Continuing our series of articles from our young people traveling to Guatemala on Mission, here is an article by Alexandra Frank:

Rethinking Volunteerism in America

As we prepare for our mission to Guatemala, we are learning to understand our impact, and we are considering the lasting difference we will make. One in every four Americans has volunteered in the past year, but not all have done it for the right reasons. Most of that statistic do things in means of charity, when they should be acting in solidarity. Solidarity is learning the people’s actual needs, instead of assuming and giving them what we think they need. To achieve this we will work beside the families to get a full understanding of their needs.

Most charities are looking at short-term accomplishments that make things look good, at first. We are looking to create a long-term difference for as many people as we can while we are there. To make this difference we are learning to be aware of our work and to do everything with a purpose. As we address the needs of the people, we will have to become vulnerable to achieve what we want. We cannot just jump into this mission, so we are learning and researching topics that will help us along the way. Lastly, we will act in solidarity through our gratitude for this opportunity to take part in this mission.