

A Missionary Kid

My name is Elena ... Elena Kathryn Stiff. Elena without an "H."
I'm American ... and I'm Guatemalan.

I was born in Guatemala, in a Guatemalan hospital,
where I was given a blood transfusion: Guatemalan blood.
I live in Guatemala with my sister and my parents ... but my grandparents,
aunts, uncles, and cousins live in California, the United States.

Each year we either visit them or they visit us;
each visit is like Christmas: lots of presents!

To me, the U.S. is presents, grandparents, visiting people,
parties, cousins, Disneyland ... but it's not my home.

I speak English ... I speak Spanish.

At home we speak English, at school we speak Spanish.

My teacher speaks English, but she says things funny.

I speak better English than my teacher ...

I speak better Spanish than my parents.

There are words that I only know in English,
and some that I only know in Spanish.

My parents work ... but I don't really know what they do ...

many people visit us, even live in our house for months sometimes!

But then they leave ... where is Laurie? Where is Seana? Where is Natalie?

Why don't they come back? Too many goodbyes!

I don't like the color of my hair ... I'm the only one in my school with this color;

I want my hair to be dark like everyone else. I don't like being different.

People touch my hair a lot. Why?

Lots of people need my parents' attention.

In Guatemala: the missionary team, the church, visitors, and many more.

In California: the church, people who support us, friends, our relatives ...

but **I want their attention!**

The school sends notes home, but sometimes my mommy doesn't send the
things I need because she doesn't understand what the teacher was asking for.

I didn't have an apron for months ... Mommy didn't know what a gabacha is,
or where to buy one, or how to ask!

My best friends are Josh, Ben, and Katie, but I haven't seen them
for a whole year! Mommy and Daddy say that they are in the U.S.,

but I don't understand why they don't come home!

My other best friend is Victoria; we are the same!

Except she doesn't speak English, has dark hair,
and I don't understand why she's never been to California.

In Guatemala we eat black refried beans every day;

in California there are no black refried beans.

I've traveled on tons of airplanes,

but my friends at school have never gone on even one!

I've been to the U.S., Honduras, El Salvador, Colombia,

but my friends haven't been to any.

I'm Elena Kathryn Stiff. I'm from two cultures, but I'm from neither.



*Elena with Kyle
overlooking the city of
Bogotá, Colombia.*



*Elena and friend Natalie
(OC Colombia) play at
a park in Bogotá.*

Note: This is the last month of our fiscal year. We are praying that God would provide in abundance so that we can finish the year in the black. Would you like to make a special donation?

Elena