

Young Missionaries Make Huge Impact in Ultra-Poor Nation

Gerald and Marissa Lopez's ministry, Esperanza Rising, has only just begun, but already the young missionaries are making a huge difference in Nicaragua. Nicaragua is the second-poorest country in the western hemisphere, and the village where Gerald and Melissa work—Jinotepe—has it worse than most. Jinotepe has no running water supply, so the villagers have to walk over a mile each day in order to get water. Food is almost as scarce. Many of the children in the community are starving.

To help, Esperanza Rising set up a feeding center in the village. They partnered with a local farm to get food and supplies, and the center has been a tremendous success so far.

"Right now we're serving two days a week: Tuesdays and Thursdays," Marissa said. "We have roughly 50 children that come and a few elderly in the community as well. We're hoping, as we gain more support, to make it a full-week program, to be able to feed five days a week."

The couple's commitment to helping impoverished children comes from Gerald's own background. He used to be a starving Nicaraguan child himself, which is why he has such a passion to set up a ministry like this.

"He has seen how faithful God has been to him through his life, and he wants to share that with others," Marissa says. "God has simply said, 'Feed My people,' and we are trying our best to do this by taking care of their physical need as well as feeding them spiritually by teaching them how to study God's Word."

The couple's next big projects are drilling a well (to solve the water crisis) and setting up a sponsorship program to help

the children get education. Many of the children of Jinotepe are too poor to afford the uniforms and school supplies they need to attend school. Gerald and Marissa are seeking donors to sponsor the children's education, which can break the village's cycle of poverty.

For more information about the ministry of Esperanza Rising, visit .