

The Jungle Journey

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Amazon, Peru

Janderson's parents were very frustrated with the behaviors their teenage son was manifesting on a regular basis. The constant influence from peers at school, their negative attitudes, and even delinquent tendencies brought unwanted chaos home. Concerned for their son, his parents faced a difficult decision to send him to Lima for high school. He was convinced that was the only way things could get better.

One day, his mother was invited to church for the first time on an Encounter night and he decided to go along. He was amazed by the infrastructure, the genuine atmosphere, and the joy of the people. He was so shocked that he asked his mother to take him again the next Sunday.

That Sunday at Real Love, the youth group, he heard a sermon about loving one's neighbor. He learned that, regardless of the mistakes and problems of others, we can always make a difference with an attitude of compassion and mercy, just as Jesus teaches us.

It was the first time Janderson recognized he didn't have to follow the crowd and could live differently. He told his mother that he no longer wanted to change schools. Instead of running away from the situation at his school, he wanted to make a difference by showing love and empathy to his peers.

Today, thanks to Janderson's decision, his entire family comes to the church. They had sought help in other places, but this was the first time change ever came. His dad has gone through his encounter and now serves at church. Janderson serves in Real Love, helping other teens get connected and find a place to belong. His story is a testimony of how a person can transform his environment when he allows God to work in his life.

“You Want Leaders?”

It was almost ten years ago when, in frustration, Nelton asked God, “Where are all the leaders? Where are all the

people who say they want to serve you and build your church? Send me leaders!” He felt the Holy Spirit tell him something that has driven and motivated us. “You want leaders? Form them.” Much of what we do is dedicated to raising up leaders who follow Jesus and lead others to him.

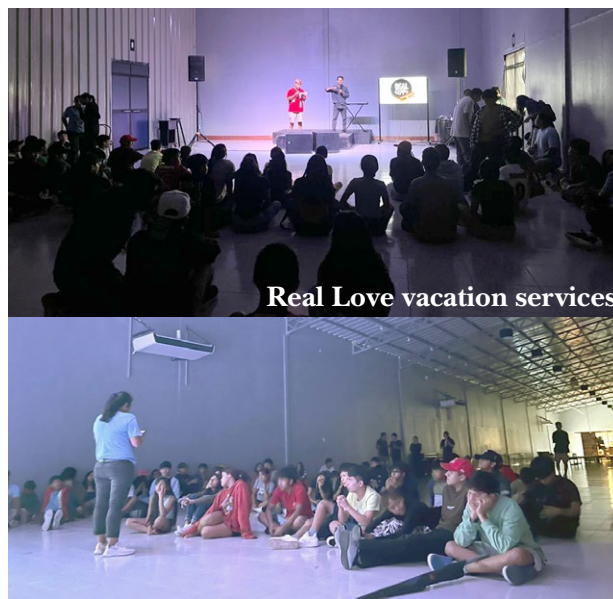
Over the past several years, the demographic of Genesis Church has begun to change. It is no longer made up predominately of youth ages 14-18. Many of the original youth have grown into young adults and serve as leaders of the church. Some have won their parents and families, others are starting families of their own. But we have strived to keep church a place where people want to be as the Spirit transforms them.

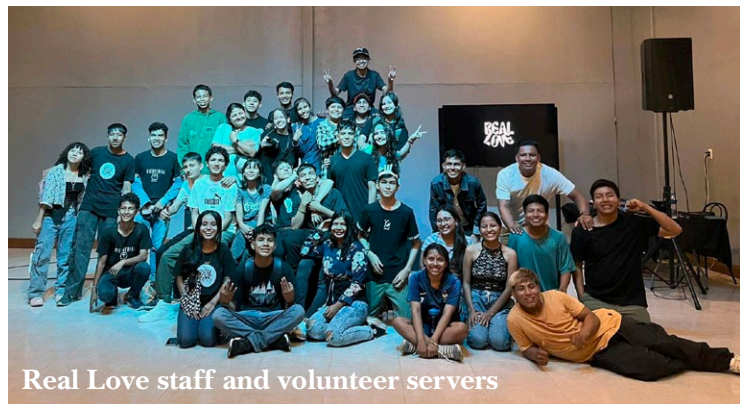
It has been incredible to see a second generation of young people take up leadership and find their purpose and passion in Jesus Christ. It has been especially exciting to watch this generation fall in love with Him as two of our own daughters, Kyliana and Briel, are part of it. It has been a prayer that our children would not resent Christ or His Bride, but see their place in the body.

Two years ago, a couple of teenagers started a spontaneous Sunday school class that has turned into the youth group. Real Love has been instrumental in bringing the next generation to Christ as they find a place to belong. Since they are more involved than I am, I asked Kyliana and Briel to share a little about the growth happening with the youth. Briel's piece can be found under Briel's Breeze.

Real Love Story *By Kyliana Noriega*

Real Love, the church's youth ministry, started in 2023—around April, as far as I can remember. It all started when one of my spiritual brothers came up to me and asked if I wanted to help him start a youth ministry for teens from 12 to 16 years old. At first, I wasn't too sure about it, but after a few minutes of thinking, I thought, “Why not?”





Real Love staff and volunteer servers

The following Sunday, we started by gathering all the youth that we could find from the main auditorium. We met in what was then the pastor's office, which would later become the Real Love room. We started out with about 8 to 10 teens every Sunday, four who were regular attendants. We had six leaders, and with that, we began to grow. Later on, we moved out into what is now the kids' ministry classroom. It was still under construction at the time, with only a metal sheet roof and wooden supporting beams. We moved there because the pastors didn't want us using their office every Sunday.

That became our weekly routine, going into the auditorium to invite the youth to come and join our small youth group. We played games and then we would share chips and pop. Next, we had a short message, which was only about five minutes long. And that was how it went for about nine months.

During those months, we slowly moved back into the pastor's office again, this time with their approval. We were finally more official and had video announcements on the big screen to invite adolescents to the youth group. We were happy to have our own space, but I'm going to be real honest here. It was a pretty old, ugly, little looking place, but we made the most of it.

Our team was praying for help to make the room look nicer and more appealing for the youth. Our prayers were answered when a team dedicated their mission trip to painting and decorating the classroom, complete with stocked shelves that had games and materials. It was awesome!! It looked new and attractive. We also put some sound equipment in, so we had microphones and background music. It was an even cooler place for the youth.

A few more months went by and the teenagers were inviting their friends. More and more youth filled the room, about 20-30 adolescents, every Sunday. So, we developed a system where we had four teams: the lions, the tigers, the buffalos, and the lambs. Those four teams competed against

each other in games and different challenges. Every team had two leaders and a helper, at the very most.

Some more leaders joined the ministry, and some left; some because of study, others due to dedicating their time in other ministries in the church, and others just made the decision to leave the church altogether. We've now become a stable team of ten leaders, the oldest being 35, and me, the youngest, at 14 years old. And then we have Pastor Gabo as our head youth pastor over all of us. Many more youth have found a place in Real Love and are also learning, helping and serving in the ministry.

Our Sundays have grown to 50-70 youth every week, not counting all the leaders and helpers already there. We now only have two teams: the lions and the buffalos. Needless to say, we were very cramped in our classroom. So our team decided to move Real Love to Saturday afternoon, given the fact that kids are out of school from December to March. It was also something we had been praying about for a while.



So that is exactly where we are right now. We have moved into the new community addition, where there is so much more space for the teens. Every week we set up and tear down the space. We even have our own movable stage, lights, and sound equipment. It's all run by youth under the supervision of leaders. It's all going great! New youth are coming and several are even bringing their families to church on Sunday.

Our old classroom looks very small compared to where we are now. In fact! That classroom no longer belongs to the Real Love ministry, it is now used for other purposes inside the church. So, now you may be asking yourself, "well, where will they go when vacation is over?"

That's just the thing! We have prayed and know that we will not be going back to the small room, because we don't believe in moving backwards! We will move forward and only forward! We believe Real Love is impacting so many teens' lives that we can only go forward. There is no point in going to the past. We will move in faith! We are thinking of putting a tarp outside, along with some speakers and microphones when vacation is over. We continue to pray for a brand new space for Real Love on the church property and believe God will answer soon. Our team would very much appreciate your help in joining us in prayer!

Real Love Camp

There is an uninvited narrative that frequently invades our minds to limit who God has called us to be and to do what he has called us to do. "I can't" is a common

phrase that rattles faith, limiting our ability to serve God with full abandon. The temptation to people-please often intimidates us to blend in and go with the status quo, rather than taking a stand for truth. We believe God wants to raise up Esthers and Daniels who boldly confront the culture of Persia and Babylon in their generation.

Real Love is gearing up to put on their first camp in March called "Breaking Limits." The goal is to identify and expose the spirit of intimidation and introduce Biblical boldness and courage. Material is being put together to teach in sessions, then reinforce the lessons through experiential physical and mental challenges, games, and activities.

Will you join us in praying for the 67 who will go as campers? Pray for a powerful time of God solidifying his word and will in their lives.

When it Rains, it Pours

It's the rainy season here in Iquitos, and "when it rains, it pours" seems to apply to more than just the weather. The major things that come to mind from January include: Jander and Kate got married! Selah had her first UTI (she's better now) and Nelton has been struggling with health issues. We addressed a minor house repair, which

has turned into significant remodeling due to major termite nests. Our spiritual son, Coco, was assaulted by two armed men who stole his motorcycle. He wasn't hurt and even got his bike back. Unheard of!

Wyatt had his second heart surgery and is recovering well. Our brother-in-law, Manuel, had a heart attack and has been sorting through the implications of that. That same week, his second son was due, so I spent a week with Hannah while Manuel was in the hospital.

It's been busy in a lot of ways that weren't expected, but we are still here and are still moving forward. We're always grateful for your prayers and partnership.

What will God do in 2025?

*Nelton, Bethany J.,
Kyliana, Briel, Jayden, and Selah Joy*



Jander and Kate were married January 23, 2025



PRAISE POINTS

- The second generation of youth are rising up!
- That Kyliana and Briel are peer leaders.
- That trials show growth

PRAYER POINTS

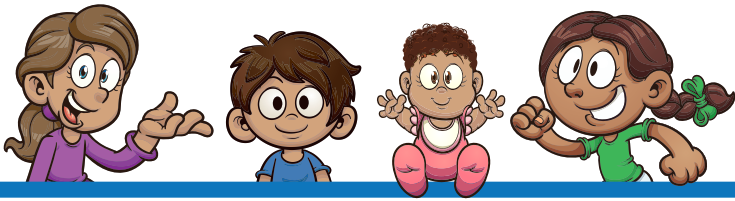
- For God to move in Real Love Camp, March 2025
- For the new Real Love gym we want to build

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* All gifts are tax deductible and may be made payable to:
International Messengers, PO Box 618, Clear Lake, IA 50428
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E-mail: NeltonandBethany@gmail.com





KYLIANA'S KORNER

See main text "Real Love Story" starting at the bottom of page one.

BRIEL'S BREEZE

In 2024, I went to Real Love for the first time. I was nervous to go because I heard lots of gossip saying Real Love is boring and lame. I wanted to stay in the service and not go, but my cousin drug me along. I didn't want to go, but when I stepped in, it wasn't boring; it was fun. I got to meet lots of fun people and make new friends.

I noticed that it started to get crowded and hard to get around in our small space, since so many kids are coming. We started to talk about moving to Saturday instead of Sunday. In January 2025, we did just that. For our summer vacation (December- March), Real Love is now a youth service of its own.

But moving to Saturday meant we had to learn to do lots of new things like production, sound, photos, welcome team, worship team and more. I serve on production. We have had many new experiences. My cousin and I have both learned to respect and serve others.

In two months, after summer vacation, we may have to move back to the small room on Sundays. We are praying now for a new, bigger space and you can be part of it too! Please pray with us that God would provide so we can keep reaching more youth.

Thank you for taking part of your time to read this.

SELAH'S STORY

She's nine months and has four teeth, which she often uses to bite; a habit I hope to break



So close to walking!

sooner than later. She is cruising along furniture, but isn't too sure about taking independent steps. She's mostly happy, but has a temper that flares up when she's angry. And I'm not sure how time flies this fast!



Briel loves serving with the youth

JUST JAYDEN

We often start our school day by praying through a list of big things we are asking God to do. One day in December, Jayden said he didn't want to pray for all the things. I told him instead of asking for things on the list, he could thank God for all the miracles we have already seen.

"I haven't seen any miracles." He said dryly.

My jaw dropped as I thought of all the ways we have seen God do the impossible. Right as I was about to list several of them (including a new truck for fellow missionaries, a million dollars for buying the church, and a baby for Hannah), the Holy Spirit hushed me, *"What is a miracle to you is normal to him. If he hasn't seen a miracle, that's okay. Ask him what a miracle would be for him and pray for that."* I asked.

"Wyatt coming home for Christmas," he said without hesitating.

We had been praying for that for months, but when doctors said it wouldn't be possible, we stopped praying. That day we started praying again and a few weeks later celebrated Christmas together with them in Iquitos! Jayden has seen his first miracle!



The first miracle Jayden has seen: Wyatt got to come home for Christmas!