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Let Freedom Ring

This month the USA celebrated Independence Day and freedom. **Freedom.** It's a word we hear often, but true freedom is much deeper than simply changing our circumstances. As Paul reminds us in Galatians 5:1, "It is for freedom that Christ has set us free." Each day in the Red Light District, we meet women who are longing for that kind of freedom—freedom from exploitation, addiction, shame, fear, and hopelessness. Through every shared meal, listening ear, counseling session, job skills class, and conversation about Jesus, we are reminded that lasting freedom begins with Christ. Thank you for partnering with us as we walk alongside these women, believing that **God is still restoring lives, renewing hope, and setting hearts free.**

"It is for FREEDOM Christ has set us free." Galatians 5:1

A Summer of Travels and Good News

In May Susie traveled with Leah on her first trip to Colorado to meet family and friends. Leah got to meet her cousins and we got to we loved getting to see Leah romping around my old stomping grounds and meeting the people I love. I also got to share about the ministry with a couple churches and God is bringing some cool new people together for His Kingdom work.

In June we were blessed with the opportunity to travel all together to Ecuador for a 5 day missions conference with One Collective. There was space for fun, rediscovering mission and vision, and encouraging each other as missionaries in the field.

During the conference, we were reminded why we do what we're doing with the women in Casa Esperanza and that we're not alone in this battle (when it can sometimes feel like that when you're on the ground on the front lines).

After the conference, our family extended our stay another 10 days to explore Ecuador. It was our first family trip and we enjoyed being able to explore God's creation and different cultures. We got to explore the capital Quito, the Equatorial monument at the "center of the world", Cotopaxi Volcano, and a town built on a river in a valley called Baños de Agua Santa. Ecuador was a beautiful country and we made many beautiful memories as a family there.

We had an extra special surprise in the middle of the trip while in Quito when Susie started feeling really nauseous and decided to take a pregnancy test... turns out... we're pregnant! We waited until we got back to Costa Rica to confirm at the doctor appointment, and sure enough, there's a baby!

Baby Mendez #2 is due February 5th, 2027.

While in Ecuador, we also celebrated **Leah's first birthday!** Our little girl is already one and we can't believe it. We got back to Costa Rica and celebrated with our friends and family here with a Lord of the Rings themed party for Leah: "One Birthday to Rule Them All".





Here are some of the privileges we've been entrusted with:



Sewing Class

This month, I've been working on a new initiative with two of the women in sewing class, we'll call them MR and AY for the purpose of this newsletter. MR and AY are both in the advanced sewing class and in Free The Girls empowerment program. Both women want to start their own sewing business soon. I've been working closely with these two women and the sewing teacher to develop a strategic Individual Development Plan that targets their strengths and areas for growth to work on concrete steps towards being able to start their own businesses. With MR, for example, we've identified that she needs to polish the quality of her work and she needs to hone the skill of self-checking her work for that quality. These are just some of the soft skills and technical skills that we can help them grow in so that they can start and grow a *thriving*

business.

Emotional Intelligence Workshops

Mondays are dedicated to workshops on emotional intelligence and health. We've started a curriculum for the remainder of the year with objectives of identifying emotions and equipping an "emotional tool box" to navigate our emotions. We've started off with "My Emotional Cup" activity which walked us through helping the women identifying what drains them and what fills them up, and how they act and react when their cup is empty vs. full. I like to take time to listen to them and have them process their ideas together, since often my examples are not necessarily relevant to their lives. For example, when I asked them "what empties your cup?", their immediate first answer was "when I'm hungry and haven't eaten in days". In my life, I'm privileged to say that I've never had to go days without eating, and therefore I never would have thought to process that and to put that the best way to fill your cup is to have a good meal. We processed that as a group and they were able to identify that when they are hungry and need food, they act out of anger and frustration, low energy and stress, which is not truly who they are but just a situation they're living through.



It's empowering to walk them through understanding themselves better and bringing grace and love into the hard, dark areas of their lives.



English Class

I love English class because it's become a small, safe group of women who know and trust each other, who all genuinely want to learn, which creates a wonderful learning environment in which we can really advance in English. We continue doing Bible Verse of the Day and this month I challenged them to memorize the week's verse and I offered a prize to anyone who could recite it in English to me. The first week they all forgot. Last week they remembered but didn't memorize it. We'll see this week if anyone dedicates the time to memorizing the verse. I was convicted at the Ecuador conference of having the Scripture written on my heart, and I wanted to extend that challenge to the women.

Apart from the verse of the day, we are studying jobs and careers vocabulary. We'll be learning how to say "I want" and "I dream" and "I work" along with the names of careers.



FREE THE GIRLS

In May, I did something new and I loved it. I made a house visit to one of the women in the program, MR. I realized that every time I meet with them, they are coming to Casa Esperanza or coming to a place I say. I felt like it was really important for me to go to them, to see their world and their lives. Being invited into someone's home is like being invited into a safe, intimate space. It was such a privilege to be invited into MR's home, share a meal, and have her make us coffee. She proudly showed me her home and what she's worked so hard to maintain for years. She proudly laid out the bras and swim suits that she has on hand right now to show me how hard she works and how much the products go to supporting her family. Part of my role with Free The Girls is the bras... but I'm discovering a large part of my role is also being their #1 cheerleader in all their efforts. I'm an advocate for them — listening to them, hearing their dreams, sharing in their plans, connecting them



with resources and people, and cheering them on at every step. Building deeper relationships is essential to my role as their advocate. As she walked me to my car under her umbrella, I felt so loved and realized that I have so much to learn from them and about the role I can play in their lives.

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.](#)

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



Praises & 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:

- **PRIASE: Legal Documents:** Susie is officially a Costa Rican Resident! I have all my paperwork and after 6 years, I can rest easy knowing I'm officially official.
- **PRAISE: New Baby:** We are having another baby! We are due Feb. 5 with baby number two.
- **REQUEST: New Parents:** Pray for us as we continue this new chapter of our lives as working parents. Pray for a healthy pregnancy and birth. Pray for wisdom, patience and love for Leah, new baby, each other, and our ministry.
- **REQUEST:** Pray for **resources and local connections** to provide opportunities for our women to get out of prostitution, to restore and to find sustainable work
- **REQUEST:** 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. Pray for program connections that further their progress in recovery.

For more specific prayer requests, please message me individually.

"Declare his glory among the nations, his wonders among all people."

- Psalm 96:3

For more information about the Hope House, check out the Face of Justice website by [clicking here](#).

For more information about Free The Girls, check out their website by [clicking here](#).

For more information about One Collective, check out their website by [clicking here](#).



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