
MISSION TO EL SALVADOR

REPORT BY DANIELLE SNYDER



2020 ANNUAL REPORT



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A LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

This year was, of course, different than any other year that I have experienced in El Salvador. Like everyone else around the globe, we found ourselves pivoting again and again to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. El Salvador was confronted with a political crisis, an economic crisis, and a health crisis all at the same time due to a strict pandemic response from the Salvadoran government, followed by a collapse in the health system. In the midst of the economic lockdown, El Salvador suffered heavy damage from back-to-back tropical storms, and was then hit with additional rain by two more storms late in the hurricane season.

In the midst of so many changes, we have continued to move forward with our work, adapting to the shifting circumstances, responding to the crises, and accompanying our clients in their own processes of growth.

We were able to open an emergency quarantine shelter for the homeless population during the strictest part of the quarantine at the Lighthouse Resource Center, and we moved our New Dawn Residential Program to a virtual model for several months. Throughout it all our clients have grown in faith as well as in physical and mental health.

As an organization, we have grown too and we are so grateful that we were able to strengthen our team and continue to minister to our clients in El Salvador throughout 2020. We thank you so much for your investment in our work this year, and we hope that as you read through our annual report you will join us in celebrating the victories that we have seen.

For Freedom,

JONATHAN SNYDER
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



IMPACTS FOR 2020 GROWTH

This year was nothing like we had planned, but we were still able to have an impact on our community in the face of a global pandemic and constantly changing circumstances. Here are some highlights from the 2020 impact that you have helped make possible in El Salvador:

We had 3 graduates from our New Dawn Residential Program

0 survivors of exploitation returned to the streets despite an economic crisis

11 clients have been sober since March

23 individual clients were in therapy this year

575 families received emergency relief following tropical storms in El Salvador

We have continued to employ our entire national team throughout the pandemic

35 clients have shown significant spiritual growth

72 people were housed in our emergency quarantine shelter during El Salvador's lockdown

6 clients stayed off of the streets because of our transitional housing initiative

OUR INITIATIVES

This year our initiatives were implemented in unique ways. Despite the changes, we were able to complete many of our objectives, as well as to add new initiatives to better serve our clients and community during moments of crisis. In 2020, our initiatives included:

- NEW DAWN
RESIDENTIAL PROGRAM
- LIGHTHOUSE RESOURCE
CENTER
- TEMPORARY
QUARANTINE SHELTER
- TRANSITIONAL HOUSING
- EMERGENCY RELIEF
- COMMUNITY OUTREACH
- SUBSTANCE ABUSE
PREVENTION





1. NEW DAWN RESIDENTIAL PROGRAM

This year our residential treatment program for youth ages 10-17 looked very different! When El Salvador went into a strict quarantine, all of the residents had to move back in with their families. It wasn't until October that the government gave us the green light to bring the boys back into the program in person.

Even though they were at home, the program didn't stop. Instead our staff quickly developed a virtual model to keep things structured. **Families were all given the same schedule to keep the boys in a routine, and therapies, workshops, and family meetings were all conducted mainly via cell phone video calls.** It was a challenge for everyone, but the boys came back into the program ready to continue their healing process. The following quote was shared by one of the residents as he expressed his gratitude upon returning:

"I'm grateful that God has cared for us all of this time and nothing bad has happened to any of us."

-New Dawn Resident

We were all grateful to move the residents back into the program, and we saw many successes in both the regular and virtual phases of New Dawn this year.

We saw a total of 3 boys graduate in 2020, with two completing the majority of the program virtually. We had a total of 6 residents in the program this year and we look forward to more graduations in 2021. It is truly amazing to see how miracles are happening in the lives of our New Dawn program participants!

2020 Program Overview:

Some of the residents' successes include:

- 3 finished the program and graduated
- 1 has worked to develop a clear life plan
- 1 went on to high school this year
- 2 completed exams to level up to their appropriate grades
- 2 have discovered talents for drawing that they didn't know they had
- all have made progress in their family relationships

Residents have also participated in the following classes this year:

- Art and Painting Class
- Auto Mechanics Workshop
- Graphic Design Class
- Carpentry Workshop
- Karate Class

Our New Dawn team of 8 worked hard to create virtual online spaces and ensure the residents didn't fall behind in their progression through the program.



Graduation ceremony with one of our New Dawn graduates this year!

Follow-Up Care for New Dawn Graduates:

Since we opened in 2017 we have had a total of 17 boys pass through the program with 12 graduating and several on track to graduate in 2021.

Those who graduate from the program have a much better chance of long-term healing as shown by our graduate success rate.

Among our graduates, 91% continue in recovery after the program.

Once they have graduated, they also continue in our follow-up care.

It's always an encouragement for current residents to see the graduates moving forward!

This year some of the highlights in the lives of our graduates include:

- **5 graduates are studying full-time**
- **5 graduates have full-time jobs**
- **2 graduates are volunteering with us at the Lighthouse Resource Center**

Seal of Best Practices

This year, we received a special acknowledgement from the National Anti-Drug Commission of El Salvador. They awarded us the *Sello de Buenas Practicas*. This is a certification showing that we are implementing best practices in the New Dawn Residential Program and demonstrating quality addiction treatment care for all of our residents and graduates.



2. LIGHTHOUSE RESOURCE CENTER

The Lighthouse Resource Center is our initiative to serve vulnerable adults in difficult situations including extreme poverty, exploitation, and addiction. We do this by offering resources like showers, Bible studies, meals, therapy, social support, recreation, art, work projects, and more. We started this year by serving approximately 75 clients per day until March. Once COVID-19 arrived in El Salvador, we needed to make adjustments. We suspended our operations from March through September, but continued working with clients in our emergency shelter.

On October 1, we resumed operations again on a modified schedule including health protocols, meals to go, and a limit to the number of clients inside our facility.

Since re-opening, there has been increased demand for services as the economy has been heavily hit due to the pandemic restrictions. We are serving approximately 50 meals to go each day. We are also utilizing garage space for socially distanced workshops, Bible studies, recreation, and therapy sessions. Our Lighthouse team of 7 staff members are working hard on all of these resources. Despite the challenges, we celebrate these successes:

- **ZERO women have returned to exploitative situations**
- **The quarantine shelter provided a fresh start for clients to work toward sobriety**
- **We have met many new faces due to the change in needs in our city**



Clients lining up outside our doors to receive "lunch to go."



Workshop for female clients to discuss violence prevention and healing.

2020 Program Overview:

1

GRADUATED FROM
A BAKERY COURSE

3,450

LUNCHES
SERVED

5

CLIENTS COMPLETED
AN ELECTRIC TOOL
REPAIR WORKSHOP

6

CLIENTS IN INDIVIDUAL
ADDICTION THERAPY

14

INVOLVED IN
FREE THE GIRLS
PROJECT

12

CLIENTS IN INDIVIDUAL
THERAPY

312

MEN'S BIBLE STUDY
ATTENDANCE

5

CLIENTS COMPLETED
AN AUTO- MECHANIC
WORKSHOP

1

WORKING IN
MAINTENANCE

37

WOMEN'S BIBLE
STUDY ATTENDANCE

23

CLIENTS IN ADDICTION
GROUP THERAPIES

5

CLIENTS IN CARD
MICROENTERPRISE

15

CLIENTS IN SPORT OR
RECREATIONAL
RESOURCES

2,200

MEALS DELIVERED
TO THE STREETS

20

CLIENTS IN GROUP
THERAPY

9

CLIENTS IN LIFE
SKILLS WORKSHOPS

Level System:

The Level System is part of our program at the Lighthouse Resource Center and the way we are able to measure and celebrate the growth process of each of our clients. When one of our clients chooses to enter the Level System, they are choosing to begin a journey toward life change. Each level allows access to more resources, and also requires greater commitment to the process on the part of both clients and staff. This year we have had to adjust some things with our program due to COVID, but we celebrate that 42 clients have chosen to enter the Level System this year.

15

CLIENTS IN LEVEL
ONE

14

CLIENTS IN LEVEL
TWO

8

CLIENTS IN LEVEL
THREE

5

CLIENTS IN LEVEL
FOUR



3. TEMPORARY QUARANTINE SHELTER

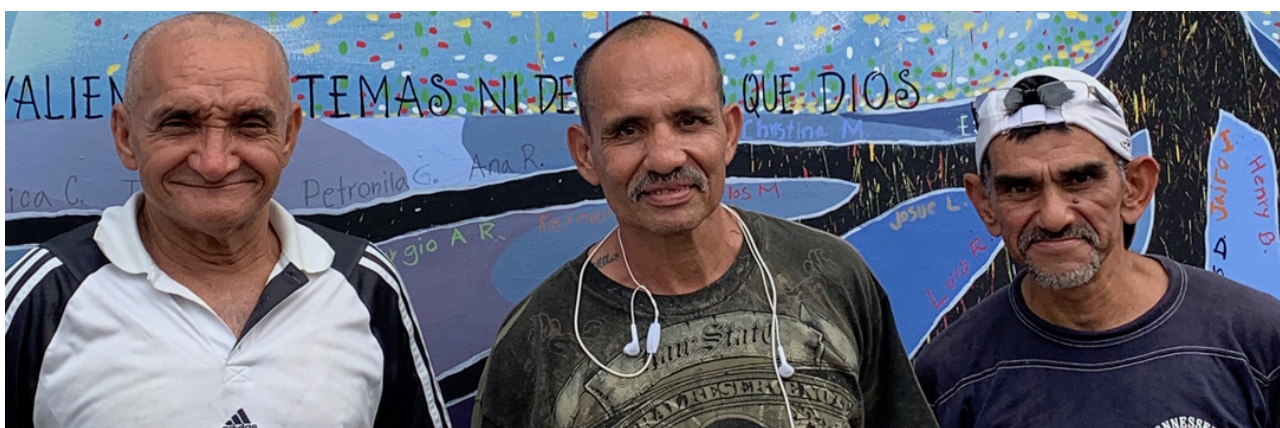
COVID -19 RESPONSE

As COVID-19 became a global pandemic in March, we worked fast to convert the Lighthouse Resource Center into a temporary quarantine shelter for those facing homelessness in San Salvador. A strict martial law meant that everyone needed a place to go. We partnered with the Salvadoran government and local businesses to meet the needs of the 72 clients as well as the around the clock staff staying at the shelter.

Our clients received medical care, meals, participated in recreational and therapeutic activities, and had a place to safely "shelter in place" during El Salvador's lockdown. One of them shared this quote,

"We give thanks to God for the COVID-19 shelter that we have had here at Mission To El Salvador."

Everyone inside of the shelter was clean and sober for two months. It was a challenge but offered a starting place for our clients to enter into a deeper process of recovery, and gave us a unique way to serve our community during the strict lockdown.



4. TRANSITIONAL HOUSING

A positive and unexpected impact of the COVID-19 crisis among our clients has been success in recovery from drugs and alcohol. Because of the lockdown and quarantine, our clients found themselves in a highly structured situation without access to substances that they would normally consume.

When the lockdown ended one of our primary goals was helping our clients to transition into healthy follow-up living situations so that they could stay on the road to recovery. **We were able to facilitate the housing of 36 clients.** Some transitioned into residential rehab centers, others to a home for older Salvadorans, and still others were able to connect with estranged family members.

We had a solid group that were very dedicated to continuing in their recovery, including 4 adults and a young couple with an infant. We covered the rent for all of them so we could work on a personal basis with each of these

"When the lockdown started I lost my income but I have had time to think of what I want to do and to self-evaluate. I feel good because I'm safe and healthy."

-Mario, Client in Transition

"clients in transition" through the Lighthouse Resource Center. They have been able to participate in emotional and addiction therapies, Bible studies, exercise, and workshops. Some of them have also been working in our card-making micro-enterprise. Others are working to prepare to get a job and launch back into the world in a healthy way. It has truly been a joy to watch their success this year!

Although COVID certainly presented many challenges, we are thrilled to report that 11 clients have remained clean and sober since the shelter closed. It is truly a wonderful picture of beauty emerging from the ashes.

5. EMERGENCY RELIEF

El Salvador was hit this year with multiple crisis situations. We found ourselves needing to move out of rehabilitation and development modes and into emergency response. It was one of the many ways that we needed to adapt our work in 2020.

The first crisis was an economic and housing crisis. El Salvador instituted a strict lockdown which meant no one could go to work or be on the streets. It was difficult even for people to travel to get food.

The next crisis came from two back-to-back severe tropical storms that caused widespread destruction throughout the country. Many of our clients suffered damage to their homes, and even our office was heavily affected with water and wind

damage, resulting in the need for us to completely replace our roof this year.

Finally, the health system in El Salvador collapsed in July and many Salvadorans lost loved ones to COVID-19.

These were all difficult challenges and many people hung white flags from their doors to indicate that they needed food and medicine. Throughout this difficult time, we were able to respond compassionately in the following ways:

- **575 families received emergency assistance**
- **619 bags of emergency food were delivered**
- **82 clients were provided with medical support**



One of our clients receiving emergency food for herself and her daughters.

6. COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Throughout 2020, we were able to be present for our community in moments of crisis and we saw new faces brought literally to our doorstep because of the pandemic and storms. For a time, we had to suspend our weekly street outreaches, but once the heaviest of the lockdowns were lifted, we began to distribute meals every Thursday night. We delivered an average of 100 meals per week to Salvadorans who are on the streets.

7. SUBSTANCE ABUSE PREVENTION

Starting in March, all schools in El Salvador closed down in-person classes. Because in-person classes were suspended, we also had to temporarily suspend our in-person substance abuse prevention talks in schools. However, our team was able to conduct virtual drug prevention workshops for one school in El Salvador before the end of the year.



SPIRITUAL GROWTH

As a faith-based organization, the spiritual growth of our staff, clients, partners, and donors is an important part of our philosophy. We are a non-denominational Christian organization, and we utilize a faith-based approach although we don't require clients to make a faith commitment in order to access resources or services.

We do have a foundation in the Gospel, and prayer is part of our routine. **Biblical values form the basis for our desire to show love, dignity, and respect to all of those that we serve.** We strive to point our clients in recovery from addictions and trauma toward a healing relationship with Christ. We believe true restoration comes through spiritual, emotional, social, physical, and

mental healing from the deep pain that they have experienced throughout their lives.

"The word of God has really spoken into my life."

-Baltimore, Client in Recovery

This year we have seen many of our clients take big steps forward in their spiritual growth. **Twenty clients made decisions to follow Christ, many attended the devotional time at the shelter, and since our programs reopened following the intense quarantine we have had an average of 15 clients consistently attending our Bible studies each week.** We are so grateful for all of you who pray regularly for our clients and our team!



Government partners, volunteers, and our staff pray before opening the COVID shelter.



Clients at morning devotions in the COVID shelter which many said impacted their experience.



STRATEGIC PARTNERS

DOING MORE TOGETHER

This year more than ever we have needed our partners! In a year where individuals and countries all around the world were fighting their own battles, we saw organizations, churches, and individuals reach out to partner with us to meet the needs of those suffering from the coronavirus pandemic, and also from the natural disasters that hit El Salvador. Our consistent partners helped us keep things going, and we were greatly blessed by many new partners this year that donated everything from masks and food, to clothing and emergency funds.

We also were blessed to have the consistent and faithful support of our partner churches outside El Salvador. Despite the immense challenges faced by churches in other countries, our work in El Salvador

The forging of new partnerships, and strengthening of old ones was truly a high point in our work in El Salvador in 2020.

was not forgotten. Prayers, encouragement and practical support were key from our church partners this year. We are also so very grateful for local and international volunteers who helped throughout the year in many ways.

The forging of new partnerships, and strengthening of old ones was truly a high point in our work in El Salvador in 2020.



Partners Next Door and Around the World

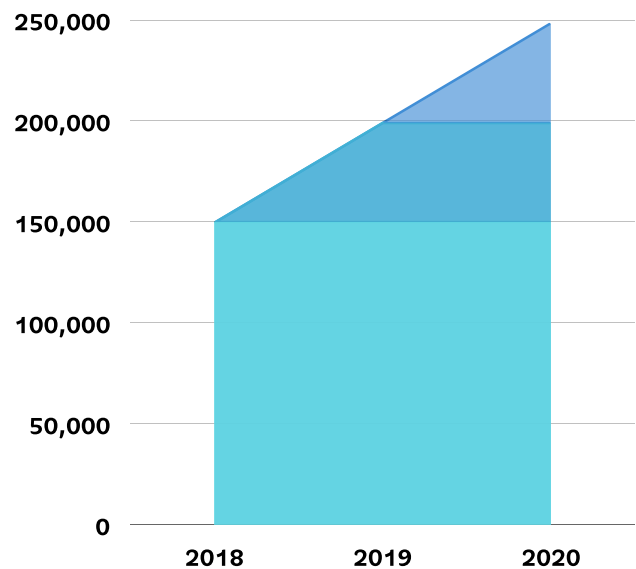
MTES has cultivated partnerships in El Salvador, Canada, and the U.S. throughout this year. The temporary quarantine shelter opened the doors for many local businesses to become involved right here in our community. This year was such a reminder that collaboration and teamwork are so important!

ROOM TO GROW CAMPAIGN

The building that we purchased in 2018 has been the home to our administrative offices, storage facility, and the Lighthouse Resource Center. This year it also provided the space for the temporary COVID-19 shelter during El Salvador's lockdown. We are so appreciative of the continued investment in our work, and in our space!

Despite the intense situations and many needs around us this year, generous donors and partners enabled us to make the needed payments on the building so that we could continue to pay our monthly mortgage as well as our yearly balloon payment. **Here is an update on how the ROOM TO GROW CAMPAIGN is going:**

- In 2018 we purchased the building for \$410,000. We made a down payment of \$150,000 and financed the remaining \$260,000 for a five year term.
- In 2019 we paid \$49,000 on the building.
- In 2020, we paid off another \$49,000 on the building.
- We still owe \$196,000 on the building but we are over halfway to our goal of having the building completely paid off, and being debt free!



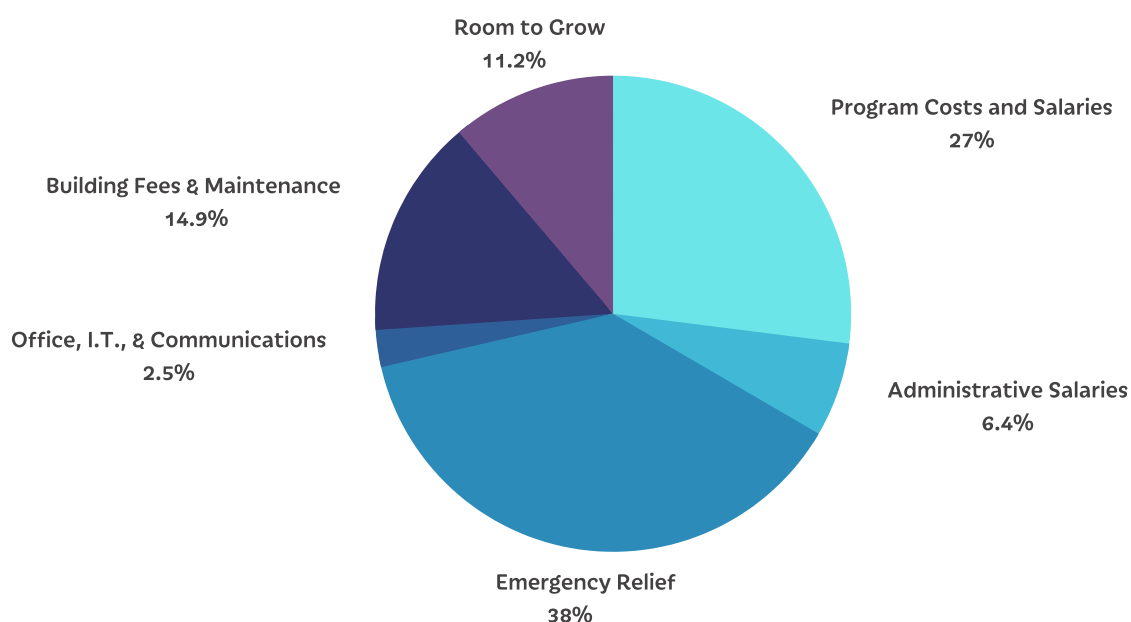
Our building was put to good use during the temporary shelter as we had adequate space for clients to sleep, participate in activities, eat, and receive medical care.

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

We are so grateful for the faithful support of our donors this year who continued to support us in turbulent times. **We were unable to host our annual gala, but through virtual fundraising efforts we raised \$90,000 online this year.** Our team of advocates did a great job with fundraising, and we are thankful for new donors who have come on board during the COVID-19 crisis to help with emergency relief for our clients and community. **A large portion of donations went to our COVID and storm response this year and helped cover things like the shelter and emergency food for our clients and community.** We remain committed to financial transparency with the completion

of a third party financial review this year, which is available upon request. Here are some of our financial highlights from 2020:

- **We had 335 international donors contribute to our work.**
- **We had 40 donors in El Salvador.**
- **We received a total of \$573,000 in donations and gifts in kind in 2020.**
- **We had a total of \$437,000 in expenses.**
- **\$166,000 went into COVID and storm emergency response**
- **5% of all of our total donations were received in country.**
- **You can see a breakdown of how we spent funds below.**





LOOKING AHEAD

One thing we definitely learned in 2020 was the importance of holding our plans and goals loosely! Many of the goals we had set for 2020 shifted dramatically as we responded to the crisis of COVID-19 and also the tropical storms that hit El Salvador. Our programs were adjusted in 2020, and in some ways we are looking forward to getting back to something resembling "normal" and in other ways we are changing things completely! Check out what we are looking ahead to for this year!



Top of page: Mural painted by clients in the COVID shelter.

Above: Clients in transition learning mechanic skills.

Here are our goals and our dreams for 2021:

- Rework and adapt the Lighthouse Resource Center level system to better reflect the current reality for our clients.
- Expand the number of residents in the New Dawn Residential Program by raising awareness of the issues surrounding teen addiction and networking with other organizations.
- Increase our donor connection by expanding our New Dawn sponsorship program and developing a sponsorship program for the Lighthouse Resource Center.
- Continue to make payments on our building as we work toward fully paying it off.
- Revamp our current data system to update, measure, and manage client data more efficiently.
- Continue to develop the Salvadoran leaders on our team to help them and all of our staff find new opportunities to dream and grow!

