

This email is distributed to a personal list and should not be forwarded or made public in any way. Such action could place the lives and personal security of my team and our women at undue risk.



Starting a New Chapter

Hola friends and family. Thank you for joining us in this vision and mission to impact lives for Christ!

We are grateful for the honor it is to work full time in this ministry with these special women and men with your support. **We want to take a moment to update you on the latest happenings in the ministry and express our heartfelt gratitude for your ongoing support.**



Introducing Leah Anastasia Mendez Bissett

Our sweet baby girl was born to us on June 17 at 11:52AM in San José, Costa Rica. An answer to many prayers, her birth went smoothly and both mama and baby are healthy. We have enjoyed the first 3 months with Leah, watching her grow, learn and become more active and alert every day. We are so blessed and privileged to be mom and dad to our baby girl and can't wait to watch her grow. Emanuel had one month of paternity leave and has been back at Casa Esperanza for two months now. Susie's last day of maternity leave is Monday the 15th and will be returning to ministry work on Tuesday the 16th.

Family & Friends

The last three months have been filled with lots of beautiful moments introducing Leah to our family and friends. Susie's dad flew down for an incredible visit in August to meet Leah. Emanuel's parents have loved spending time at the house with us. We are also so grateful to our many friends, ministry and church communities for their support as we navigated the newborn and postpartum phase.



Here are some updates on what's been going on in Casa Esperanza so far in 2025:



Sewing Class

This year we have had five women continue in advanced sewing class, producing skirts, tote bags and aprons. We have also received a handful of new students that start their journey by practicing straight lines, then curvy and zigzag lines on paper. Once they've passed that unit, they move on to practice pieces of cloth. From there, they start to learn how to use patterns, cut and measure fabric, and assembly. We are all very proud of their accomplishments, talents and perseverance with learning the trade. After many hours of dedication, they are able to produce a beautiful product to be sold.

Discipleship Bible Study

This year, Susie and Emanuel started a small group Bible Study with three of our center's women who have shown leadership. Our goal has been to create a safe space to dive into the Word, ask the hard questions, and challenge them as leaders in the community. Emanuel has continued the study while Susie has been on maternity leave. Because the women have not had much experience diving into the Scripture and their highest education level is 6th grade, we have started with teaching them *how* to read and understand the text. Through this, we have seen God transforming their hearts to desire deeper understanding of His Word.



Social Work

In Costa Rica, all university students must complete 150 hours of community service in a space related to their area of study. Every quarter we receive around 10 social work students on Saturdays that serve our women. So while the head social worker meets 1:1 with the women to go over their case and prepare their letters and reports, the students carry out activities, workshops and crafts for the women. They focus on important life topics, such as violence, women's health, legal rights, and emotions. We are so grateful for their support.

Emotional Intelligence

Monday mornings in Casa Esperanza are for Social Emotional Learning. For women facing prostitution or homelessness, daily life can be overwhelming — filled with fear, anger, shame, and survival pressure. Teaching emotional intelligence gives them tools to understand and manage these feelings, build self-worth, and set healthy boundaries. It's more than “managing emotions” — it's helping women rediscover their identity and see new possibilities for their lives. Emanuel has discovered that he really enjoys and has a gift for teaching in this setting because he loves empowering the women with tools and speaking to them about their incredible value in this world.





Looking Ahead

Looking ahead, Susie is excited to return to work and discover the dynamics of a working mom. We will split the work week up, so that Emanuel will stay home with baby Leah while Susie is at Casa Esperanza and vice versa. Susie will continue back with Free The Girls projects with the women: building a store, starting a business, and selling bras at markets. English class will resume for a quick two month quarter at the end of the year. Emanuel will continue with Bible Study and Social-Emotional Learning workshops.

Check out our Instagram account and stay updated on the goings-on in Casa Esperanza!



Instagram

All of the services and activities that we offer at Casa Esperanza are made possible by the generous donations of our donors. We are incredibly grateful for every financial gift that we receive. If you would like to send a one-time or recurring gift to support the operating costs of Casa Esperanza, [please click this link.](#)

Story Highlight

On Wednesday in Casa Esperanza the women come in to share a meal and select 2-3 pieces of clothing from our donations. Wednesdays are hands down the busiest day of our week with 40-50 women coming through and we wouldn't be able to do it without the help of our two Casa Esperanza leaders, Kerry and Grettel! Both women worked in the Red Zone for years. But now, they spend hours of their week preparing the clothing and organizing the closet for Wednesday. During the activity, Kerry and Grettel direct the women to ensure everyone is getting equal amounts of time and clothing. We are so thankful to have such amazing mentors for the women we serve here in Casa Esperanza!



Urgent Ask

As many of you know, I've been serving as a missionary in Costa Rica for the past six years, and it's been such a joy to see lives touched and transformed for Christ's glory. In order to continue this work full-time with our new growing family, we need to increase our budget. I'm currently seeking an **additional \$683 in monthly support**. Would you prayerfully consider becoming a part of our support team? *Every gift - big or small - makes a real difference in helping us reach our monthly budget goal.*



Thank you for all your support!

If you'd like to financially support our family with a single or monthly gift, you can do that in the link below to receive a tax-deductible receipt.

Make sure the donation details say: "Work of Bissett, Susie [30US3783]"

GIVE HERE

We are so grateful for your prayers and support! It is an honor and joy to serve the Lord and share how He is advancing the gospel through this ministry.

IN HIM WHO LOVED FIRST,
Susie Bissett Méndez & Emanuel Méndez Mondragón

Prayer Requests

We covet your prayers. The realities of fighting sex-trafficking and exploitation on the front lines involves spiritual warfare and challenges. We would LOVE prayer for:

- **Legal Documents:** Pray that Costa Rica gives Susie her Residency this year! We have completed all the steps and are awaiting their response. Pray for Emanuel's U.S. visa possibilities: we waited 18 months for his interview in August just to be denied; we will need wisdom in pursuing other options to get him to visit the U.S.
- **New Parents:** Pray for us as we enter this new chapter of our lives as working new parents. Pray for wisdom, patience and love for Leah, each other, and our ministry.
- **Funding:** Pray for our last \$775 to be fundraised so we can have healthy work-life balance with our newborn at home.
- **Disciple-Making:** Pray for open hearts, minds and ears of the women with whom we will be discipling starting in April. Pray that the Lord brings them up to be leaders in the community for His Kingdom.
- Pray for **resources and local connections** to provide opportunities for our women to get out of prostitution, to restore and to find sustainable work.
- Pray for the **Free the Girls Program:** pray for successful reintegration and empowerment for the brave women who are seeking financial and emotional freedom. Pray for more women to take this next step in their transformation process.