

Ernesto, the boy in the photo below, is eleven years old. He was living with his mother in an adobe house in San Marcos when the earthquake wrecked havoc on the area a year ago last November. The adobe walls crumbled in the earthquake and the roof and walls crashed inward killing his mother.



Ernesto stayed at his mother's gravesite in shock the first few days after her burial. However, he eventually went out and was living on the street when Edna's family took him in. To say Edna's family took him in doesn't really describe the actual gravity of the situation. Edna's family home was destroyed in the earthquake as well, and her family was living in a borrowed room.



Edna & Graciela in front of their home.

The earthquake either destroyed or made uninhabitable hundreds of homes in San Marcos, making it nearly impossible to find a house to rent for those who were displaced.



A couple of weeks after the earthquake Edna's mother, sister, brother, nephew, and Ernesto moved to Mazatenango, a city about three hours by car from San Marcos where they were able to find affordable housing. Edna got a job working as a secretary for a security company and lived in a room a couple of blocks from her job in Xela.

Edna's brother, William, is a motorcycle mechanic and has struggled finding adequate work since leaving San Marcos a year and a half ago. Recently William and Ernesto came to Xela to live and look for work.

The new school year starts in January each year in Guatemala. Ernesto didn't go to school last year and he is not enrolled this year. He can read and write, but will be in the third grade when, (if), he returns to school. He would be in the sixth grade if he were at grade level for his age.



Edna, Ernesto, & William

The manager of the security company Edna worked for embezzled thousands of dollars from the company and fled the area last fall. The employees of the company were not paid for two months. Edna left that job without getting paid and started working with Maya Mesoamerica Mission in our newest microbusiness outreach in Xela, ***Novia Americana***.



Edna, Ernesto, & William enjoying Christmas Eve dinner at the mission.

Along with thirty-eight other souls Edna, Ernesto, and William participate in the Xela Food Outreach. All of the participants receive a nutritious hot lunch at the food outreach every Tuesday and Thursday afternoon. The mission also helps all of the children who attend the food outreach purchase their school supplies when they start the new school-year each January.

Funding for the food outreach comes from two sources. The mission receives monetary gifts from individuals, organizations, and churches in the United States and Canada; and it also derives some income from its micro-business outreach projects in Guatemala.

Novia Americana, (American Bride in Spanish), is doing well since opening last fall. We are encouraged with the success of this micro-business outreach. Now, (April, May, & June), we have an opportunity to give it a real boost! Just about every high school in North America will soon be having a prom, and we need those gently worn prom dresses to sell in Guatemala after the girls have worn them to this spring's prom. Will you help us with a dress collection at

the school in your community? There are all kinds of campus organizations looking for projects where they can be involved fighting hunger or helping women and children break free from poverty in the developing world, (Guatemala). You may not have a child in high school, but there is someone in your circle of friends or family that can help you facilitate a prom dress collection at your school or with the youth in your church.

Another way you can help is finding, and then donating women's and junior's jeans to us for resell in ***Novia Americana***. Garage sales, flea markets, and women/youth ministries are some venues that might help with jeans. If you explain what the jeans are for people will often give you the jeans or give you a large discount at a garage sell or estate sell.

With your help these clothing items that are sitting in the closet in North America can be turned into food to feed the hungry in Central America!

Here is a Q&A that explains how we can make that prom dress help feed Ernesto:

Novia Americana

“a hand-up, not a hand-out”

Pressing forward with new and innovative ideas in partnership with people from North America to help the “overlooked and ignored” in Central America provide for their families with dignity.

Novia Americana, common questions and answers;

Q: What is the purpose of these micro-business projects? **A:** The micro-business projects of Maya-Mesoamerica Mission serve to provide opportunities for women and impoverished families in Central America earn income in an atmosphere of safety and dignity. They also provide income to support the outreach projects of Maya Mesoamerica Mission.

include your name and email address with your gift where we can send a receipt.

www.mayamission.org

Q: What is *Novia Americana*? **A:** *Novia Americana* is a micro-business project that sells wedding dresses, prom/party dresses, and junior's/ women's jeans that are donated by friends of the mission in the United States and Canada.

Q: Where does *Novia Americana* obtain the dresses and jeans that they sell in Guatemala? **A:** They are donated by partners of the micro-business project in North America.

Q: What kind of dresses and jeans do we need? **A:** We can use excellent quality wedding dresses, prom dresses, bride's maid dresses, evening gowns, semi-formal dresses in all styles and sizes. We also need junior's and women's jeans. Please no casual dresses or clothing or children's or men's jeans. *This is not a general clothing drive!*

Q: How do the donated items get from the donor in the United States to the Micro-business project in Guatemala? **A:** Donors ship them directly to the Maya-Mesoamerica Mission collection point in Missouri. In Missouri, they are sorted and packed for shipping to Guatemala. The items go by truck from Missouri to Miami and by ship from Miami to Guatemala, or by air directly from Missouri to Guatemala. For large shipments contact us for shipping instructions.

Q: Where is the collection point in Missouri where the items are shipped? **A:**
Maya Mesoamerica Mission
504 Dogwood Drive
Knob Noster, MO 65336-1589

Q: Are gifts tax deductible? **A:** Yes, Maya Mesoamerica Mission is recognized as a tax exempt charity by the IRS under chapter 501©3. Your gifts of cash or dresses qualify as a tax deductible gift. Please