gratitude, he would go downtown a couple times each month to cut the hair of the guys that still live on the streets. As with the boys in the Micah House and the young men in the Timothy House, **Selvin is an example that it is possible for the Lord to transform “street kids” into young men who “act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with their God” (Micah 6:8).**

Why Isaiah?



We believe that no human being is beyond the transformational reach of our Heavenly Father. We love how the prophet Isaiah describes salvation in the lives of people who have fallen to great depths—people like the Isaiah guys, and people like us:

“See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.” [Isaiah 43:19]

When Stephen, the founder of the Isaiah House, was younger, he felt called to proclaim the gospel to “unreached people groups.” Today, he’d tell you he’s doing just that. Although Honduras has many churches and Christians who have heard and believe the gospel, young men on the streets continue to be some of the most ostracized individuals in our society. But through the Isaiah House, God really is “doing a new thing!” as this home’s staff serves and disciples young men who previously had nowhere else to go. **Because for the Lord, it’s never too late to change a life.**

Chapter 5

The End: just the beginning!

One of the most special parts of the Micah family is that we truly are a family. After 18 years of ministry, we have the great privilege of seeing some of the fruit of our labors and the never-ending faithfulness of the Lord in the lives of so many.

We see it in the lives of Olvin F, his wife Cesia and their toddler Mateo,

who was born while they were serving in Egypt for a year. We see it in Olvin P, Hector L and Brayan C who now work in the Micah House. And we see it in Pedro, Maricela and their son Dylan. Though he is a hard-working civil engineer who puts in long hours building roads and other infrastructure for the city of Tegucigalpa, Pedro always has time to come back to the Micah House to encourage our younger boys. In fact, he stops by nearly every morning to visit and share a cup of coffee with our founding director Michael! Read how Pedro describes the way Micah transformed his life.

"If I had not become a part of the Micah House, I would be dead. I didn't believe in God because I had so many bad things happen when I was a kid. My dad kicked me and hated me. My mom abandoned us. I didn't believe in God because I had so much hate in my heart. But when I started in the Micah House, and Michael started to talk about life, talking about the Bible, about Jesus, I made the decision to change my character. Before Micah, I only had drugs and the streets."



Introducing... [Micah Works]

Imagine that you are an 18-year-old young man who has lived on the streets for the last seven years. Out of a desperate desire to change your life, you make the courageous decision to leave the streets behind and join the Micah Project. In your childhood, you may have gotten through the first or second grade before abandoning your education after hitting the streets, and your teen years have been all about survival. You have entered the Micah Project looking for a new life—a way to leave the cycle of despair and addiction behind you for good.

The Micah Project has a deep calling to reach out to this older population of street youth. In 2015, we inaugurated the Isaiah House where youth 18 years old and up can find a home away from the streets. But because these young men cannot invest the next eight years to work their way up to a high school degree, we must provide them with an alternative way to successfully and permanently leave the streets behind.

That is why we are launching Micah Works, an accelerated program of classroom instruction and hands-on training to help street-connected youth acquire the skills necessary to be able to step away from the streets and successfully enter the work force. Even as the young men receive the same rehabilitation and Christian discipleship as all of our other residents, they will also learn the specialized skills needed to obtain and keep employment—a critical step for creating a new future.

Micah Works is all about job training, job creation and job retention. It is about teaching these young men that they can be trusted, competent and positive members of a society that once marginalized them.

Please pray for God's blessing on this new program, and be on the look-out for updates on our progress and ways you can get involved.



Chapter 6 What's your part?

When you invest your time, talents and resources in the Micah Project, you become part of the stories of each of these lives. In the Micah family, we pray that you'll see for yourself how a boy is rescued from the streets, begins a process of healing and becomes a man of purpose and vision. As you support our mission, you will be blessed as the Lord uses YOU as part of this miraculous transformation.

Here are some ways you can get involved... ➔



[Give]

The large majority of our yearly budget is covered by individuals like you. Please consider investing in the Micah Project with a one-time gift or through a monthly donation. Individuals who give \$50 or more each month join our "Friends of the 504" campaign. Learn more on our website!

We know that deep, eternal change only comes in these boys' lives through God's supernatural grace and support, and we believe in the power of prayer. Let us know if there's a specific boy or boys for whom you feel led to pray, and we'll send you updates about their lives.

[Pray]

As the Micah Project grows, we need the Micah family to grow as well! Share our story with your friends or church, host a gathering at which you tell others about Micah, or share our social media content on your personal profile!

[Advocate]

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