

Parramos, Guatemala

Lauren & Kevin Sanchez

Results

Results are hard to quantify when they are not statistics. We have seen growth in our school in terms of number of students and staff. Various students received a raise at their place of work or found a better job since they have a solid level of English. But Academy of Future Leaders (AFL) does more than just provide high quality education and improve incomes.

Meet Kris. I have translated when Kris shared his story, and I always end up in tears. Kris and his sister, Mailin, have lived with their aunt since their mom died, their dad got remarried and started a new family where Kris and Mailin were not welcome. This trauma caused Kris to start misbehaving in school and even got him kicked out, having to repeat a grade. His anger was eating him from the inside out.

About the time he moved in with his aunt, he started attending our Saturday group. Kris was shy at first, but I took a liking to him from the first day. His attitude and demeanor quickly changed. He is now one of the most well-liked among his classmates and does well in school. He is in career school, just completed his third year at AFL, and is moving onto advanced English starting in January. He is kind, funny, easy to talk to, and focused in the classroom. He has done various jobs for us including construction, coaching soccer, and caring for our dogs.

Kris's trauma still flares up from time to time, and he has mentioned many times that he feels like a burden. His aunt, a single mom, carries a lot of weight (not only with household work, but also financially). At the beginning of this year Kris asked to speak to Kevin privately. Through tears Kris told Kevin he didn't see a way out of being a burden and was planning on illegally going to the U.S. to try to find work.



Kris and Cristian. Both study at AFL and work as chefs in Antigua

Unfortunately, this option is what many of the young people (specifically men) in Parramos see as their "only way out." Kevin listened and gave counsel and tried to explain the need for a shift of mindset. Kris is in my intermediate class and anytime he didn't show up, I got nervous wondering if he had fled the country.

I am overjoyed to report that last week Kris came into my class on a day I was alone grading tests and told me he had news. With a big smile on his face he told me he found a job that will let him continue studying and contributing more to the house financially. He was *most* excited he would not be leaving his sister and family.

AFL is an English school. But *it is also* giving hope and helping people find opportunities. We recognize this type of trust and influence takes time. As we continue being here for our community, we hope to report more stories like Kris's: families staying and growing together.



Kris started coming to our Saturday group in 2021 and has been very involved since. The picture on the left is from our devotional and scavenger hunt in June of this year and the picture on the right was during a discussion and speaking practice day during English class.

T.I.A.

I am not as up-to-date and “hip” as I once was, probably explains my using the word “hip.” All that to say, I am a part of a Facebook group of moms in the Antigua area. Sometimes there are posts about events, selling items, advice, etc. As I was scrolling the other day, I kept seeing TIA at the beginning of posts. So, turning to google, I looked up what it meant. TIA means *thanks in advance*, and it got me thinking... Kevin and I are so incredibly thankful for your support of us, our ministry, and our community. I could write a book about the major changes we have seen in individual lives and the slow change we are seeing in our little town of 30,000.

However, I also want to extend a TIA. Starting a new ministry in a more remote underdeveloped location has had its challenges. For anyone who has been a boss or owner of a business, specifically a new business, you know many times you are not only the boss/owner, but also the marketing person, secretary, maintenance person, filling in for absent employees, etc. Kevin and I put out fires as best we can and are giving our best to Academy of Future Leaders, while also giving 100% toward creating new leaders. As we know, the best leaders make more great leaders. **So TIA for being a part of this.** Sometimes it is hard to write updates when we feel discouraged and overwhelmed. But taking a step back, I am astonished at what has happened and has been accomplished in such a short time. I am optimistic about our updates of growth in the future. Thank you for believing in us and our vision for Parramos, Guatemala. Thank you for taking the risk to support us. We will continue working, so that in 5, 10, or 20 years we can look back and see how faithful you have been in the creation of a beautiful, thriving, clean, healthy community.

Lauren & Kevin Sanchez

"From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked."

Luke 12:48

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