



GLOBAL SHORE

OPPORTUNITIES

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*Paola (left) and
classmates*



*Paola started her schooling at
our smaller campus in town,
and finished at our new high
school up the hill*



*Paola at the zoo,
Grade 4*

A GIFT THAT LASTS A LIFETIME

Paola Alvarez enrolled in our school in Junior Kindergarten, walking across the main road with her mother every day to attend classes at the new Christian school in El Tizate. Thirteen years later, Paola still walks across the road to attend our school. Now, the new building is further up the hill, our school population has grown ten times and Paola is preparing to graduate from our high school, a high academic achiever with fluent English and a strong relationship with God. Paola's received the gift of an education that will last the rest of her life, but this journey to arrive at graduation wasn't easy for Paola.

DAILY BATTLES

Since she started at our school, Paola was quiet and shy. Our staff who have been with us since the very beginning remember her as "precious" and still call her "Paolita" (little Paola). Surrounded by an environment of worship and prayer, in Grade 4 she started to develop a personal relationship with God. Manuel, her Grade 4 teacher, invited her to a Bible study he hosted with his wife, Haydee.

"I have no idea why my dad let me go," Paola said. "My dad didn't really let us go out. But I started to go to the group. I got to know them and their family better, and started to have a relationship with God."

Paola's involvement in the church continued. With the encouragement of Manuel and Haydee, she began to pray for her sister, fasting and inviting her to church.

Our school pastor Jervin shared with us: “I remember so often she would be receiving from God so that she would be able to give to her family. She came and told me about different battles: people making fun of her, or her dad, who was an alcoholic... She grew up in the midst of that.” It was an incredibly difficult environment for Paola.

“When she started following God, her siblings made it almost impossible for her. And her mom as well. It was a really difficult persecution.”

But over time, Paola’s sister eventually agreed to go to cell group, and she came to church too. She started to grow in her relationship with God as well. “My sister and I had a really hard time with my mom. I come from a very Catholic family, and my mom wouldn’t let us go to church. She’d say: ‘You are Catholic, and you will stay Catholic.’”

GOD MY REFUGE

As her faith grew, Paola continued her studies, and applied herself in her English classes. She continued to attend church and a small group. However, when Paola was in Grade 9, her father passed away. “He had an alcohol addiction, and he died. Before he died, he became close to Manuel and Haydee and confided in them. He told them that they needed to continue taking care of me.”

Manuel remembers this time vividly. “He asked me to take care of his family, and to teach them the ways of God. He passed away a little while later and he left me this great responsibility. It certainly wasn’t easy, but it formed a really special bond between us.”



Alaina and Paola in English class, January 2018



Paola is one of our strongest English students; here she is translating for the Maranatha Christian Academy team in February 2019

“So, I was under [Manuel and Haydee’s] care — and my mom’s, of course,” Paola shared. “They started to love me and my sister even more. Our relationship grew stronger, and they started to love us like their own daughters.”

“I loved my dad. When he died, I thought that I was going to be depressed, that I was going to be sad forever. I felt like I had to be strong for my mom and my sister. I hadn’t told anyone I felt that way, but I was drowning in my sadness. In devotions one day, though, Profe Samuel came up to me, and told me that God needed to be my refuge. Only God knew what I was going through, he told me, and I needed to let the sadness go from my heart. That was when I understood that God works through the teachers.”

Through her relationship with God, her mother, Manuel, Haydee and other teachers at the school, Paola had the support she needed to weather this storm. She knew that there were other choices she could make, and knew another girl whose father passed away, who had turned to drugs. “I can say with confidence that God was my refuge. I didn’t try to escape by means of drugs or people. I took refuge in Christ.”

A FIGHTER AND A CONQUEROR

Over the three years since the loss of her father, Paola has seen a complete transformation in her family. “My sister and family know God now too. My aunt and my mom go to church; my mom is even serving in the church together with me! It was a huge change. Only God could do that.”

After more than twelve years in our school, Jervin describes her as a Deborah. “She’s a really strong woman, a fighter and a conqueror. She loves God. She’s really powerful and set in her goals.”

“After graduation,” Paola shared, “I first want to find a job so I can go to university. I want to study International Relations, or translation. I want to work, support my mom, and save to be able to go to Canada. Ever since I can remember, it’s been my dream to go to Canada. And I know I’m going to achieve it.”

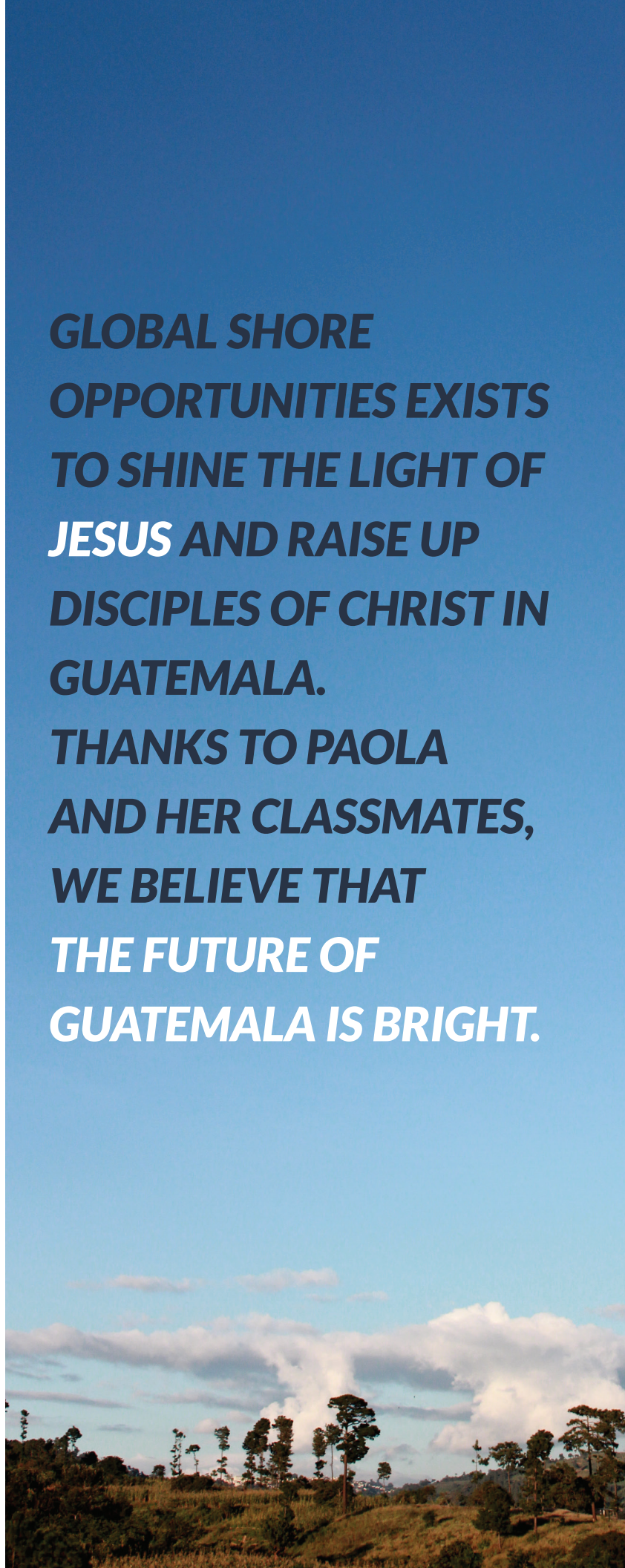


Manuel and Paola, August 2019

“Everything I have, I owe to God. And the relationship that I have with God, I owe that to this school. I’m really grateful. I’m here today because God has raised me up, and because He brought me here. It’s been a great blessing for me, and I know that God is going to continue providing for this school. I’m sure that God’s bringing this school to great things.”

Paola and nineteen other students will walk across the stage this November, graduating from our school. It’s our prayer that as they go out, the foundation that was established at our school will sustain them throughout the years to come.

**GLOBAL SHORE
OPPORTUNITIES EXISTS
TO SHINE THE LIGHT OF
JESUS AND RAISE UP
DISCIPLES OF CHRIST IN
GUATEMALA.
THANKS TO PAOLA
AND HER CLASSMATES,
WE BELIEVE THAT
THE FUTURE OF
GUATEMALA IS BRIGHT.**



a gift that lasts a lifetime



Education is the gift that keeps on giving. At Global Shore, we've seen the lifelong impact of education. We've seen lives like Paola's completely transformed. The gift of education allows these students to receive quality education and encounter the living God in a way that will define their lives forever.

We believe in finishing well each year and preparing financially for the season ahead. **This year we are working to raise \$75,000** which includes the funds we need to continue providing quality Christian education and the capital necessary to expand our elementary school offerings.

With this amount, we're able to open a new Grade 9 classroom, creating opportunities for more middle school students to attend our school. We can con-

struct a new, larger library, allowing for more activity space and more books. We're going to create a needed elementary school staff room, promoting unity amongst our staff, and strategically relocate our stationary store, providing ongoing income to our ministry.

This ambitious plan allows us to carry out the vision the Lord has given us for the lives of our students. Together, we can give back to these students, these teachers and this school, giving our "yes," allowing God to move in a powerful way.

Will you give a gift that lasts a lifetime? Will you support this crucial work? Help us make 2020 our best year yet, because we believe the best is still to come for Global Shore Opportunities.



GLOBALSHORE

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