

MEXICO *Monday*

Pray for the Circle of Hope in Guadalajara and its jewelry and sewing workshops.

by Cheryl Fugate, Alliance Worker in Mexico

Circle of Hope is a nonprofit organization founded in 2018 in Guadalajara, Mexico. It opened its doors in July 2018 next to the Breath of Life Alliance Church with a center for at-risk women. In 2019, we received a gift from the National Project of the Alliance Women, which helped greatly in providing workshop supplies and rent. In 2020, during the pandemic, we were able to acquire a larger facility, effectively quadrupling our space and providing a living space for our full-time Mexican director in a two-story house in a needy neighborhood that hasn't yet heard of the testimony of Christ.

We believe that ministry to the community must go hand in hand with the development of the local church—new believers are taught to care for the vulnerable and needy as they build the physical and spiritual church together.

Circle of Hope provides workshops designed to create additional income for at-risk women, giving them dignity, a sense of belonging, and worth in a society that has cast them aside. With the church as our foundation, our message is that *she is valuable to God* and loved by the local believers, worthy to receive the training and blessing that education and learning provides.

Since 2018, Circle of Hope has taught the following workshops on repetitive cycles in both evening and morning classes: Basic Haircutting I, Hair Cutting II (makeup and special hair styling for events), Manicure and Pedicure, Introductory English, Painting on Cloth (making placemats, aprons, and other items that can be sold in seasonal markets), Artisan Jewelry I, Sewing I (basic sewing, including face masks), Sewing II (Christmas crafts), and Sewing III (clothing repair and alterations). Most workshops are taught over an eight-week period.

We hope to establish a Circle of Hope where we plant new churches in least-evangelized areas. Each circle would receive materials from the “main center” located in Guadalajara and would function as a counseling center, a place for the workshops and Bible studies, and a place of prayer and refuge.

One church plant that has been in formation since 2016 among an indigenous group called the “Purepecha” is in the town of Paracho. This area is about four hours away from Guadalajara. Circle of Hope would be part of the church-planting strategy in this area. As the church is being planted, the Circle of Hope would form a foundation for outreach and ministries of help in this community.

This Circle of Hope would continue in the tradition of other centers—there would be counseling, Bible studies, workshops, and a place to just “belong” with other women, sharing their lives with each other, building community and hope. Workshops being considered for this area would focus on meeting the needs of the women in this indigenous community and relieve poverty and illiteracy so that the gospel could bring hope and dignity.

Workshops under consideration:

- Literacy and GED-Type Programs
- Sewing—In this community, the women create items with intricate stitching designs that can take up to six months



to finish. Each design tells a story of their beliefs and traditions, which are usually syncretistic in nature with many gods. Our sewing workshop would include designs that are biblical, telling the God-story instead of their animistic symbols and gods.

- Artisan jewelry I—We would possibly get involved with Mercy Market and CAMA.
- Basic Health Care Instruction I—This would provide basic training for mothers with an emphasis on nutrition for young children. This instruction would depend on the support from outside sources and short-term medical teams.
- Computer Skills I—Our focus would be on school-age girls and single mothers. We believe that with the provision of stable Internet in the Circle of Hope center, we can dedicate one room permanently to computer training and on-site work, developing a micro-business for women at the center using database entry and graphics arts design.

As each workshop is developed, our idea is to form a micro-business that could be self-sustaining, that would employ men and women from the community and the church, to give back hope, and create a sense of belonging for each person as they form an identity with the new church in their community.

Possible Budget:

- Rent—\$6,000 annually
- Materials—Depends on the workshops:
 - ♦ Sewing Workshop—four machines = \$500; material = \$500
 - ♦ Jewelry Making Workshop—\$3000
 - ♦ Computer Skills Workshop—five laptops needed = \$2500
- Literacy—\$1500
- Travel Costs for Team to Visit the Site—\$1,900

TOTAL FUNDS NEEDED TO LAUNCH: \$16,600

Alliance Women has set a goal to fully fund this Circle of Hope project in 2022–2023. To participate, please visit www.alliancewomen.org/give.