

Dear Anawim Sponsors, supporters, Friends and Benefactors,

Please allow us to share our recent experience with you when we visited our Anawim families on March 26-28<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

We would like to express our deep and heartfelt gratitude for your support of our mission.

Happy Easter!



He is Risen Indeed.



**Pat & Liza Gonzales**

**As for me and my house -we will serve the Lord! Joshua 24:15**



## **Anawim Roller Coaster Experience March 2017**

April 3, 2017 1:20am

It is hard to put into words what the naked eye has seen and what the heart has felt ... with one's spirit crushed and tears welling down one's cheeks - flowing in immediate and natural reaction to the pity and helplessness one feels for the deplorable condition one has witnessed.

I am no writer by any means. Therefore, I have not the right words to describe the pain and misery I felt for the family whom I should have been glad to see having a shelter to protect them from the vicissitudes of nature as was gifted by Anawim and its sponsors. The single room tenement measuring 10x10 where both dining and bedroom reside and no latrine in sight - (which could possibly be causing the stench in the air either from human and animal waste alike)- has pierced my spirit.

I lie awake till the wee hours of the morning trying to convince myself this family will be alright and this is their circumstance that no one can really help make better (or possibly can??) despite the materials provided for housing after the storm-that has mangled their dilapidated shack completely to the ground.

For one -a mother with 3 children ages 2-6 years of age. Husband out of town trying to make a living that continues to provide for a hand to mouth (or perhaps an empty hand and a starving belly?) existence. The 4-5 steps from their door to their tiny bedroom filled with muck...and to cross that threshold can mean knee deep mud if you miss your step. It was quite disturbing to me to witness this.

Another recipient of this housing provision whose wife and mother fled to her province due to possible desperation - leaving her husband with four children behind. This father

ready to throw in the towel and rope his four children to his waist and drag them to the river to drown. I wrapped my arm around the father's shoulder and whispered to him to never ever give up on his children. Incidentally, his oldest child had the words "never give up" scribbled in big, bold letters on his shirt. I told this dad to hang the shirt where he can read and see it - to remind him often of why he needed to keep alive amid what seems to be a very hopeless situation.



Yet- will my words and my momentary presence make a difference?

I was paralyzed. Tears just wanted to flow freely and endlessly from my heart. I could not help but ask WHY... why is there such poverty in the midst of abundance in the world? Why do we allow it?

When one witnesses these circumstances - one is frozen in her tracks.

Not knowing how to respond. Not knowing how to put one foot in front of the other and leave the misery behind.

There are many similar stories of "mere survival" in the face of trying to live a life... almost certain destitution exist everywhere (in the world - in the millions). I walked away from that moment with my hands tied, struggling to analyze and ask the question "what can be done? "

A heart literally bleeding and crushed into pieces. I recalled the book I was half way through reading about Mother Theresa of Calcutta and how she patiently, painlessly and joyfully cared for the poorest of the poor. I realized how completely inadequate I was. And that I am nothing like her and have a lifetime to learn on how to give of myself to serve the poverty-stricken children of God. I even wondered for a moment if I have the guts to give up my present existence to be able to immerse myself in such adversity. I kept those emotions in a tin can to temporarily function and move on to the next stop.

Here - there was a bit less misfortune???

Husband helped build their home and had a bit more breathing space to mingle kitchen and bedroom. Wife and mother with 4 children seem to be "less miserable" with their living condition. A cleaner, a bit more spacious and humble surrounding noted. Newly installed stainless steel roofing and wooden siding with hollow block support and the ground they walk on still unpaved.



Then -another Anawim recipient whose means of livelihood is scrummaging through heaps of garbage with stacks of sacks filled with dumpsite treasures - somehow keeping their self respect knowing they earn a living through honest means. And without much choice to survive but to sort through someone else's trash for their daily subsistence.





One of our last stops was to visit with San Ramon mothers who took the time and effort to serve us native snacks out of their already meager subsistence and to celebrate their Anawim membership with so much gratitude for the simple housing provided for them. Mothers gathered in the humble home opened to us wholeheartedly (the 10x10 size living room whose walls adorned pictures of the 4 children ages 12 to 18 with two girls in their graduation cap & gown) filled with pure and extraordinary happiness and laughter.



I was grateful to have been an essential part of that moment. My joy could not be contained. My pain and sadness -temporarily healed.

Here in this moment, I came away blessed to be able to experience what Anawim sponsors and supporters give of their hard-earned generosity. My heart embraced their deep gratitude with genuine ecstasy. These women gave me hope... when they thought I came to bring hope back to them.



Different scenarios. Different circumstances.

One essential goal - Philanthropy.

For you - who give of yourselves humbly through your hard-earned treasures to make better a "stranger's" misery and ease their almost hopeless existence.

The memory of my visit with these families will remain imprinted in my mind for a very long time.

It will always be a reminder of how I cannot take for granted each and everyday of the abundance of blessings I have been given. Tears will still roll down my face and my heart will still be pierced with sadness.

I have no answers to my own questions . I can just try to make better my daily

encounter with others - and share with them the love I have learned from the embrace

of a loving God who died on the cross for me and for His mother who lovingly gave up His son so that I may live as a witness of that selfless love.









**FROM OUR ANAWIM FAMILIES...  
350 STRONG!!!**





**AND OUR AMAZING AND ENERGETIC HEARTS  
(NOT JUST BOOTS!) ON THE GROUND!**

**TOPNOTCH...**

**THANK YOU FOR ALL YOU DO!**



**HAPPY**

**EASTER!**

**WITH SO MUCH RESPECT AND LOVE FOR YOU.**