

# Judy's Path



Serving a God of miracles requires patience and attentiveness. Knowing that prayers will be answered is not the same as knowing *how* they will be answered. Mission work always involves some bit of volition. It is our free will which causes us to volunteer; however, just because someone volunteers for one thing one year doesn't mean that there are not other forces involved steering one's decision-making process. The following journal entries tell the tale of Judy Gardner and her path as a missionary to Honduras with [AHMEN](#).

## June 14, 2016

I am so excited to be back in Honduras on the [Río de Agua Viva](#) team. This is my 13<sup>th</sup> trip and first to the jungle. I can already tell that Houston {Judy's Husband} was right. I am not as young as when I started back in 2002. But that's okay. I am here and ready to teach again after being retired from the pre-school for so many years. I just hope I don't slow down the team like I did in the airport a few day ago.

## June 17, 2016

The excitement of being able to teach today is making me nervous. After today the people will know how to test each other's vision. I remember being in Yorito on an eye team and how good it made me feel when some of the older people would come in unable to read and leave reading their favorite scriptures using a new pair of glasses. We aren't giving out glasses, but at-least the people will know whether they need them or not.

## June 19, 2016

We went back and let the community agents teach each other. They did a wonderful job. A few people said come back next year. God will answer that. I feel like a fifth wheel. I shouldn't have come. It took away from the rest of the team when I fell down last night.

## June 21, 2016

I feel much better today. After talking with Caden, Michael and Tom I don't feel like I made a mistake in coming back to Honduras this time. We will see about next year. I'm writing to tell you the joy and blessings of being on a mission trip. In America, we don't realize the poverty experienced

in other countries. And the people here may not realize their poverty either. When you pull up the smiles on their faces will light up your world.



We are teaching the Honduran people to be able to take care of their needs. I taught the importance of taking care of your eyes. Everyone in my class seemed to enjoy it. The best thing they said is that they will now be able to give eye tests for other people in their community. Dr. Ben Coplan was a big help.

You really have to be on a mission trip to understand what you can do for these amazing people. The living conditions are unimaginably horrible. They live in huts made of straw and mud that leak when it rains, which is every day. Their bathrooms are outhouses. Their diet consists of beans and rice for breakfast, lunch and supper. The water in Honduras is so bad. It's filled with bacteria and parasites. One child dies every 15 seconds. We bring water filters and train the people on how to use the filters. Even with all of this, the Honduran people are a loving and kind people. Everyone hugs and wants you to come back. I questioned why God sent me on this trip, but God is never wrong. I return home again with stories to share with those who may donate to the children. God created us all, and those that can help should help. Pray for our team, and ask yourself if you'd like to join us. Thank you ahead of time for your prayers.

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Judy wrote this journal last year while on AHMEN's Río de Agua Viva team. It scared us all when Judy fell in Raistá last year (She was fine, BTW). We were too far out in the jungle unable to deal with any emergency. However, Judy was even more scared, not for her life but for the fear that she may not be able to return to fellowship with the people of Honduras.

This year as we began to prepare for another journey, Judy was undergoing knee replacement surgery and reasonably questionable as a fall risk on good terrain, let alone the rocky, ruddy paths through the rain forest. She began praying about whether she should go back with us this year or not. It wasn't until Judy met Leisha Boulware that she got the motivation she needed to persist through the long, painful road of physical therapy in anticipation of joining the Río team.

That's right, Leisha Boulware and [Project Backpack](#) are answers to Judy's prayers about her utility as a missionary. And she doesn't realize this, but Judy is an answer to Leisha's prayers also! At the exact same time Judy was praying about her health and whether she should even consider returning to Honduras, Leisha was praying for someone to step up and help her carry Project Backpack into the mission field. However, this story was decades in the making. Judy had to join the Río team after years of volunteering in Honduras; did she have to fall? Leisha had to go to Honduras and work to build a sustainable discipleship program for kids over the last several years AND pray for someone to help get the project off the ground. Unable to physically make the journey herself, who did God send Leisha? A pre-school teacher..



Life has so much purpose. Each of our lives are interconnected. Every one of our actions is a mixture of our own free will and providence. Many volunteers in the mission field live along this clouded pathway, but with experience does not come greater enlightenment as to how God's wishes will interact with our own. The magic is that they do.

How are your decisions and the will of your higher power leading you along a trail to work on behalf of others? Who would support you in your journey into the mission field? What event in your life let you know that you have a role in helping more people live better lives in Honduras?

[Contact me](#), Michael Franklin, today for more information on how to help donate to [AHMEN's Community Empowerment Program](#) or to join the Río de Agua Viva team.