



1990 Lakeside Parkway Suite 140 Tucker, GA 30084 USA

Dear Storyteller,

Thank you for agreeing to serve communities in Central America by acting as your team's Storyteller! Your role is integral to the success of HOI's continued ministries and will have an impact on the lives of both North and Central Americans.

By sharing experiences from your trip with HOI, you will share the powerful stories of God's work in, through, and around you and your team and in the communities you serve. If you've participated on a mission trip before or have a friend or family member who has, you know that returning volunteers often struggle to communicate what they experience while on the trip. Your story, which will be published on HOI's online blog, will allow you to express some of the moments that meant the most to you or your team.--- while giving others the opportunity to learn about what God is doing in places like Honduras and Nicaragua!

In addition to helping us understand others' experiences, stories often propel us to action. Some of HOI's most active volunteers and donors became involved because they heard a true story so powerful that it moved them to act, as you will see in the example below. By sharing your story, you invite others to participate as well, multiplying the impact of the ministries in the communities we serve.

Don't worry if you don't have writing experience—the example and tips below will give you the guidance you'll need, and your story will be edited by HOI staff for spelling and grammar before it is published. The most important thing is to share your heart, and the rest will fall into place!

Please review the storytelling guidelines below and send me your story within two weeks of your return to the U.S. Don't hesitate to contact me with any questions! Thank you again for serving in this way!

Blessings,

Louis Deas

Communications Coordinator
404-32767 ext. 101
louis.deas@hoi.org

Storyteller Guidelines

After breakfast Jerry and Archie walked over to a cattle corral just outside the gate where a cowboy was milking a Brahma cow with her legs tied together, and a couple of cowboys were bringing more cattle. A dozen or more Honduran children in filthy T-shirts had gathered, all of them looking malnourished, and some with distended bellies from parasites. Each of the children held a little plastic bottle with the top cut off by a machete, watching intently as the cowboy squirted milk into a dirty bucket.

After a few minutes, one of the children stepped up, and the cowboy picked up a ladle from the manure on the ground, dipped some milk out of the bucket, and poured it into the child's bottle. The cowboy put his ladle down in the mud again, and the boy walked away smiling broadly, carrying his milk as carefully as if it were liquid gold.

In that moment Jerry was changed. Since his childhood he had heard and read Christ's words, "Blessed are the poor in spirit." Now, for the first time, he understood. He saw the poor – the truly poor, the starving poor. Looking at their muddy little faces and their clear brown eyes, he believed God had a blessing for them in this world. And somehow through this ranch, God wanted Jerry to participate in that blessing.

None of the Honduran adults understood the relationship between the ladle lying in the manure and the sick and dying children. Somebody had to teach them how to be more sanitary – the basics of good health and nutrition. Jerry knew people back in the States who could do those things.

– excerpted from *They Call it Paraiso* by Dick Parker

—

This story about HOI founder Jerry Eickhoff's first trip to Honduras has introduced countless people to the poverty in Honduras. Inspired by this short, simple story, many of these people have been inspired to take steps to improve the quality of life of children like the one who walked away with dirty milk – participating in mission trips, funding a child's education, or financing the construction of a new clinic.

You, too, can create a powerful story that inspires others to act! Read on to begin.

During Your Trip

"Great stories happen to those who can tell them." - Ira Glass, American writer and storyteller

1. As you go through your trip week, you may want to keep a journal or notebook to record moments that stand out. For example, you could jot down a funny misunderstanding between a teammate and a villager, a sweet hug with a child during VBS at just the right time, or a special goodbye during the fiesta on the last day. (Remember that these are just examples, and you will experience many more memorable moments "worth writing home about"!)

2. Try to take note of any times that you feel strong emotions – anything that makes you smile, laugh, or cry is likely to have an impact on readers too.

3. Asking questions of those around you, like the villagers you work with and the HOI staff, will also open your eyes to what's going on around you, and will help you gain a deeper understanding of the local culture and people (the setting and characters of your story).

Getting Started

You may want to begin writing while you're still on your trip, or you may choose to wait until after you've returned home (either way, please send in your story within two (2) weeks of your return). When you're ready to start writing:

1. Think back on your trip and glance through your journal, noting any defining moments.
2. Focus on the **moments** that you remember.
 - a. **Avoid** long, rambling stories.
 - b. Instead, **find the turning point**, the moment of discovery, the one experience when everything changed for you. *For example, if you are telling us a story about working on a chimney, don't describe the entire process. Tell us about the moment when the family's grandmother saw the finished product for the first time.*
3. Choose a story to tell that does one of the things listed below (tells who you are, teaches a lesson, motivates change, etc.).

What Sorts of Stories Can You Tell?

Tell Who I Am

Stories about moments that changed you or that clarified your values

- *i.e. what others need to know to join you in your support of ministries in Honduras/Nicaragua*

Tell Who We Are

Stories about values of HOI or the local village that hosts your team

- *what makes up the DNA of HOI or the host community?*

Teach a Lesson

Stories that show how you learned something through failure or success, how you mastered a skill, or how you overcame resistance

Motivate Change

Stories that shed light on what's wrong with the present situation

- *establish the case for continuing work in developing countries, create a vision for the future*

Change the Frame

Stories that allow your audience to see a problem through a different lens or from a different perspective

- *helping to diffuse or change the emotional climate of a situation*

As you Write

Try to keep our story to around 500 words long if possible. Remember that HOI staff will help with grammar and spelling, so you can focus on sharing what's on your heart!

When your Story is Finished

Congratulations on writing a great story, and THANK YOU! By sharing this story, you're spreading the good news of God's Kingdom on earth and recruiting others to join in this work!

Within two (2) weeks of returning from your trip, please send your story to Louis Deas by email at louis.deas@hoi.org, fax to 404-327-5767, or mail to 1990 Lakeside Parkway, Suite 140. Tucker, GA 30084. You will be notified when your story is published so that you can share it with family and friends.