



### **Who are we?**

Empowerment International originated in 1997 as a Costa Rican non-profit organization. We have a unique approach to addressing the root cause of the increasing plight of street children. Street children generally come from poor families. They are sent out to work on the streets selling fruits, vegetables and trinkets and do not attend school. Sometimes because of a volatile family environment, children attempt to make their own way in the world by trying to survive on the streets.



Homes of some of the children in Barrio San Jose de Alajuela, Costa Rica

Empowerment International reverses this trend by working with the children and their families to foster an enthusiasm to attend public school. We provide financial and emotional support to both the children and their families. As the children receive an education, they are able to stay off the streets and break out of the cycle of poverty that has haunted them for generations.

### **How we help...**

The government provides primary education in many Latin American countries. They do not, however, provide the mandatory

We currently work with over 35 families and have 53 children successfully enrolled in school. We have an aggressive goal of increasing this number by 50% for the school year beginning February 2004.



Carlos Alberto Santamaria graduating from kindergarten

### **How we started...**

In August 1997, Kathy Adams relocated to Costa Rica from the USA to work for Intel Corp. Kathy became aware of the multitude of children begging for food and money, selling produce in the streets, and working in supermarkets. Her curiosity and concern led her to discover that these children were working instead of going to school. She felt an overwhelming desire to change that.

Kathy started learning Spanish and called several organizations seeking a volunteer position. The organizations she contacted either did not answer their telephones or were only looking for office help. Kathy had a strong conviction to work with the children.

Working in an office would not satisfy that need. So, with her conviction and a friend from Nicaragua, Socorro Incer, she started to comb the streets in search of the reason why these children were not in school. The two women discovered that most of the children had a family, but under the extreme pressures of poverty, the children were forced to work to help provide for

Rafael, the father, then became sick with diabetes and had kidney failure and was unable to work for almost two years. We worked with the family to make sure they had adequate food and emotional support.

Throughout this turmoil, all five of the children have stayed in school. Erica, the oldest girl, hopes to become a doctor. Her mother, Roxcina, has been a volunteer for Empowerment International and is a tremendous resource to the organization. Rafael has now recovered and is back at work selling vegetables. All of the children enjoy school and have high hopes of obtaining professional jobs someday.



Jacqueline and Herbierto in their home

### **How you can help...**

You can help us break the cycle of poverty in Latin America and keep kids off the streets by putting them into the classrooms. For one year:

- \$300 educates four children
- \$150 educates two children
- \$75 educates one child
- \$50 gift of shoes and uniforms for one child
- \$35 gift of uniforms for one child
- \$15 gift of shoes for one child

American countries. They do not, however, provide the mandatory shoes, uniforms, and books. These cost about \$75 per child for each school year.



Carlos Alberto and Josue getting home from the first day of 1st grade

Many of the families assisted by Empowerment International have three to six children and earn no more than \$200 a month. With this economic limitation, spending 40% of a family's monthly income for just one child to go to school is a great hardship. It makes the possibility educating a child more of a dream than a reality.

For the past six years, Empowerment International has helped children with:

- school supplies & uniforms
- eye care and glasses
- dental care
- educational trips
- Christmas parties
- emotional support
- counseling for both the family and the children

forced to work to help provide for the basic needs of their families. With this burden, the opportunity for an education and a chance to get out from under the oppressive poverty seemed like an impossible hurdle for both the children and their families.



Jagueline and Kimberly ready for their first day of Kindergarten

### ***One of the families...***

One of the families Empowerment International supports, the Santamaria family, has had many hardships. When we first met them over five years ago, they were recovering from a devastating loss of their home to a fire.

- child
- \$ 10 gift of one backpack or books for one child
- \$ 5 gift of pencils, pens, crayons and paper for one child

100% of your contribution will go directly to the children (administrative costs are currently covered by a private benefactor). You will make a real difference by giving the gift of knowledge and helping end the cycle of poverty for a family. You will receive updates throughout the school year on the progress of the children.



Founder Kathy Adams with Erica Santamaria

Please send a check made out to Empowerment International to:  
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