

July 31, 2008

Well, we've been back for almost one month now and we can't believe it. Our trip was simply wonderful. Geovanny was a fantastic tour guide with a wealth of information and knowledge about the culture, history and people of Guatemala. He interacted so well with all of us...the adults, younger children and older kids. The older kids loved him. Nancy did an excellent job of coordinating places to go. It was a pleasure to travel with Paula and Carol...

Michael told me the other day how much better he felt talking with the other kids in his group concerning adoption issues. Now, of course, his dad and I have told him repeatedly that he is not the only adopted child who thinks about his birth family. He has heard that from us for many years. Only after speaking with the other kids on this trip did he realize he was not alone with his thoughts!

After visiting one village Michael expressed to me how hard life was for the Guatemalan people. We talked about the single, pregnant women and why they make the choices they do. He actually said to me, "I do understand, Mom, because there is no other choice for them to make!"

We visited the town that [his birth mother] came from and got a glimpse of what her life had been like in Escuintla. But one of the things Mike like very much was when he asked me, "So, Mom, how does it feel to walk down the street when no one looks like YOU.....and everyone looks like ME?!!!!!"

Michael, his father and I have, over the years, read about Guatemala, the people, traditions, and food, and traveled around our state to various Hispanic cultural events. But there was no comparison until we experienced Guatemala firsthand through a trip like The Ties Program. Michael and I fell in love with Guatemala and the people. We were so sorry to have to leave to come home. But we know that we left part of our hearts and souls there. We also know that we will return again to The Land of The Eternal Spring.

This is a trip that every family who has children adopted from Guatemala should take. Thank you again for having such a terrific program with wonderful people involved in it.

Judy and Michael Kapandais