I have enjoyed working hand in hand with the local community and getting to at least somewhat know what the people are like.
— Joshua Baisch

Today we worked in a home with a young baby who was so sweet and well-behaved. Also, we got to braid some hair!
— Megan Baisch

I had a wonderful day – spending time in the homes of the people, learning that they are so grateful and willing to work hard. Such a beautiful country on our bus ride.

Going up and down the hills with bricks in my hand was a lot of hard work but coming back down was even better because I had 2 children on each side of me holding my hand and helping me through the slippery mud.
— Briana Alder

My favorite part of the expedition has been getting to know the sweet people of Mercedes Secanquin. The children are ever-present and so happy to help and walk and talk with us. We have little escorts walking to and from the homes. In the villagers’ homes I have loved the interactions I’ve had with the families, especially the mothers – watching the work they do – and even trying my hand at some tasks. Doing the laundry by hand is HARD! Looking forward to many more awesome experiences here and in the future with CHOICE!
— Karen Hamilton
Bonita Mercedes Senququin Guatemala! A great story just starting. It has been great to be in the homes and work with these determined and dedicated people forging lives of property ownership, self-reliance and community cohesion in their daily efforts. It will be great to witness the transformation of development over the coming years. Can only hope they can filter out the non-productive technologies and time consuming toys while utilizing the technological tools for efficiency and productive living. Viva Guatemala!

After Friday nights meeting I really started to notice how selfless these people are. Everyone is looking out for each other + they really do love each other. I noticed I need to make a change + be more selfless + love each other like they do.
- Briana Alder

This has been a wonderful experience! I love how friendly the people are and how willing they are to work. They are proud of their community. The kids are terrific, friendly and helpful. So grateful we were able to help build stoves that will improve their quality of life.
- Donna Alder
I can’t believe the week is almost over. It has absolutely flown by. Today I found out that Santi is an awesome guitar player. We had a jam session with some of the kids and exchanged songs from our cultures. It was so awesome to all sing songs together. The kids have definitely been one of my favorite parts of this experience. Even though we speak different languages, we have figured out how to communicate and have been having so much fun teaching each other words and secret handshakes. I love these kids so much. This experience has been life changing. The villagers have given more to me than I could ever give to them in one short week. I am determined to figure out how to do more of this. My life back home and all the things I’m involved in suddenly seem a little pointless. I want to travel to more places and help people/experience more cultures over the next few years. CHOICE IS RAD SAUCE!!! GUATEMALA IS USEZ DOE?? UULUS?? UUUULUS!!!!

This has been the coolest and more meaningful trip I’ve ever taken. I’m putting my stuff in storage as soon as I get home.

Will e-mail my thoughts from this fantastic experience from home.
Peter is the BEST!!
- Meredith Hamilton

A Tamale!
Because we made them and had a ball.
- Megan Baisch
Hard to believe the year is ending. Exactly one year ago, Karen + I were with Choice in Nepal leaving a bit of our hearts in the school foundation and the people there. It’s happening again here in Guatemala...

A true blessing to serve, be with, learn about and absorb life here in the village. Upon return, predictably, the question will be asked, “Was it life changing?” I have contemplated this many times and believe it is not life changing but life altering. A different perspective, a greater depth of gratitude and an increased desire to give and to share, in a properly balanced fashion, all I have been blessed with.

Thank you Choice for letting me partake.

- Jeff H.

P.S. - Peter was perfect for our group.
This week has been amazing! Serving people is always a great thing to do because even though you are helping them, you get happiness in return. I have also learned so much about these wonderful people. They are amazing! The kids are amazing! Everyone is amazing! I will remember this trip for the rest of my life and treasure it! Thank you Choice!

One of the best things we saw during the expedition was the work being done at the training center, Sikabe. It was exciting to see the opportunities that youth in the area will have to learn practical skills - electrician, mason, cook, etc. Our expedition directly benefited from the center because one of the masons that helped us build stoves, Arturo, is a graduate of Sikabe.

The facility itself is impressive - dorm rooms for the students, kitchen, hot showers, etc. It provides students a place to stay so they don’t have to travel hours each day. However, the cost to hire instructors, to pay for materials, and to eat has to be paid by the students. Many of the families don’t have the money to pay for these things. I hope CHOICE & the communities in the area can figure out a way to help these students with their expenses while they are receiving this valuable training.

- Nate Checketts
- West Jordan, Utah
This expedition has truly been life-changing. The people of Mercedes Secarquin are absolutely AMAZING! The people there are so welcoming and kind. They have taught me a lot about how to be humble and working together. But most of all, these people are happy! I came on this expedition expecting to be working to end poverty. But what even is poverty? I thought I was coming to improve their lives by giving them material things. But instead I walked and realized how much poverty WE have. Being here for a week working alongside these perfectly content people benefitted me more than them I think. At home we tend to get caught up in a lot of our material things. These people have so little that they have focus on the best things in life. It’s truly been a lesson to me to change the way I live to make the world around me a better place.

- Brian Checketts

Poverty Poor

- Lacking
- Stressed
- No money
- Struggling
- No basic necessities
- Hungry
- Homeless

Poverty Rich

- Unhappy
- Poor in spirit
- Hard to get to know people
- Lacking spirituality
- Trapped
- No meaning/purpose
- No gratitude
- Focused on what you don’t have
- Nothing good enough

- Have family
- Surrounded by family
- Freedom
- Focus of people
- Community
- Togetherness
- Content - w/ what we have
- Easy to connect
- Happier
- open

Wealth of Poor

- BMW
- Excess
- Waste
- Ego
- Rio Dulce
- Focus on status
- Materialism
- Comparing
- Judging
- Isolated by things
- Technology
- Internet
- Too many connect
- overstimulation

Wealth of Rich
About CHOICE
Proven methods. Over 34 years of impact.


CHOICE Humanitarian is a non-profit leadership organization that ends extreme poverty in rural villages around the world. Strong local leadership means communities can develop their own vision out of poverty. Our holistic approach integrates 5 core areas through a learn-by-doing model in economic development, health, education, environment, and culture preservation.

University professor Dr. James B. Mayfield co-founded CHOICE in 1982. With nearly forty years experience in international development, he plays a key role in defining and developing CHOICE’s unique approach to ending poverty.

What makes CHOICE different?

Village Driven
No handouts. All projects are village identified and village driven, using local resources. We use simple and appropriate technologies. When repairs and problems arise, villagers have the knowledge and skills to solve them. Our native in-country staff provide the magic of the CHOICE model. These experts have insider knowledge and are sensitive to local culture. As locals themselves, they can overcome obstacles outside leadership generally encounter.

Leverage
We multiply donations. We turn your $1 into $5. The village contributes labor and resources. The local government and partner organizations contribute additional funds, materials, training and skills. Such investments culminate in extreme efficiency and link communities to all available resources. Your dollars do more with us.

Local leadership
People in poverty are driven to change their circumstances. Oftentimes they lack the tools and resources to do so. CHOICE has the tools, resources and knowledge to walk an entire village through the process of becoming self-reliant. By incorporating principles of good governance and transparency, locally elected leaders are trained in project management and community mobilization, ready to execute on any poverty alleviation project. skills to solve them.