



# **Salesian Chicos de la Calle**

## Education for Impoverished Children

— Esmeraldas, Ecuador —



For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord,  
plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope.

JEREMIAH 29:11



## **We are a Catholic ministry**

that mobilizes the global Catholic Church to transform the poor and their communities materially and spiritually for the glory of Jesus Christ.

Rather than create new institutions to distribute aid, we support existing ministries and churches already serving the poor. In addition to being the most cost-effective way of helping the poor, empowering these ministries allows us to support the Church's spiritual mission and its important position of leadership in poor communities.

We consider every gift we receive as a precious resource from God. We direct every donation to its intended project, provide honest and accurate reports to our donors, and keep overhead costs to an industry low. We handle funds with utmost integrity and hold our ministry partners in the field to the same high standards by asking them to document costs and the impact of their outreach.

We invite you to join with us as we seek to transform the lives of the poor materially and spiritually — ways that please the Father and glorify him in Heaven and on earth.



## Project Synopsis

### Description

This project will provide 515 impoverished children educational and spiritual support, including a nutritious daily meal for 80 boys and girls most at risk of malnutrition.

### Purpose

To nurture and inspire children so they can recognize their God-given gifts and escape a cycle of poverty.

### Our Partners

Chicos de la Calle is an outreach ministry of the Salesians of Don Bosco - Catholic priests dedicated to serving impoverished youth.

### Location

Esmeraldas, Ecuador.

### Cost

\$31,944

### Highlights

- The fringes of the coastal city of Esmeraldas are filled with families living in abject poverty and unable to afford running water or adequate food.
- Ravaged by unemployment, addiction and gang intimidation, families can't afford education costs, so children either work physically demanding jobs at a young age or resort to living on the streets.
- Poor families now suffer even more because of the COVID-19 pandemic, which further restricts their access to food, work and education.
- Answering God's call, this Catholic ministry offers educational support and tutoring so boys and girls can succeed in school for the first time.
- Children and teens build faith and self-esteem through spiritual formation and recreational activities.
- Those in dire need receive a wholesome meal, Monday through Friday, and regular health checks that consist of having their height and weight recorded.
- The Salesians need your support! Their life-changing ministry to vulnerable children cannot continue without support from Cross Catholic Outreach.



*Nutritious meals ensure children overcome malnutrition and undernutrition.*



*Betty Cortez is grateful her son, Adrian, has an opportunity to escape the poverty that engulfs her family.*

## The Need

Through your support of Chicos de la Calle, the Lord will bless hundreds of children living in squalor. That may seem like an amazing claim, but it is true. When we work together with compassion and mercy, God can do incredible things to bless the poor.

In this case, Betty Cortez is one of the many parents benefitting from the gift, because by empowering the Chicos de la Calle's ministry, we are giving her hope that her children can escape the dangerous urban slum where they currently live.

Pictures of St. Anthony and Our Lady of Guadalupe are taped to the wall of her ramshackle home to keep this dream alive. They also remind her of God's love, despite the misery she sees around her. Her husband — a good man and a good father to their six children — was murdered a few years ago, and she knows violent gangs are always on the prowl for vulnerable children. Pervasive poverty has crushed the spirit of many here, and she doesn't want that to happen to her children. Unskilled adults can't find consistent employment and end up raising children in hovels without running water. For too many, this world of disease and addiction leads inevitably to an untimely death.

Education is also part of Betty's dream. Like most parents in the slum, she has never been able to provide its blessings to her children because she can't afford the cost of school supplies. Many slum families forgoing classwork will even have their children work as laborers to supplement meager incomes. Other boys and girls become beggars on the street, where they can fall prey to gangs or be lured into prostitution.

In the face of these hardships, Betty does all she can to hold on to her faith and to the dream that her children become educated so they can "become somebody."

***And now, with your support, Chicos de la Calle can help make this dream come true!***

Chicos de la Calle will be able to show her children that they *already* are somebody — beloved children of God! You'll also be empowering the mission's educational plan, one that will open wide the gates of learning so her children and many others can discover their God-given gifts and build a way out of poverty!



## Ministry Description

Your gift will enable the caring team at Chicos de la Calle to transform despair into hope. Each of the 515 impoverished children reached by this ministry is blessed with programs that heal the mind, body and spirit.

### Mind

The past success of the program's educational outreach can be continued through your gift. What is this history of success? Incredibly, 92% of children at the center passed their final school exams last year and were able to move on to the next grade. To achieve results such as these, impoverished children must overcome large obstacles, including illiterate family members and being too poor to pay for pencils, paper, books and other supplies.

Chicos de la Calle offers assistance so children can clear these hurdles, which have become higher by the COVID-19 pandemic. A backpack filled with classroom supplies will be delivered to students' homes per social distancing guidelines. Also, students previously would receive two hours of tutoring each afternoon at the center, and parents would gather for workshops. For this upcoming school year, the ministry team will work with students and parents during home visits, until the government lifts quarantine measures.



*Daily tutoring helps students succeed in class.*

### Body

Your support also enables Chicos de la Calle to provide a nutritious meal to 80 of the most impoverished children in the program. In the wake of the pandemic, families are being given prepaid cards for food at local markets instead of having children gather at the center for meals. During a typical school year, Chicos de la Calle provides wholesome activities that encourage exercise and build self-esteem. Following their tutoring, students may participate in soccer games and a marimba dance team. Expert training enables students to excel at choreographed dancing to marimba music, featuring colorful costumes and a joyful expression of the country's heritage. The Salesians are currently waiting for further direction from the government in light of COVID-19 restrictions, before determining how to proceed with this year's activities.

### Spirit

Students' lives are transformed as Salesian priests lead them to discover the healing and hope the Lord offers. Boys and girls discover the joys of the Church's sacraments with baptism, first communion and confirmation. Priests also lead students and their families in weekly masses and special celebrations during Holy Week, special feast days and more.

**These ministries for the mind, body and spirit are possible only with the support of Cross Catholic Outreach. Please help us fulfill our commitment to the boys and girls of Esmeraldas!**





## Help Now!

Our Salesian missionary partners in Ecuador boldly follow the example of the founder of their order — St. John Bosco. He ministered to the street children of the new industrial age in 19<sup>th</sup>-century Italy.

This holy priest, popularly known as Don Bosco, once proclaimed: “The power of evil men lives on the cowardice of the good.”

This is no time to let cowardice crush dreams! Instead, let’s join the Salesian missionaries and stand up bravely for the children of the slums! It is only with the support of bold Catholics like you that the inspired Salesians can provide the educational, nutritional and spiritual support that impoverished boys and girls need in order to overcome the injustices of poverty.

In the years to come, these children will remember you for the courage you showed in helping conquer the evil plaguing their lives. As we follow the example of St. John Bosco, let us boldly proclaim the good grace of God and celebrate the hope he will bring into these young people’s lives!

“It is not enough to love the young; they must KNOW that they are loved.”

**ST. JOHN BOSCO**

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### Our Promise to You!

Donations from this campaign will be used to cover any expenditures for this project incurred through June 30, 2021, the close of our ministry’s fiscal year. In the event that more funds are raised than needed to fully fund the project, the excess funds, if any, will be used to meet the most urgent needs of the ministry.

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