

Unsettled

The Micah Project Summer 2014 Letter

"In this world you will have trouble.

But take heart! I have overcome the world."

- John 16:33

We have never, ever taken a kid by force into the Micah Project. In our fourteen years of ministry, we have seen many broken kids on the streets of Tegucigalpa and have felt an urgent desire to rescue them. There is a process though, often a slow and painful one, in which these children have to want to leave the streets as much as we want them to. If we try to rush that process, they inevitably end up back on the streets. It's a terrible thing to get to know and love a kid on the streets, to visit him several times a week, to get to know his personality, to begin to see the child of God behind the brokenness--only to leave him each time in his misery because he just isn't ready to say "yes" to Micah.

Earlier this year, we were so desperate to help ten-year-old Noé that we actually discussed the possibility of staging a "holy kidnapping" and removing him from the streets by force. Noé was the most difficult case that we have ever encountered on the streets of Tegucigalpa. Pronounced "no WAY", his name described his condition pretty well: after so many years on the streets and on yellow glue, there was simply no way that he would ever find a path to healing.



Noé takes a quick nap on Stephen's shoulders in the downtown market of Tegucigalpa

It's hard to describe how completely his personality disappeared in the three years we had known him. In 2012, he would come to our Friday night soccer outreach and play with the best of them, but by mid-2013, he was already a different kid. One Saturday in April of last year, after taking a few of the street kids to a park, he and his little buddy Edward decided that they wanted to stay at the Micah House that night. When we pulled up to our old house, both of them immediately went in and fell asleep. Edward never left the Micah Project after that day, leaving the streets behind for good. Noé however, woke up in the morning and demanded to leave. Our boys and staff did everything they could to convince him to stay, but he would hear nothing of it. Out the door he went, and since our old house was just a short walk from the outdoor market, he almost certainly had a glue bottle in his mouth minutes later.

This last year on the streets has had horrific consequences in Noé's life. I would describe his daily state as nearly catatonic; he was there, but not really there. We would continue to take him and a few other street boys to a park a couple times a month, but Noé became so palsied that he could barely get in and out of the pool; could no longer catch or kick a soccer ball. Often, he would fall into a sleep so profound in our van that we were unable to wake him up,

and he would never get in the pool at all. Then, he stopped coming to the pool altogether. When our van pulled up by his alleyway, he refused to get in, refused to give up his bottle of yellow glue even for two hours. It seemed that there was no way that this little child would ever leave the streets.

One of the things that I most love about serving with the Micah Project though, is that, so often, when we reach that point where we throw up our hands in defeat and sigh “no way”, our Heavenly Father uses our weakness to show us the glory of “His way”. When we were completely out of ideas on how to help him, when we had pretty much lost all hope in ever getting him off the streets, I truly believe that the Lord reached into the deep, dark recesses of Noé’s lost soul and whispered, “it’s time.”

In early April of this year, we were finally able to get Noé to go out to the pool with us again. After a couple hours of swimming, we came by the Micah House for a bit before taking the kids back downtown. Our street minister Stephen Kusmer had been talking to him, once again, about staying at Micah. This time, incredibly, Noé didn’t say no right away. He stayed through dinner, played soccer with the boys all evening, and tucked his tiny frame into one of our new beds that night. He spent the next morning happily romping around our open spaces here at Micah 2.0. And every single night for the last two months, we have had a moment of pure joy as Noé tucks himself into bed one more time, having made it through another day away from the streets! Noé has finally become a Micah boy.



Stephen tries to talk to a highly-intoxicated Noé



Noé and Hector enjoy the swimming pool at Micah in Noé’s first weeks as a Micah boy

A question I often get now that we have lived out at Micah 2.0 for half a year is if we are feeling settled in. And honestly, it’s tempting in a setting as serene and lovely as Micah 2.0 to kick back a little bit, to be a little more passive in our ministry and enjoy what the Lord has given us. It’d be nice to be able to sit on the front porch and enjoy the mountain breezes while the boys run off their energy on our soccer field. We’ve worked hard to get where we are, maybe it is time to settle a little!

As I have talked with my fellow missionaries, though, I have found that we are of one mind in thinking almost exactly the opposite: we have been unsettled by a renewed urgency to take up the fight on behalf of these boys! As a team, we have, more than ever, a sense that we need to engage the forces of evil that would keep these kids on the streets with a sense of authority and an expectation of victory. Far from going into neutral, we see this amazing new facility as a powerful tool that the Lord has given us to get “unreachable” kids like Noé off the streets for good.

Every single day that Noé has lived in the Micah House has been a delicate balancing act, and has required all of the creativity, patience and love the Micah family can pour out to him. Going off the yellow glue “cold turkey” has been hard for him; his body and brain scream out for those deadly fumes that had become so precious to him. He has frequent flashes of anger and paranoia, and if we do not have someone posted with him every waking moment of his week, he will make a run for our

gate. I guess it's a mixed blessing that his motor skills are still somewhat impaired, because when he does try to run away, there is always someone who is faster than him that can catch up to him, talk with him and love him back into the house.

Though every day of Noé's time at Micah has been a battle between life and death, we are finally beginning to see the little boy reappear. We had a moment of panic a couple of weeks ago when we couldn't find him anywhere. We were about to send someone out in a car to see if he had escaped, when we saw him in the distance, walking near the perimeter wall of the property. He had been trying to catch an iguana and it had led him on a chase through the back parts of our land! In fact, iguana-chasing has become his new favorite pastime.

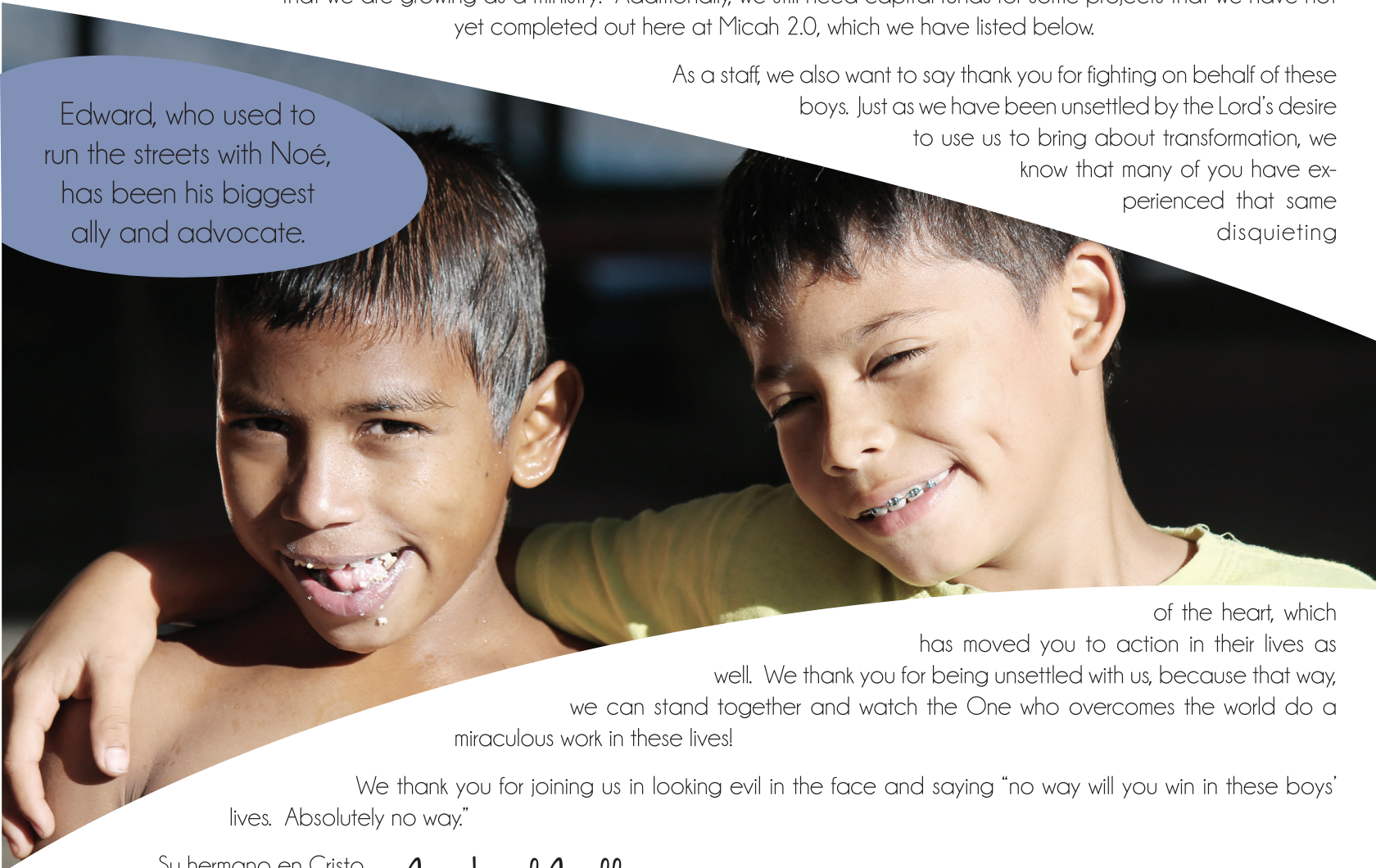
If you were to ask any of our staff members if it is just too hard to take a kid like Noé off the streets, I think each one of them would say "yes". It's way too hard. But that is exactly what we are here for: we don't shrink away from hard! We are so thankful and proud of the other boys as well, who have been loving and faithful to Noé through thick and thin. (Part of that paranoia that I mentioned can cause Noé to accuse the guys of all sorts of crimes against him; they have gotten really good at just smiling and hugging him tight when he gets that way!).

Are we settled out here at Micah 2.0? No way! There is still a long journey ahead for the sixteen boys who currently call the Micah House home and many of them are still overcoming the trauma of street life. They need deep care and intensive, personal discipleship from our staff. There are boys that we know and love who are still on the streets and have not yet made the decision to join us: Saul, Junior, Ibrahim, Cristian, and Oscar, to name a few. There are older teens as well, who have been mentored by Stephen on the streets for two years, and who are anxiously waiting for us to open our program for older guys in the old Micah House next year.

There is much work to do as the Lord continues to use the Micah Project to transform these troubled lives in His image. And there are several ways that you can join the One who is overcoming the world to do just that! First, you can PRAY! Pray for healing and growth for our boys; pray for strength, endurance, unity and courage for our staff. Secondly, you can COME! The Micah Project is growing and we need more missionaries to come alongside us to fight on behalf of these boys. We promise that it will be the hardest and most blessed thing you have ever done. Finally, you can GIVE! We always need funding for our daily operations, and that is especially true now that we are growing as a ministry! Additionally, we still need capital funds for some projects that we have not yet completed out here at Micah 2.0, which we have listed below.

As a staff, we also want to say thank you for fighting on behalf of these boys. Just as we have been unsettled by the Lord's desire to use us to bring about transformation, we know that many of you have experienced that same disquieting

Edward, who used to run the streets with Noé, has been his biggest ally and advocate.



of the heart, which has moved you to action in their lives as well. We thank you for being unsettled with us, because that way, we can stand together and watch the One who overcomes the world do a miraculous work in these lives!

We thank you for joining us in looking evil in the face and saying "no way will you win in these boys' lives. Absolutely no way."

Su hermano en Cristo,

Michael Miller

Micah 2.0 is feeling more like home day-by-day as we culminate different aspects of the project. While the vast majority of the project is already complete, there are still a few things left to finish...

This year:

1. Complete the perimeter wall and entrance gate (with the help of our mission teams!).
2. Finish the electrical grid.
2. Build and furnish a cabin for John, Becca, Nico and Emmy Bell, who will be returning in early 2015.
4. Install street lamps and other safety lighting around property.
5. Install a water purification system for our well water.
6. Continue to develop landscaping and gardens.
7. Purchase new project vehicles.

Future:

1. Improve the entrance road and parking area.
2. Prepare old Micah House for new phase of ministry with older street boys.
3. Make sewage system improvements.
4. Complete athletic fields & facilities.
5. Build the technical school & educational center.
6. Build storage spaces behind the Micah house and underneath cabins.
7. Build a house to lodge visitors.



www.micahprojecthonduras.org