

## Transformed from Victim to Advocate *The Doris Gavarrete Story*

For the last two years, Doris has been a social worker at Hogar Nazareth. She is uniquely qualified for her position because she understands as few others could the thoughts and emotions of the children that come to Hogar. That is because as a child Doris and her sisters experienced unimaginable family tragedy.

The third of five sisters, Doris was born into a violent home with a drunk and abusive father. Her father beat her mother because he wanted a son. He did not love or value his five daughters. He beat the girls simply because they were female. Often, their mother tried to protect them by taking the blows herself. The household lived in a constant state of terror and fear.

One day, no longer able to endure the blows, Doris' mother fled with her girls. Doris was only six years old. Her sisters ranged in age from 2 to 10. They tried to find a safe place but soon their father found them. In front of the girls, he first beat their mother, and then began cutting her with a machete. As the mother lay dying in front of Doris, a stranger arrived to help their mother. She knew she couldn't get to a hospital in time to save her own life so she begged the stranger to promise that he would take care of her girls just as a father cares for his own daughters. The girls could not even attend their mother's funeral because their father was looking to kill them too.



Doris (left) with her sisters

The girls initially hid in a mountain village safe from their father. There they were left alone for long periods of time as their oldest sister, just ten years old, cared for them and tried to keep them together. They only had each other. By the grace of God, after two years of hiding from their father and living with distant relatives and complete strangers, they found their way to Hogar Nazareth. By this time, Doris was eight years of age.

At first it was difficult because the sisters would not let anyone get close to them because they thought everyone would hurt them. Many professionals helped them overcome their past. They grew to believe that God had a greater purpose for their lives. At the Hogar, they were able to have everything a child needed to develop. Doris even graduated from college.

Today, Doris's work is multipurpose. While she is trained and employed as a social worker, at the Hogar, she has many responsibilities that extend beyond



Doris (2nd from right) with children of the Hogar

that. Doris is blessed with an open heart and a willingness to attend to any need that arises, no matter what time of day or night or the area of need.

Many children come to the Hogar when the government needs to place a child, either permanent or temporary. Doris is the direct contact with the government and they explain the situation of each child to her. Doris then communicates this information to Mami Carmen. Once the child is approved by Mami and Doris, she notifies the government to bring her the necessary papers.

When children arrive at the Hogar, most of them arrive with a broken heart, full of doubts and fears and without any hope. Mami Carmen, together with her staff, work diligently to welcome the children. Mami offers some helpful recommendations on living in the Hogar and once they warm up to Carmen, she tries to get more information about their family life and the circumstance that led to them coming to the Hogar. This is so they can better understand how to help the child.

## Assistance Needed

We have received a tremendous influx of children in the last 15 months including children at Buen Pastor and children coming from horrific situations and extreme circumstances. One situation was so horrific, it made the Honduran news. We ask that you please pray for the children, pray for the staff and that you strongly consider funding the work with a generous gift today.

The child is soon given a tour of the Hogar, including their bedroom. They are introduced to the other children and welcomed by his/her roommates. Thank God, the process of adaptation is fast! The girls and boys are very kind to receive every new child. Each girl and boy play a very important role in the adaptation process for the new children.

The children are excellent brothers and sisters to the new ones. Usually, the children arrive alone, with just the clothes they are wearing. Often times each girl or boy shares a piece of their own clothing with the new child. This is a beautiful picture of God's mercy and compassion. God does not forsake anyone.

Each morning when she wakes up, the first thing she does is ask God to give her energy to finish her day well. She asks for guidance and that what she does during the day will bring honor and glory to God.

While working at the Hogar, Doris has heard many sad stories. Some are more difficult than others and it can take a little more time to reach the heart of the broken child. But Doris feels that for God nothing is impossible and with God's help she has managed to heal some of those internal wounds of the soul.

Doris's biggest challenge has been controlling her emotions and not letting them affect her when she listens to the stories of the children. There is a case recently where the older sister has done everything possible to be able to rescue her siblings and have them all together at the Hogar. Doris has walked with her and cried with her when things have not gone as expected. They are still in the process of rescuing her sister and brother. She reminds Doris a lot of her older sister who also did everything possible to keep the sisters together. This recent case has been one of the most difficult that Doris has had to deal with. But it has also allowed her to see how God worked in her life and that of her family.

To this day, Doris goes to bed with her Bible open to Psalm 91, seeking comfort from the memory of her father and the horror of her life before the Hogar.





**Above left:** Tias getting manicures **Above right:** Circle of Sisters

## Circle of Sisters 2018

The Circle of Sisters, the first all-female trip in over 25-years of All God’s Children, embarked on a historic journey to Honduras in February 2018. The idea started with an October luncheon in Chicagoland when Mercedes shared her desire for women to minister to the emotional and spiritual needs of the Honduran staff and children. At the table, Pam DeBoer and Mary MacKenzie began dreaming: “Could we really do this?” Confirmation came later that week at the AGC fund raising dinner when Margaret Jones and Lynn Dugan expressed their excitement. The planning team was formed. Within weeks, 22 women joined the Circle of Sisters.

The trip theme: Luke 1:37, “Nothing is impossible with God” proved to be true when the civil unrest in Honduras that cancelled other serve trips raised the question: “Was this the right time to take a group of women?” God’s resounding “Yes!” propelled forward the group of social workers, musicians, dieticians, cooks, retired teachers, and seven fluent Spanish speakers. Eighteen women who had never been to Honduras felt God’s call to serve.

Classes were organized for the staff (Tias) and the children. The Tias from all four ACG sites were invited to Hogar Nazareth to attend a discussion about their jobs. They were able to speak freely on the challenges they face when caring for children who have emotional wounds and received constructive suggestions on how to minister to those needs.

The Tia’s received instruction, edification, and an unexpected nail and facial spa. It was an honor to be able to serve the women who provide such loving and compassionate care to the children. At their request, many Tias returned the next day for a nutrition and healthy cooking class. Several Sisters watched the children so the Tias could attend these groups.

The Circle of Sisters taught Bible stories to Alberta’s special needs students and made crafts with them. Lynn Dugan and her team taught a cooking class at Buen Pastor with the moms while other Sisters watched their babies. The older girls at the Hogar participated in a resume writing class. Several Sisters taught younger children to play the recorder.

On the last day, the girls from the Hogar enjoyed a field day at a beautiful Siguetepeque camp, playing games, running relay races, jumping rope and eating a delicious lunch.

The entire trip was evidence that “Nothing is impossible with God.” May He receive the glory.



**Camp Day**

Join our  
e-mail list!



Sign up for AGC e-mails at:  
[allgodschildrenhonduras.org/signup](http://allgodschildrenhonduras.org/signup)

Like us on  
Facebook



Like our page at  
[facebook.com/AllGodsChildrenHonduras](https://facebook.com/AllGodsChildrenHonduras)

### AGC Board of Directors

Allen Heerema,  
*President & Executive Director*  
Robert Venhousen, *Treasurer*  
John Hiskes, *Secretary*  
Pamela DeBoer  
Jan Kamp  
Paul Lagestee (*not pictured*)  
Tim MacKenzie



**Donate  
Online**

[allgodschildrenhonduras.org/give-online](http://allgodschildrenhonduras.org/give-online)



**Sponsor  
a Child**

[allgodschildrenhonduras.org/give-online](http://allgodschildrenhonduras.org/give-online)



**AGC, Ltd.**  
PO Box 5909  
Villa Park, IL 60181

**P** (630) 862-1728  
**E** [allen@allgodschildrenhonduras.org](mailto:allen@allgodschildrenhonduras.org)  
**W** [allgodschildrenhonduras.org](http://allgodschildrenhonduras.org)