Central America after the storm
from the president

Reports of Hurricane Mitch’s rampage through Central America have almost disappeared from the news, but the hard work of rebuilding is just beginning for families like that of Angélica Elizabeth López, the 3-year-old sponsored girl featured on our cover.

In La Barranca, Honduras, Angélica Elizabeth’s parents and seven siblings struggled through waist-deep water to safety, finally reaching their neighbor’s hilltop house minutes before their own home collapsed. They lost most of their belongings—clothes, shoes, furniture. Angélica Elizabeth salvaged her doll from the wreckage—one of her few remaining possessions.

It will be a long road to recovery for our fellow Central American Christians who are relying on their faith in the midst of this crisis. As Honduran President Carlos Flores Facusse explained, “We lost in 72 hours what we have taken more than 50 years to build, bit by bit. In Honduras, everything will be measured before and after Mitch.”

World Vision has been serving in Latin America since the early 1960s, and will continue to help families in our partner communities rebuild their homes, schools, roads, and bridges. Beyond your regular gifts, I invite you to consider joining our special campaign, “Twelve Months of Hope,” to assist with the reconstruction effort. Program details are listed on the center of this magazine.

As I think of the López family and the tens of thousands of others who suffered such devastating losses, the psalmist’s words come to mind, “My soul is weary with sorrow; strengthen me according to your word” (Psalm 119:28). We ask for your continued prayers and support as we help build a brighter future for children like Angélica Elizabeth.

—Richard Stearns
The calamitous effects of Hurricane Mitch hit many slumbering villages in Honduras at dawn. People had mere moments to react—with life or death consequences. Two families share their stories, and how World Vision came to their aid.

"I've had my soul torn out," lamented Francisco Alvarado, grieving for his three children and pregnant daughter-in-law killed after mudslides destroyed his home in San Miguelito, a community of 5,000 in southern Honduras.

World Vision rushed to help Francisco and other families in its 251 project communities in Honduras, reaching about half with food and medicine less than two weeks after the disaster. Some 330,000 pounds of food were delivered to 11,000 families who lost homes or crops. Francisco and his wife, Bella Victoria, who lost everything, received special consideration.

The Alvarados and their surviving children Cania Mariela, 16,
Cindy Josalin, 6, and Jimmy Javier, 8, a World Vision sponsored child, are living temporarily at a local school. An avalanche of vegetation and mud destroyed their tile and adobe home on Oct. 31.

“We had no warning. There was no time to do anything,” Francisco recalled.

Bella Victoria, who slept fitfully through the pounding rain the previous night, heard the crash. She leapt for the door. “I don’t know how I got out,” she said.

Francisco shot out of bed and found himself buried waist-deep in mud. After freeing himself, he desperately rooted through the debris for his children. Bella Victoria and neighbors joined in, tugging at boulders and tree limbs, scooping aside mounds of sodden earth. But they could not save Kaylen, 11, Sandra Patricia, 14, Juan Baptista, 20, and his pregnant wife, Lesle Rosebel, 17, who suffocated to death.

The flooding and landslides left 100 people homeless and knocked out roads and bridges in San Miguelito. Supplies in the village grocery and pharmacy dwindled. Before World Vision’s food shipment arrived, families subsisted on one meal a day.

In nearby Divisadero, 10-year-old sponsored child Alice Coritza Pastrana watched her home wash away when the Choluteca river flooded, carrying an angry wall of mud into the community.

Alice’s neighbor Elias Ruiz ran through the village, yelling an alarm to the sleeping residents. Alice, staying at her grandparents’ house next door, awoke to waves of muddy water streaming into the adobe home. She grabbed her grandmother and pushed her out. Joining Alice’s parents and little sister, they

**Weeping with those who weep:** Francisco Alvarado and his wife, Bella Victoria, break the news to a relative that three of their six children and their pregnant daughter suffocated to death in a landslide that buried their home in San Miguelito, Honduras.

**Responding in the wake of Mitch**

**Honduras**

**Human toll:** More than 7,000 people killed; 12,000 missing; at least 2 million homeless.

Of 21,508 children sponsored through World Vision by Americans, five deaths confirmed by mid-November.

**Damage:** 70 percent of agriculture decimated, including banana and coffee export crops worth $900 million and shrimp farms that employed thousands.

Country rendered impassable by damage to 60 percent of the infrastructure. Repair costs could total $2 billion.

**World Vision’s response:** 4,344 emergency packs of

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World Vision
PO BOX 70081
TACOMA WA 98471-0081
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Hope and life are World Vision's business, and we are reaching out to families struggling to survive in the wake of Hurricane Mitch.

We are delivering food, blankets, and medicine to victims. And in the months ahead, we will begin assisting sponsored children and their families to reconstruct their homes, and rebuild community infrastructure, such as bridges, roads, potable water systems, and schools.

The task is great, but with the faithful support of friends like you, we can make a huge difference right now and in the months ahead.

Will you join with us in this ministry?

We are seeking faithful partners who are willing to give a gift beyond their normal contributions to this special monthly program. We are calling it Twelve Months of Hope. Your gift of $20, $35, or even $50 a month will help children and their families begin to rebuild their lives.

If you can be a part of this special ministry, just check the box on this envelope, and include your first monthly gift. Or, whatever you are able to give will be used to help more people get back on their feet.

God Bless You!

Keyber Melisa Maximo, age 4, Honduras
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 Hurricane Mitch
emergency response

I want to provide “Twelve Months
” for families in Central America.
my first monthly pledge of
□ $35 □ $50 □ $Other ______
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k you for your generous response!
m more information, please visit our
website at www.worldvision.org

Nicaragua

Human toll: Some
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covery will take longer 
e Alvarados as they 
their lost children.
alking quietly between 
under a mango tree 
the San Miguelito town 
e, they said they have 
their trust in God.
Lord is the only one,” 
ella Victoria, blinking 
tears.
landing: Flood victims in 
iguelito were down to one 
day before World Vision 
gency food arrived via 
an Air Force helicopters.

food, blankets, and medicine air-
dropped to families in isolated areas 
and 1,700 homeless families assisted 
in the Tegucigalpa-Comayaguela area. 
World Vision plans to distribute 
tools and seeds to 3,000 farmers in 
the next few months. Also will help 
rebuid 50 bridges, 100 community 
water systems, 40 schools and help repair 4,500 
homes, providing employment for Hondurans 

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Risking raging rivers. Hitchhiking on military helicopters. Slogging up muddy mountain trails to reach stranded villagers. Treating the sick seven days a week in humid heat without pay. And loving it.

Such is life for Honduran medical student Romualdo Rodriguez since Hurricane Mitch slammed into his country in late October. Romualdo, a former sponsored child, directs a 70-member university medical team assembled by World Vision to care for hurricane victims isolated in the most remote corners of Honduras.

“We will take the children first, by number, then the adults,” announced Romualdo, organizing an impromptu clinic in a tin-roofed school. It is one of the few structures still standing in Chilamatada, a mud-choked town in southern Honduras. “If anyone is too sick to move from their beds, advise us, and we will visit them.”

More than 100 patients lined up to see Romualdo and his colleagues: Children with bronchitis; infants suffering skin rashes and infections from being constantly wet; adults wounded when their clay-brick homes collapsed on them.

“This is how I want to live,” says Romualdo, 31, who has volunteered with World Vision for 12 years on weekends and during school breaks. “I could make six times as much money in business, but my life is committed to this work.”

Romualdo can well relate to his destitute patients. One of 13 children, Romualdo was born in a poor, mountain village four hours’ walk from the nearest road. His mother was overburdened; his father a drunk. As a youngster, Romualdo did not want to go to school because he had no shoes.
begin three years of pediatric training. He dreams of opening a children’s clinic in his home village of El Piccacho. Too many children there die needlessly because there is no community medical care, says Romualdo.

In the meantime, Romualdo runs two small businesses between studying and volunteering with World Vision. Profits from his vegetable and clothing shops underwrite high school and university tuition fees for talented rural children. World Vision helped Romualdo. Now he wants to do the same for others.

River of relief: Wading through flood waters, this team of community volunteers, medical students, and World Vision staff were the first to reach villagers in isolated La Barranca.
how can you help

Give to World Vision's Hurricane Mitch disaster relief effort.
World Vision is committed to raising $7 million in cash and gifts-in-kind to assist disaster victims. Your donation will help us purchase items such as food, medicines, and tents. Our long-term rehabilitation efforts will help families rebuild their homes and enable farmers to replant their crops.

Involve your church. Share extra copies of this magazine and World Vision's Hurricane Mitch church bulletin insert with your congregation. Order these by calling toll-free: (800) 531-7777.

Pray for Central America. Pray for Jesus' comfort for families, the homeless, and the sick. Please remember World Vision staff in Central America who continue to work even though many have lost family members or have missing relatives.


Be patient for further information. If you have a sponsored child in one of the affected countries, you are no doubt worried about his or her safety. Staff are working tirelessly to assess loss and damage in project communities. As detailed information becomes available, we will issue updates. In the event of a sponsored child's death, World Vision will contact you by telephone.