

Pass It On®...

Wanderers Turned Wonderers.

Tobie Spears and her husband wanted to see the world. But traveling together made them realize how big a difference the little things are. Like providing a sewing machine to a village, or teaching a new way to raise vegetables. So, she founded Be Humanitarian, and the impact has outgrown even their own expectations.

Tobie Spears has always had wanderlust. As soon as she graduated from high school, she left with a friend and trekked around Europe.

"We just made our way the best we could," she recalls, laughing. "Two kids out to see the world."

The trip was a valuable education. Spears realized how fortunate she was, and that making a big difference doesn't take a big effort, just a little time and a lot of love.

"I knew I had to do something," Spears says. So naturally, she hit the road again. This time, she and her new husband packed the car and drove south through Mexico and into Guatemala. It's a beautiful place, with verdant jungles, crystal lakes and wide rivers. Its residents have lived there for thousands of years. Spears began to wonder what good she could do.

"The people are happy," says Spears. "They just need a little help."

In a Guatemalan village, Spears and her husband rented a small house. Living conditions were more primitive than back home, but the simple life was appealing. Despite their cheerfulness, the local people didn't have enough to eat. Their education was poor. They had no real way of sustaining themselves.

Spears wondered what she could do that would make a lasting change. "We didn't want to just give them a few things and go home," she says. "We want them to be able to sustain themselves."

So they started teaching, focusing on three major areas: Nutrition. Self-sustainability. Income opportunity.

Education is key to all three. The Speares taught skills like how to use a sewing machine, how to create a more productive garden, how to charge for services and manage resources. The first few years focused on completing projects, although traveling four times a year makes it difficult to keep the effort going.

In time, the locals took to it. They began using vertical gardening techniques, which made more vegetables available. A few sewing machines arrived, and skilled seamstresses emerged. And Spears realized she needed help.

She recruited friends, and the effort was organized into a nonprofit: Be Humanitarian. With the formalization of a legitimate nonprofit, sponsors and more volunteers joined the initiative. A community grew up around the village in Guatemala, supporting, loving and especially learning.

As Spears' own family grew, her children became actively involved. Volunteers are in the village four times a year, mentoring, working, sharing love and discovering what really matters.

"My time in Guatemala changed my outlook on life," writes Emery, a volunteer. "I learned it's the people you meet and the relationships you build that will fill your life with the feeling of true and genuine happiness."

Wander. Wonder. Do Good...[PassItOn.com](https://www.passiton.com)

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