



*Voices Today:**
History in the Making

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Sonya Fultz, ALDEA Board Member



I have been connected to the work of ALDEA since 2004. My connection to the country of Guatemala started two years earlier as we finalized the adoption of our son, Marty Jose, who came home in 2003. So many have asked why all these years later I am still so passionate about giving back to Guatemala.

Recently I sat with a dear new friend who didn't know the story of Marty's adoption and I shared with her the yearlong wait to bring him home. I now recognize so clearly that although my heart ached terribly as I waited for him to be home, it was during that year--and five trips to see him--that I became so passionate about a life-long commitment to changing the lives of rural Guatemalans! Lucky for me, I found an organization that strives to implement best practices empowering rural Guatemalans through partnership and education to change their own lives. My thanks to our son for introducing me to a country that has truly changed my life!

ALDEA is the organization through which I live out this passion that only a child can create in us!

Since 2008, I have served on the Board of Directors for ALDEA and have served as President of the board since 2019. A strength I have brought to the board is the opportunity to share the work of ALDEA with adoptive families both in the US and internationally. More than 75 families have traveled back to Guatemala with me over the years to see the work of ALDEA firsthand. I have also had the privilege of speaking at FTGA, MOGUATE and GUATNEWENGLAND gatherings where the organizations in return generously supported the organization. Probably my most proud moment, though, is to now see Guatemalan adoptees getting involved with ALDEA as volunteers

and donors themselves. I could not be more proud to have been a small part of their story in connecting with the organization.

There is truly no more rewarding part of being engaged with ALDEA than walking alongside villagers to hear their stories and the impact of the program on their lives. Each time I spend time in villages, I am taken by the innocence of the many young faces I meet. These children, the future of Guatemala, face hardships most of us cannot imagine. Being there reminds me there is so much to be done to be a small part of changing the realities of today that face the families of these children so they may know a better tomorrow.