



This is an article written by a boy in Grade 4, Tyler LeBlond, after his father's friend had shared about several trips to help Loving Arms as a volunteer in Guatemala. Tyler wrote it last year for a school project. His father went on a Loving Arms volunteer trip recently.

## Loving Arms

Have you ever thought about helping the poor? If so, this is how you can:

Volunteer with the Loving Arm's organization or donate some money to their programs.

Loving Arm's is a Canadian charitable corporation that helps people living in Guatemala. Their programs are run by lots of churches and volunteers from Canada. The people that go to Guatemala volunteer because they follow their hearts to help other people who are less fortunate.

Loving Arm's organizes activities and programs for families in Guatemala. The goal is to teach them to become self-sufficient as individuals and as a community. Volunteers educate the people, teach them to take better care of themselves, and build relationships. The five topics that I will be talking about today are: education, health, construction, how to make money, and sponsoring children and families.

**Did you know that not every child in Guatemala starts school at the age of 6? This is because there are not enough schools close by or because they do not have enough money to go to school.**

Loving Arm's works to repair schools and set up classrooms with whiteboards, so that the children and teachers have better environments to learn in. They also provide school supplies to the children that do not have money to buy their own so that they can go to school and participate. They also have an Adult Literacy program to help parents who never had the chance to go to school. Loving Arm's wants the people to know that it is never too late to learn.

**Did you know that not everyone in Guatemala has clean water to drink?**

Loving Arm's helps improve the people of Guatemala's health and wellness by teaching them and their doctors how to take better care of themselves. Dental and medical

clinics are also set up. One of their main goals is to provide clean water and use a sanitization system that does not pollute the water.

### **Can you imagine living in a corn stalk house?**

There are currently three construction projects going on. One is Property Development where they build community complexes. Inside these complexes you will find a sewing centre, health and training centres, storage areas, classrooms and public washrooms. The second project is Build-A-Home. Right now families build their homes from corn-stalks which is not very safe, so Loving Arm's is showing Guatemalans how to build with concrete. Another project is called Adopt-A-Home which hands out household items to those who don't have enough money to buy all the things they need like beds, mattresses, tables, chairs, pots and pans.

### **Did you know that 75% of Guatemala's population lives in poverty?**

Loving Arm's promotes ways for people to earn money by using what they already have. They've started a women's weaving and sewing co-op, taught farmers how to sell the food they grow and how to start their own livestock businesses. This will help give them a better living.

**Did you know that in the villages that Loving Arm's works, 80% of the children under 5 years old are starving? That would mean that out of all of the kids at St. Andrew, only two grades are not starving.**

Loving Arm's has two main sponsorship programs - Child Sponsorship and Family Food Sponsorship. A sponsored child receives clothing, shoes, medical/dental care, Christmas and birthday gifts. Currently Loving Arm's sponsors 95 children. Family food packages are given out every month to orphans, widows and the extreme poor. This gives help and hope to those who do not have are not able to provide food to their families. Loving Arm's has 20 children in this project.

Now you can see how lucky and fortunate we are to be living in Canada. Unfortunately, the people of Guatemala are not so lucky. Now is the time to think about helping the poor. We can all make a difference, one person at a time!