

Into a Spacious Place

The Micah Project Summer 2013 Letter

He reached down from on high and took hold of me; he drew me out of deep waters.

Psalm 18:16

It was almost midnight on Saturday when we passed a boy named Junior on the streets of downtown Tegucigalpa. The two Micah vans were caravanning through the mostly deserted city on their way back from a late night soccer tournament at a field across town. Though downtown Tegucigalpa shuts down after dark so that people can flee to the safety of their homes, I'm sure that the few late-night denizens still out there could have heard us coming from several blocks away. Sweaty, raucous, contentedly-tired laughter bounced off the darkened façades of the buildings as we wound our way back to the Micah House.

Junior was on a street corner just a couple of blocks from the main cathedral that sits in the city center when we passed him that night. He had found a deflated soccer



Junior takes a nap on the sidewalk

Megan visits with Junior on the streets in downtown Tegucigalpa



ball and was trying to see how many times he could kick it before it hit the ground, all the while sucking on a plastic bottle filled with mind-altering yellow glue. When the Micah vans zoomed by his corner he gave us a quick, glassy-eyed wave before returning to his ball and bottle. His tiny, 11-year-old frame quickly faded in our rear-view mirror as the vans chugged up the hill and pulled up to the Micah House. Upon arrival, the boys scattered to their rooms, dropped onto their beds, and fell into that hard, undisturbed sleep of those that have played and laughed with abandon during a fully-charged day.

Junior could just as easily have been one of those boys packed into our vans that night. We have gotten to know him well over the last couple of years through our street ministry. Since March, he has joined us every week in a new initiative in

Junior joyfully heads down the slide into the pool below during our Thursday outreach



which, every Thursday, we take a few street kids with the rest of the Micah boys to a park outside Tegucigalpa. Junior has come faithfully every Thursday since we began, handing over his glue bottle before hopping into the van. He spends three happy hours swimming, playing soccer and eating snacks from the poolside store, indistinguishable from the rest of the Micah boys that are joyfully doing the same.

We have used those Thursdays at the park as a way for the street boys to get to see the Micah Project for what it really is... to break down walls of distrust that they build around themselves in order to keep from getting hurt by the outside world. We take them with us to show them that the Micah Project is a group of boys that are just like them—only happier because they are no longer on the streets. Two brand new Micah boys, Edward and Ismael, recently joined the Micah Project after years of being a part of our street ministry thanks in part to these times at the pool with the Micah family!

Junior, though, always begins to tense up as we finish our time at the park and prepare to return downtown. He grows quiet as he dresses in his ragged clothes, and can barely wait to jump out of the van and head back to the streets once we are back downtown. Though he has a standing invitation to join the Micah Project—and though he seems genuinely happy when he is around us—he always firmly refuses our pleas to get him to stay.

*He rescued me from my powerful enemy,
from my foes, who were too strong for me.
Psalm 18:17*

Yony, Junior and Miguelito get ready to jump into the pool

Junior's biggest enemy, who the gospels call "the father of lies," has deceived him into thinking that bondage is freedom and freedom is bondage. He's got it all backwards: he thinks that standing on a street corner at midnight huffing yellow glue is the ultimate freedom. He thinks that the other boys have given up their freedom by joining Micah—*why would you place yourself under someone else's authority when you can be free on the streets?* He is only eleven, and he's got it all backwards.

*He brought me out into a spacious place;
He rescued me because he delighted in me.
(Psalm 18:19)*



Jose Luis chases Raul through the downpour



Over the last few months, we have been taking the Micah boys out to Micah 2.0, our future home in the foothills outside of Tegucigalpa, at least once a week after classes. We ask them to put in a few hours of work on their new home, but the real reason we go out there is so that they can begin to dream about what life will be like once we are living on these lush, rolling acres. On one of those workdays recently, we got caught in a tropical rainstorm, the kind that blows up almost every afternoon during the monsoonal rainy season in Honduras. We adults scrambled for cover under the newly finished roof of the new Micah House, but the boys had other ideas. Torrential rain only means MORE FUN!!! They began a game of tag that quickly spread over the entire, soggy property and predictably ended in a muddy heap of happy bodies!

Seeing the boys run and play on our spacious new land, watching them plant flowers and sow vegetable seeds in our new garden, hearing them happily chatter about which of the new bedrooms will be theirs—all of these are signs to me. They are but physical reminders of the greatest work that the Lord does through the Micah Project—drawing the boys into His wide-open, loving arms—into the only Place where true freedom exists.

In my mind, I can envision how it will be a few months from now, when we have moved out to Micah 2.0 permanently. I see the 15 current Micah boys spending most of their free time outside; maybe we will have to get a big bell to ring to call them into dinner from all the diverse points on our land! But that's not all I see. I also see Junior out there as well, running and playing with the guys and working up a huge appetite for that dinner. I see Noé, Axel, Oscar... all of whom are still on the streets...kicking a soccer ball, climbing a tree or flying a kite with the other Micah boys. They will not have it backwards any more: they will have figured out what true freedom means and they will be living it to the hilt at Micah 2.0.

They will understand for the first time that they are the Lord's delight.

Sometimes when I tell these stories about the lives of street kids, I fear that it might seem very, very far away from you... removed from your own reality. I want you to know that it is not. When you pray for Junior, you are standing right there on the street corner with him, slowly chipping away at the chains that keep him on the street. When he finally decides to join the Micah Project, you will be able to say, "The Lord has answered my prayers for Junior, and has delivered him from a powerful enemy."

The Lord has called us to dream big on behalf of the street children of Honduras. Micah 2.0 is the platform on which those dreams will take flight, and as of June 30th, you have helped us raise **\$991,262** to make that dream a reality! Now, we ask that you prayerfully consider investing in these last stages of Micah 2.0, so that our talented staff can move out there soon and begin to use that beautiful space to change lives. The summer months are also an important time for the Micah Project to raise operational funds, funds that we use to nurture, educate and inspire this growing group of boys! When you give your financial resources to the Micah Project, you are providing wide-open spaces on which Junior and our other boys can discover just how much their Heavenly Father delights in them. Your generosity creates real, powerful transformation in so many lives!

If you have the opportunity, we would love for you to come and see this transformation with your own eyes! Whether you come for the Micah 2.0 inauguration on August 17th, or for our yearly graduation celebration in November, or with a group from your church... when you walk the streets where our boys once lived, and when you see them in the wide-open spaces where they will soon live, you will understand SO powerfully how the Lord completely transforms lives... through you!

Thank you for being beacons of the Lord's delight in each of these young lives!

Su hermano en Cristo,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michael S. Miller".

Michael Miller





Michael smiles with Benllamin and Junior in Tegucigalpa's central park

Miguelito fills his shirt with ammunition during a water balloon fight at Micah 2.0



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