

Phil & Donna Waldron
Mission UpReach
Honduras



It was over 12 years ago now, that Mission UpReach (MUR) was formed when Phil and Donna Waldron signed an agreement with their overseeing eldership at the time. On August 1st, 2008 the Campus View Church of Christ in Athens, Georgia agreed to serve as the sponsors for the mission while Phil and Donna raised money and began the preparations to move their family to Santa Rosa de Copán, Honduras.

It took until June 2009 to complete the preparations for the move and to finalize the Waldron's resident visas. Upon arriving in Honduras with their two youngest

teenage children the Waldron family lived through a military coup that threw the country into turmoil for many months. Since that time Mission UpReach has grown from Phil and Donna to include 125 Honduran employees and six North American volunteer missionaries.

At its heart, Mission UpReach is a disciple making, church planting organization. However, over the years, living and working among some of the poorest people in the western hemisphere dictated that the organization become involved in a number of humanitarian efforts in addition to its core disciple making activities. To date, MUR has helped to establish 26 new congregations and it has trained hundreds of men and women in various intensive programs that produce a higher level of Biblical knowledge and better equipped leaders in the local church.

In addition, it has provided over 80,000 medical consults through village medical clinics. And it has taught more than 10,000 lessons on Biblical values to public elementary school children. In the last few years MUR also established a school for deaf adults who previously had no education whatsoever.

The largest "social program" that MUR runs is the Moses Project which is a 120 acre working farm. Up to fifty young men from poor families from the region live at the farm while they finish their junior high and high school education. They work as interns during 4 hours of their day and also attend Bible class. In the evenings they finish their formal junior high and high school classes.

The Legacy church has been partnering with MUR since the early years and has helped MUR become useful in expanding the borders of the kingdom in Western Honduras. Phil and Donna Waldron have high praise for the Legacy church and express their gratitude whenever possible for the prayers and financial support that they offer.

Stories of Hope

As the pandemic began in March 2020 Honduras shut down all schools, churches, government offices, restaurants, etc., much like the U.S. Our initial and most concerning shut down was that of our deaf school. How would we be able to continue to educate our deaf students without having face to face access to them? Our wonderful ESPERO team quickly recovered and began conducting classes with the majority of our students via WhatsApp Video, which nearly all of them have on their phones. The limitations resulted in our teachers teaching day and night because they could only have 2-3 students on the video at once. It was not an easy solution as connections were inconsistent and being able to get a good visual of a student signing was

hard. But they persevered and our students ended up not missing out on this school year, unlike thousands of other hearing students across the nation. In fact, our school was recognized by the education leaders on a national level for their perseverance. Our concerns were far greater than just them missing out on education, but also included concerns over their isolation since most of them live with family members who do not know sign language. This isolation led to an even greater enthusiasm for being in class. The students showed up consistently and on time, even dressed in their school uniforms. Our church planting team created Bible classes and a separate worship for our deaf so that they could continue to grow and develop spiritually in spite of the challenges. We feel so honored at Mission UpReach that we can be God's tool for meeting the needs of the neglected and forgotten through our deaf school.

With donations down in 2020, we have had grave concerns for our ministries and their survival. Every two weeks when it was time to pay salaries, we found ourselves in prayer asking God to provide although it seemed impossible. There hasn't been any excess, but just like the oil in the widow's lamp, God has given us just what we needed. Being able to support and continue to employ the 125 families that work with us and serve in western Honduras has brought great hope to our team. Each of them recognizes that God is the One providing.

In November of 2020, Honduras was hit with back to back hurricanes on top of the economic impact of the pandemic. Thousands of families were displaced and without homes, having lost all of their possessions. Mission UpReach, through its generous donors has been able to provide basic needs to hundreds of families. 2021 will hold many new opportunities to meet the needs of the poor and oppressed with hope by meeting some of the most basic human needs, which not only include food, clothing and medical care, but also the knowledge of a loving heavenly Father.