

Keeping the Promise

Urban Promise Honduras

Annual Report 2019



Founder's Message



Our 10-year celebration parade last July captured many emotions as time seemed to slow down to a crawl so that I could truly enjoy the moment: pure gratitude for being able to participate in such life-giving community, reassurance of the impact we are making, and encouragement that this thing called UrbanPromise Honduras is truly becoming locally owned and operated.

The parade was epic in every sense of the word. Hundreds—literally hundreds—of UPH children and youth came out in support, carrying colorful camp banners and greeting business owners as we made our way through the streets, led by a marching band to the central plaza of Copán.

As UPH kids prepared for this epic city-wide parade, I struck up conversation with the teenage leaders near me. They were decked out in their camp colors, with faces painted and carrying large cardboard cutouts labeled “UPH 10 AÑOS” (UPH 10 YEARS). Out of nowhere, one of the young women said, “UPH has changed my life. I am now the light in my family. I’m the only light in my family.” Not expecting anything of such depth and power during casual conversation, I just about lost it. Sunglasses hid tears of gratitude as I did my best to acknowledge, nod, and smile.

Ten years of memories began flooding my mind. I couldn’t help but think about the power of light as I stood there and tried to carry on the conversation. Light, even if it’s just a small flame, is impossible to contain. It has no limits. It changes everything that it touches.

That’s what has been happening here for the last 10 years: light triumphing over darkness. I give thanks for each child who has walked through our doors and even now is keeping the light alive, keeping hope alive, keeping the promise.

With gratitude looking back and with hope looking forward,

Blair



Director's Message

It is a pleasure to greet you and welcome you to the adventure of our annual report. I am sure that you are going to enjoy being a witness to the activities carried out in the different programs of our ministry.

It wasn't in my mind to become the Director of UrbanPromise Honduras, but I was surprised to find out that it was in God's heart to fulfill the desire of the founders and first board members: seeing UPH become a team of Hondurans on the front lines to inspire youth and children to believe in their abilities and the leadership they possess to serve their own community.

I thank God for giving me the opportunity to be an instrument of His Kingdom, working alongside a team of passionate and creative leaders to impact our community and nation.

I also want to thank the Board of Directors for their trust in my leadership, a leadership that has been growing since childhood, full of obstacles and hard lessons that have formed me to serve my country. I am so lucky to be the first Copaneco to become the director of a great ministry that loves to serve, equip youth, and announce the good news of Jesus in each of its programs.

Ten years ago, Blair brought the seed of the UrbanPromise model, Hugh was here to water that seed and see it germinate, and now it's my responsibility to collect the fruit.

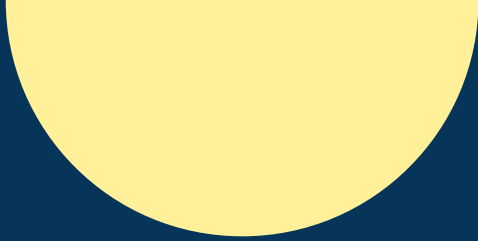
I am sure that God will surprise us as we see Him Keeping the Promise in the children who were served by the first staff, those kids who have turned into leaders in their communities, serving their people, inspired by seeing values in action.

Londin

UPH *10th Anniversary*



#keepingthepromise



Ten years ago, just as the start date for UPH's first summer camp was approaching, our three founders had to sit down and have a hard conversation. With concerned voices from all sides asking them when they were leaving Honduras and all its violence and political turmoil behind, their situation was even further complicated when they realized that camp was about to start and there were zero children registered.

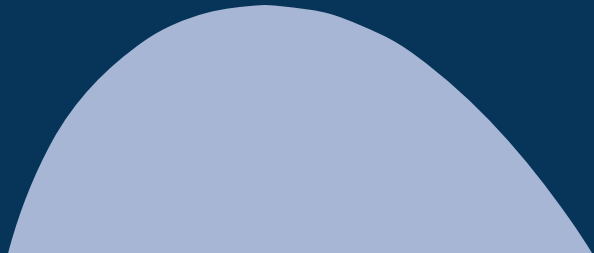
But even so, they chose to continue. Little by little, the kids came, and the first Camp Joy went down in UPH history.

In 2019, Camp Joy had over 100 children registered, a record-breaking number, with kids coming from all around Copán Ruinas, as well as the nearby town of Santa Rita. As we celebrated our tenth anniversary, our founders visited Camp Joy, introduced themselves (through a megaphone!), and led the kids in the camp "Iema," the Bible verse recited at the end of each camp day.

In that moment, the contrast between the first Camp Joy and 2019's camp was clear. But the numbers are only a sign of something greater happening beneath the surface.

That first year, parents didn't understand the concept of a summer camp; now, kids and parents ask us months beforehand, "When can I sign up for Camp Joy?" That first year, kids stepped cautiously into a brand new environment; today, many who enter Camp Joy do so with a wealth of fond memories and deep relationships from previous years. They come with an affection and excitement that only continues to grow through the ever-expanding chain of lives being touched and transformed through UPH.

This growth is the fruit of lots of risk-taking, trust, and hard work. It's the fruit of the "yes" of our founders and the continuing "yes" of each child, parent, teen, staff, and supporter who has left their unique mark on this ministry.



Camps





Vacation Camps

5 January Camps

224 kids

Hope

Libertad

Gracia

Promesa

Luz

Brand new camp in the neighboring town of Santa Rita!

Summer Bilingual Camp

120 kids

Joy

Our biggest bilingual summer camp ever!

After-School Program

3
camps

160
kids

150
days of
camp
(Mon-Thurs)

**Daily snack +
homework help**

Classes in:

Bible

Discovery

Cooking

Art

Plus special activities including:

Kids' Olympics

Prayer time

Kids' Carnival

**Workshops on
managing emotions**



After several years at the same site, Camp Agape was relocated to Iglesia Manos de Jesús, making it more accessible to children in some of Copán's more vulnerable neighborhoods.

Youth



Youth Program

40 teens employed in
AfterSchool Program

57 teens employed in
Vacation Camps

13 Leaders-in-Training in
AfterSchool Program

19 Leaders-in-Training in
Vacation Camps

29 Youth Nights
(every Tuesday)

27 Tarde de LJAs
(weekly time of
reflection &
refreshment for
Leaders-in-Training)

3 university
scholarships

16 high school
scholarships

6 retreats



Widman had been attending Camp Agape for several years and was now on his way to high school after just graduating from sixth grade. While this was a great step and a big accomplishment for him, it also came with a new set of challenges. He would have to travel farther each day to high school, buy more materials for homework and projects, and, if possible, pay for food during his hours at school.

These challenges may seem like a small price to pay for an education, but they are the obstacles that keep many kids in Honduras from continuing into high school.

Diony, one of our Youth Program directors, heard through the grapevine that Widman was in the same situation and wasn't planning on studying the following year. For anyone who knows a little of Widman's background, the rumor wasn't difficult to believe. His mother passed away in an accident several years ago, which left him and his siblings under the custody of their grandmother. His older brother, Carlos (a long-time UPH youth leader), had often walked to and from school because he wasn't able to pay the 10 Lempiras (approx. 40 cents) for a taxi ride.

Diony, who has had his own fair share of challenges, responded to the news by calling Widman and his grandmother in for a meeting. He was surprised to hear Widman's grandmother's reply when he asked her about the coming academic year. She emphatically declared that the family would do whatever it took to make sure Widman was able to continue studying. Then Diony turned to Widman, who expressed with equal enthusiasm his desire to start high school.

Carlos, who was entering his final year of school, had provided a positive example for his brother; and in the midst of great difficulty, Widman was inspired to practice the same level of dedication he has seen in Carlos.

Thank you for joining us in inspiring youth and children to fight for their dreams. As we look back on 2019 and the past 10 years, we can all learn from Carlos and Widman's perseverance and from Galatians 6:9, which reminds us:

“Let us not grow weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.”

Experiential Learning



UrbanTrekkers

Outdoor Adventure Program

Excursions



Eight young cyclists spent 5 days riding, serving, and reflecting

Maraton La Prensa

2 days, 10 youth

10k race in San Pedro Sula & serving in the children's wing of a hospital

Celaque

9 youth, 5 days

climbing Honduras's highest mountain

Nicaragua

1 youth + youth intern, 7 days

learning about sustainable energy & building a working solar panel

Plus...

Tour de Copán

5 days, 7 youth

cycling tour around the Copan region while reflecting on the theme of identity

Service Trip to Siguatepeque

5 days, 9 youth

service & adventure trip building houses and learning basics of rock climbing



Reina celebrated her "sweet 15" atop Honduras's highest mountain!

Rite of Passage

8 youth, 3 days

hiking, harvesting coffee & a time of reflection and solitude for older youth

5 Retreats

3 AfterSchool Program

Rock Climbing

Experiences

3 Camping 101 Trips

Urban Dreamers

Arts Program

40+ children & youth involved

Activities

Workshops with visiting artists including percussionists & songwriters



“Keeping the Promise” youth art contest

Participation in international poetry festival



Art Classes

Semester 1:
guitar & crafts

Semester 2:
guitar & singing

2 culminating exhibits/performances



Gerson Lopez, a former UPH youth, was our experiential learning intern for 2019. In addition to putting his outdoors & drawing skills to practice in UrbanTrekks & UrbanDreamers, he was trained & empowered throughout the year in areas such as personal organization, communication, leadership, & graphic design.

Wellness

a counseling program that seeks restoration and fullness for children and youth, connecting them with their original purpose and design

Weekly staff training in childhood trauma, regulating emotions, etc.



Regular visits to camps to check in with children & youth



Workshops in collaboration with other programs



Groups

Fresno, CA

Adventure Community Church

6

participants

14

participants

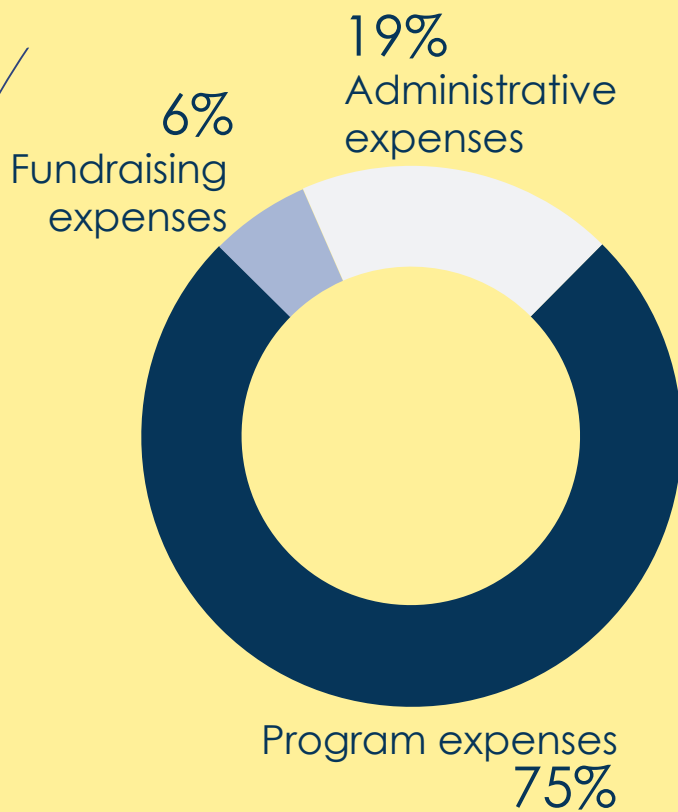
St. Luke's Episcopal Church

Hilton Head Island, SC



Campaigns

& Fundraising



\$329,560
Total Income

\$330,043
Total Expense

Scholarship Campaign

Feb | annual campaign for high school & university scholarships

Summer Camp Sponsorship

June/July | raising support for our biggest bilingual summer camp ever

MUNAC

Nov | local sponsorship campaign for January vacation camps

Giving Tuesday

Dec 3 | international campaign to fund various UPH programs



For the purposes of this report, statistics include income and expenses from UrbanPromise Honduras only. A separate programmatic annual report for UrbanPromise Latin America can be found at www.urbanpromiselatinamerica.org

Tania, director of Camp Vida, was in Elmer's neighborhood one day and decided to stop by and see how he and his family were doing. Elmer, one of the children at Camp Vida, had stopped going to school. After some chatting and catching up, Tania asked Elmer if he would be willing to try going back to classes. Nervously, **he said he would try it if Tania went with him.**

The next day, Tania was at his door at 6:30am, ready to walk him to school. The two walked together; and by the time they arrived, Elmer was even more nervous than before, until one of the teachers came up to him, said hi, gave him a hug, and told him:

"I want to be your friend."

In that moment, the worry fell from Elmer's face and was replaced with peace and satisfaction.

As much as we may want to keep to ourselves and fight our fears on our own, there's no avoiding the fact that **bravery comes easiest in community, and encouragement is found in connection.** Elmer, being a child, was sincere enough to admit that he was willing to walk that scary road back to third grade—he just needed someone to go with him.

And that is what UPH is all about: walking with children and youth in their difficult moments, embracing them as they are, and being present when they just need to know someone is there supporting them and cheering them on.

Thank you for continually walking with us and with children like Elmer.

Thank you!

We want to thank you once again for your unwavering support today and throughout the past 10 years. Your faithfulness and generosity inspire us to keep serving day after day. As we look to the future, you continue to be our greatest example of

#keepingthepromise!

