

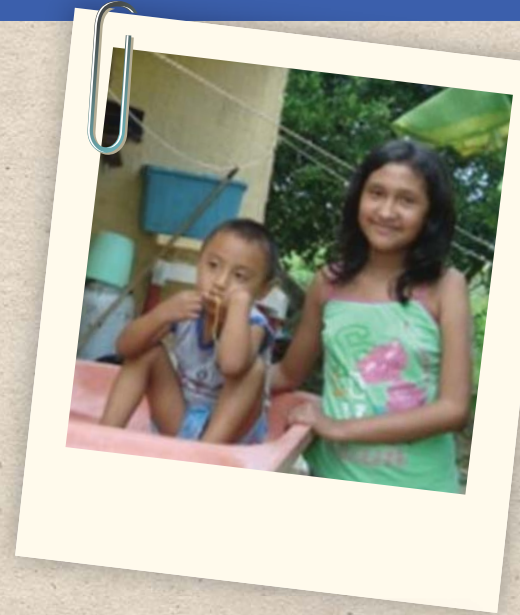


Strength in Community

Gabriela and her brother Josmar are students of Mano Amiga Conkal. Gabby, 14, suffers from a chronic kidney disease that requires frequent treatments. The family struggles to provide basic needs for their children, let alone medical expenses. Insurance does not pay for the special foods Gabriela needs to stay healthy. She and her mother take on sewing work to help with expenses.

Josmar, a pre-schooler, has sacrificed because of his sister's needs. Struggling with routine at the beginning of the school year, he "clung to the school fence and cried," said his teacher. But the staff knew how to help Josmar, making him feel safe and happy in school. He has made friends and is learning social skills.

Gabriela encourages and mentors her little brother, and works hard in school despite her fragile health. "She is an excellent student, her teacher remarks, "especially in science." Gaby's goal is to become a nutritionist and help people the way she has been helped by others. She references her faith in god as the source of her strength.



"The sickness and suffering of a family member, friend or neighbor is a call to Christians to demonstrate true compassion..."

Blessed John Paul II