

## Strategic Giving 2023 – Youth in Bolivia

# Giving Children a Future

BY **ELEANOR CHUN**

IN BOLIVIA, child exploitation is rampant. Persistent issues such as poverty, the vulnerability of indigenous populations, and the disparagement of women and girls further exacerbate the problem.

\*Maribel was on the road towards becoming another statistic like many of the youth in the southern region of Cochabamba, Bolivia. Children and teenagers in this area often live in poverty. Many do not receive an education or support in daily life, and as a result they tend to fall into unhealthy generational cycles, including prostitution and living on the streets.

Maribel is the second oldest child of four children. At one point, none of the children were able to go to school.

Because of Maribel's darker complexion, she suffered frequent rejection and discrimination from many in the community which adversely affected her sense of self-worth.

Maribel and her family discovered the *Emmanuel Foundation Children with a Future* program during this difficult time in her childhood. CBM's partner in Bolivia administers this program which focuses specifically on young people at risk of living on the streets and in danger of sexual exploitation. Through the program, children and their families are given the opportunity to discover their God-given talents and understand that they each have value. With proper education and support, the youth are encouraged to study, take care of their own health, and make positive choices for their future.

Your generosity ensures that each child has access to nutritious meals, medical and dental care, as well as vocational training for future employment prospects. The parent(s) are encouraged to learn how to sew as an alternate means of income. They learn how to sustainably grow their own food as a family, which helps to develop productive inter-relationships and improve family dynamics.

The staff of the *Children with a Future* program who welcomed Maribel and her siblings when they first arrived noticed her incredible shyness. She was in second grade when she started the program, and it was apparent that her time out of school and the relentless discrimination she endured had greatly eroded her self-esteem. With patience, kindness, and love, the staff ministered to her spiritually and helped her in practical ways. Maribel soon emerged as a much more confident and focused teenager today, one who knows she is capable of great things. The dream of attending university was never a thought for her, but today, she has made it her goal as well as helping others in need.



Children at the Foundation, enjoying the books purchased with the help of CBM



**CBWOQ Strategic Giving 2023**

CBWOQ has committed to raising \$15,000 to this Emmanuel Foundation Children With A Future program.

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Maribel loves to read, particularly books related to faith. She learned about God through this process and credits the change in her life to His work through all the people who have supported her saying, “I like coming to the program because I learn a lot here and I have books within my reach. I thank the Lord for the program because I met the Lord here. Also, I have people who inspire me to get ahead. The staff help us see that if we study, we can achieve many things.”

Mirabel remains grateful for the choices in front of her that this program has made possible. “I want to study and be a person who bears fruit. I want to stay in the faith and in the church and I want to travel abroad and see a little of the places that the staff told us about...I thank you for supporting me and supporting the children of the program. I want to tell you that your support and donations are not in vain, we are striving to do things right. I know we can make life better. May the Lord bless you and your families.”

Eleanor Chun, CBM

\*Names changed to protect privacy.

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Romans 8:25

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REGISTRAR: **Marion Nurse**  
2 Keewatin Gate, Brampton, ON L6Y 2X2  
(905) 459-2087 - [mjn9149@gmail.com](mailto:mjn9149@gmail.com)

ettransfer payments [elimretreat51@gmail.com](mailto:elimretreat51@gmail.com)

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