

The BOYK BULLETIN

Helping The Local & Global Community: Honduras Service Trips Touch Lives of Boyk Law Family



Steffenie Merillat (left) & Evan Merillat (right) with Honduran children

When Attorney Wes Merillat and his wife Steffenie were talking about what to get their son, Evan, for his 13th birthday, the discussion turned toward something more valuable than money could buy. Instead of an iPhone or the very specific Nike shoes that Evan was asking for, the parents decided to go with a gift of perspective – a trip to Honduras with their church, Cedar Creek, to serve the less fortunate and assist in “Centro de Desarrollo Infantil” (Children’s Development Center), a before- and after-school program that provides the participating kids with meals, homework support, and Sunday school type classes.

Last July, Steffenie and Evan traveled for 16 hours; 3,000 miles from the comfort of home to stay with a host family who spoke little English and lived in a home with concrete floors and a metal roof. They spent much of the week painting and readying classrooms, building homes, and travelling long distances

by pick-up truck to provide groceries and supplies to families in need.

“To see the housing conditions of some of the kids we had gotten to know was astounding,” Steffenie said. “Some were so far up the mountain that the trucks couldn’t take us all the way, and we’d have to hike – up mountains, across streams, and over make-shift bridges – to get there. It was amazing to see the reactions of mothers when handed a simple box of beans, rice, eggs and other staples. Tears and gratitude flowed out and touched us all. One special moment was when we surprisingly hiked up to the house of the girl that our family sponsors. Evan and I were able to meet her, her mom, her twin sister and her brother. On one wall was an old photograph of Evan, Avah, and Casen which we had sent her.”

We sat down with Steffenie and asked her to share with readers some highlights of the life-changing experience:

What was it like watching your son participate?

I was able to catch a glimpse of Evan’s soft heart, connecting with strangers to the point he didn’t want to leave them. As a mom, it was so rewarding.

How did the trip change your outlook on life?

No matter where or who they are, people want a good life for themselves and their families. They want dignity and respect. Moms want to feed their children good food, and provide a pathway to success. The tears of gratitude we

experienced when delivering basic staples to these struggling families broke our hearts and opened our eyes. We are all so much alike.

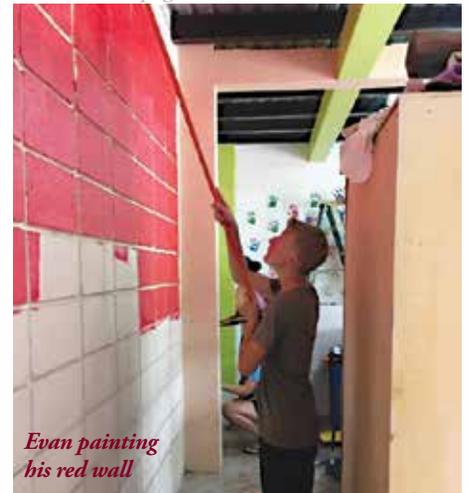
What advice would you give to families or individuals who would like to make a mission trip like that or get involved but don’t have the ability to travel so far from home?

The kids are precious. It is life-changing for them to get a sponsor and have access to all the programs and services the Great Commission church provides. It costs \$45-50 per month to sponsor a child in La Ceiba. To find out more please visit: <http://cedarcreek.tv/sponsor/>

What are your thoughts on going back?

We are hoping to go back. Evan talks about it a lot. We have a family there, and it’s hard to think about not seeing them again someday.

(continued on page 2)



Evan painting his red wall

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(continued from page 1)

Another person dedicated to the Honduran cause is Boyk Law nurse paralegal Julia Benfield, who helps coordinate the Honduras leg of the University of Toledo Emergency Residency's Global Health Outreach. UTMRC's emergency medicine residents go to Honduras as a mission team three to four times per year, and work with a local clinic called Salud Total in La Ceiba, Honduras.

The last trip was in November and the team treated 270 patients and also took a senior pharmacy student along to help provide education to their newly licensed on-site pharmacy program. The Global Health Outreach team is comprised of ER attending and resident doctors, nurses, and medical students who provide healthcare and health education in conjunction with Cedar Creek Church, who supports the clinic.

Julia has made multiple trips to Honduras and has plans to continue her regular pilgrimages to provide medical support to those in need.

"The goal of these trips is not only to take care of and educate the local population, but aid in the education of our residents and students," Julia said.



The University of Toledo Emergency Residency's Global Health Outreach team in La Ceiba, Honduras

Employee Spotlight: Julia Benfield

What started out as an internship opportunity for Julia Benfield as she worked to complete her Nurse Paralegal degree from the University of Toledo quickly grew into a permanent position with the firm. She performs medical records reviews, lending her 23 years of nursing experience to our clients' cases.

Chuck Boyk and the other attorneys at Boyk Law have found her extra help to be invaluable when analyzing our serious injury cases and her file reviews add a fresh perspective which they have grown to rely on.

"Julia's ability to recognize medical issues and translate them into a language that we can understand has been vital to the firm," Chuck said. "Her expertise as an emergency room charge nurse has put her on the front lines of countless auto accidents and work injuries, which means that she can relate to our clients in a way that very few people can. We are very lucky to have her on our team."

In between working two jobs and running a household of six, Julia still finds time to help her husband make and sell their (almost) famous homemade wine and travel to foreign countries to help those in need of medical assistance. We sat down with Julia to see what life is like for the busy mom of four.

What do you like to do in your spare time?

I teach karate twice a week. We also own a new winery in Swanton that we are working on getting public.

Tell us about your family.

I have been married to my husband Rob for 18 years and we have four kids. I work both for Charles Boyk and the University of Toledo, and consider all my coworkers my extended family.

Favorite ice cream?

Breyers Waffle Cone with Chocolatey Chips

Favorite food?

Anything Mexican or Latin American

What book are you reading right now?

The Heart Speaks: A Cardiologist Reveals the Secret Language of Healing by Mimi Guarneri

Favorite Pixar movie?

"What Dreams May Come"

What's the farthest you've been from home?

La Ceiba, Honduras

What is your favorite hobby?

Listening to music, karate, and being with family.



Julia (right) with a UTMC co-worker

CASES OF INTEREST: FEBRUARY 2017

Co-Workers At A Local Correctional Facility Were Attacked By Inmates, Suffering Serious Injuries

Partners patrolling the same area at a local correctional facility were attacked at the same time by inmates, in an area where cameras were not working. This was not the first time a disruption had broken out in that area and the facility was aware of the non-functioning cameras that led to the inadequate protection of the employees, leaving one of the workers with nine staples in his head, bruised ribs, concussion, numerous cuts and bruises, and strong symptoms of PTSD. His partner also suffered a concussion, the need for stitches in his head and face, a fractured tooth, and an eye that was completely swollen shut after serious hemorrhaging.

Deadly Crash On Ohio Turnpike Leaves Client With A Fractured Neck & Grief For His Friend

Our client was the passenger in a fatal car accident that left him with a fractured neck and fractured ankle. He struggles with the grief of losing his friend, sleeplessness, and the severe emotional trauma of watching him pass away, all while facing the potential need for surgery to repair his injuries. Boyk Law is assisting him with follow-up appointments to orthopedic surgeons and psychiatrists as we work to get his injuries covered by the at-fault party's insurance company.

Dog Bite Leaves Two-Year-Old girl Scarred & Scared

Three days shy of her second birthday, our client was bit in the face by a relative's dog, causing the need for 30-40 stitches and narrowly missing the child's eye. The girl faces another round of plastic surgery and possibility that her scars will be permanent.



TPS Proud Student & Teacher of the Month, December – Toledo Technology Academy



Nick Baumgartner & Bill Coine

Winning student: Nick Baumgartner, Sophomore
Nominated by: Bill Coine, Toledo Technology Academy American Government teacher

Reason for Nomination: “Nick gets excited - about everything - including school. He loves to learn, and while it often doesn’t come easily to him, he never gives up. At times he might struggle academically, but he’s persistent and willing to try anything. At our recent Halloween party, our gym teacher (a guy) taught Nick how to slow dance. That visual was one for the books, but Nick was overjoyed. He’d learned a new skill. He openly talks about the many surgeries he underwent when he was little, and he is totally candid about his obvious physical disability. Some kids would let that get in the way. Not Nick. He often comes charging into the room before school to show me something he’s done or something he got as a gift. He’s a grateful kid – no matter how large or small the offering. He always has a positive attitude and is well-liked by his classmates. In all probability, adult life is going to be a challenge for Nick, but given his outlook on life in general, he’ll be a winner.”



Maya Nair & Shelby McElroy

Winning teacher: Shelby McElroy, Toledo Technology Academy Math teacher
Nominated by: Maya Nair, Student

Reason for Nomination: “I like that she does so much for the school. She has seventh graders twice a day, she has juniors, she has no planning period and she always finds time for us. She helps the kids who are farther ahead get more of a challenge than what the rest of the class is doing. And she runs Lego League and she just does so much for the school.”

When asked on camera to describe one thing that Mrs. McElroy has taught her that will stick with her the rest of her life, Maya responded, “That it’s really important to be kind to people.”

The TPS Proud Student and Teacher of the Month contest is a joint effort between Charles E. Boyk Law Offices, LLC and Toledo Public Schools. Each month, one teacher and one student from one of TPS’s high schools will be awarded with a \$150 Visa gift card. Stay tuned for winners from next month’s school, Bowsher High School.

BOYK LAW ATTORNEY TRAVELED TO D.C. FOR WOMEN’S MARCH

On January 21st, Attorney Leah Michael joined over 500,000 people in Washington, D.C. for the Women’s March, whose mission is to “Stand together in solidarity with our partners and children for the protection of our rights, our safety, our health, and our families – recognizing that our vibrant and diverse communities are the strength of our country.”

Leah was joined by fellow Toledoans Carrie Russell Hartman, Brittany Moore, and Steven Spittler, who are all active members of the Young Democrats in Lucas County.

“I am beyond proud that even with nearly triple the estimated number of participants expected there was not one reported arrest in D.C., not one riot or destruction of property,” Leah said. “This is what a peaceful protest is supposed to be and I’m honored to have been a part of it. Many thanks to Rebecca Boone and Courtney Macklin for making this once in a lifetime experience a reality for many northwest Ohio people. Not only was I able to take part in a truly awe-inspiring event but I was lucky enough to do so next to my very best friends and I got to make a lot more along the way!”



Leah Michael, Carrie Russell Hartman, Brittany Moore, and Steven Spittler

RECIPE: Brianne’s Best Breakfast Skillet

INGREDIENTS

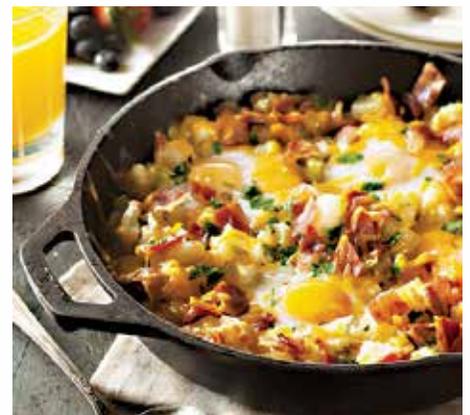
- 6-7 thick slices bacon
- ½ small sweet onion, diced
- ½ cup mushrooms, chopped
- ½ cup green peppers, diced
- 8oz (one roll) hot sausage
- 3-4 small russet potatoes, cubed
- 3 eggs
- 4oz shredded cheddar cheese

DIRECTIONS

1. In a large cast-iron or oven-proof skillet, cook bacon until crisp then set aside. Remove half of bacon drippings and set aside in a small bowl.
2. In the same skillet, sauté onion, mushrooms, and green peppers until soft. Set aside cooked vegetables.

3. Cook hot sausage in skillet, breaking up into small pieces, until cooked through and brown. Set aside in same bowl as vegetables.
4. Add reserve bacon drippings back into skillet and cook cubed potatoes until they pierce easily with a fork. Add sausage and vegetables back into the skillet and cook everything until hot. Sprinkle cheese over the top of everything until melted.
5. While the mixture is cooking, cook eggs in a separate pan to desired liking. (Most like them sunny side up!).
6. Top skillet with cooked eggs and salt and pepper to taste. Serve with toast and orange juice.

Want to give your loved one something special this Valentine’s Day? Make breakfast in bed with this tasty (and filling!) breakfast skillet.





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IN THIS ISSUE

- **Helping The Local & Global Community: Honduras Service Trips Touch Lives of Boyk Law Family**
- **Employee Spotlight: Julia Benfield**
- **February Cases of Interest**
- **TPS Proud Student & Teacher of the Month**
- **Boyk Law Employees Travels To Women's March**
- **Recipe: Brianne's Best Breakfast Skillet**

February's Raving Fan of the Month

"Cynthia in Chuck Boyk's office was the most pleasant to speak with. She made my family feel like we matter and made sure we were heard. Lisa was the same she kept us informed and answered all my questions. And Chuck – oh my gosh - he was amazing. #1 in my book!" – Carl W.



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Keeping Kids Entertained with the Boyk Law Treasure Chest

We never want parents to have to choose between getting the legal help they need and finding or paying for a babysitter, so we encourage parents to let their kids tag along to any appointment they may have at our Downtown office. (Kids are always welcome at our other locations, too, it's just not as fun!)

Why do kids love visiting our office? THE TREASURE CHEST!!! Children are always welcome and will be invited to pick out toys from our Treasure Chest, read books from our Kids Library, color with crayons or on our huge dry erase wall, or enjoy children's shows while they wait for Mom or Dad! Attorney

Chuck Boyk has even welcomed employees to bring their kids in on days when it's hard to find a sitter, like days when school is delayed or a doctor's appointment is scheduled.

Boyk Law paralegal Katie Braunreuther's daughter, Emma, was so excited about the Toy Chest when she came to visit the office that we decided to feature her in a firm video about the Treasure Chest, which you can view on our YouTube page, www.youtube.com/user/ceboyk. Simply type "treasure chest" into the search bar on our YouTube page to view the cute video of Emma deeming it "the best day ever!"



Emma Braunreuther in the Boyk Law Treasure Chest video