

# VAMOS ADELANTE FOUNDATION



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Dear Friends of Proyecto Vamos Adelante,

Two weeks have passed since the arrival of the generous disaster relief from the German Embassy. In this time afflicted families in 14 of „our“ villages have been identified for food distribution and received help. The rains continue to fall heavily around the volcano Fuego, though it will be some time before the flood waters recede. In the meantime, people are left without homes and hungry while mosquitoes carrying epidemic diseases are multiplying in the stagnant waters. In the village of Ceylan, we have already lost a young boy to the mortal hemorrhaging dengue.

Many areas of Guatemala are still cut off from any food or health sources as roads, such as this one remain entirely flooded. Additionally, bridges have been destroyed and it will be some time before they can be repaired, because the waters below remain dangerously rapid. Mudslides also continue to occur even weeks after the storm has passed. Just recently the highway between Guatemala City and Antigua was blocked off by a landslide. Yesterday October 23rd, the busses could not get across the rivers to our base in Zapote.



To prepare the grand task of relief distribution, the Vamos Adelante team carefully formed lists of the families identified as severely poor and suffering from Hurricane Stan. After waiting in line for hours, two by two the people entered the clinic, gave their name and then stepped aside to receive their food. This system helped the distribution process to work smoothly and efficiently. Amongst the rice, beans, oil, salt, soap, soup and blankets that were distributed, several hundred more pre-packed aide bags prepared through the German Embassy were handed to the desperate families.

Since we received the imminent relief aide, we have been packing and handing out food daily. So far around 640 people have received help. The majority have been women, children and elderly who walked for up to four hours already to arrive at our base in Zapote before 5:00 AM. When distribution began at 7:00 AM, the masses were formed into a long line that stretched far up the road.



Women with small babies received diapers and milk in addition to the other staple foods being distributed.

Each recipient also carried home a 25 pound sack of Maseca, which is used to make tortillas. The Vamos Adelante promoters and helpers spent several days carefully dividing the original 50 pound sacks in half to make Maseca available to more people.



Four hundred and eighty four blankets were taken out to some very remote villages to be handed to the poorest of families there. While the blankets were being distributed we listened to their accounts of flood waters destroying their homes and few belongings.



The people from La Esmeralda, Belice, El Nispero and about 30 additional remote houses outside these villages were very thankful to receive blankets and food as they had been cut off and isolated for many days due to a dangerous mudslide on the road on one side and a wild river on the other making it impossible to even walk through to Zapote or other more populated places. Thankfully, the road has now been cleared.

Vamos Adelante is now working to improve the structure of homes in the villages. Many are in such dilapidated shape that even small cardboard boxes are being used as walls in a desperate attempt to establish some insulation.

This family's roof was destroyed by Hurricane Stan. We have been replacing this family's tin sheet roof through a small private donation.



Last week 166 elderly people were assigned to pick up their food. The hurricane has left them hungry, feeble and weak. It was heart wrenching to watch these individuals muster all of their strength to lift the heavy sacks. They helped each other out as some were literally unable to lift the Maseca. This woman made the journey from a very remote village in her bare feet. Despite the difficulty of this task, they all glowed with happiness and thankfulness for the help.



The next months will continue to be a desperate period of hunger, especially for elderly and children such as this little girl who is one year and two months old but who only weighs 14 pounds. In some far villages, inaccessible to vehicles, all of the crops have been flooded and destroyed. The little tiendas (stores) are empty and even worse, there are no longer field jobs available for the men causing sudden and unexpected unemployment.

Hundreds of families have been able to return to their villages with enough food to sustain them for a short time.

THANK YOU for your constant concern for Vamos Adelante and the Hurricane Stan victims. Though we have been able to temporarily help some, hundreds more who have been devastated by the hurricane are left to suffer.

Warm Regards from the whole Vamos Adelante team,

Nina and Erin (short-term volunteer)

