A Sister’s Personal Journey
Kimberlie K. Ryan

The Aaron J. Ryan Living Memorial Library

San Bernabe, Guatemala

A Contribution to Project Village

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A few days later, my beloved Auntie Pattie told me that my 29-year-old younger brother, Aaron, had just died of an unexpected massive heart attack. I knew then I needed to get away for a time . . .

In January, after a ferocious seven-year legal battle against a multi-billion dollar corporation and its armies of attorneys, a Denver federal jury awarded two of my individual clients $3.1 million . . . one of the largest sexual harassment verdicts in Colorado history . . . and my personal best at trial . . .
“Go to Guatemala”

“Luckily,” I had already planned a trip to Guatemala with my son, Kyle.

At a charity auction, we won a week’s stay in a beautiful colonial-style home in Antigua, Guatemala, donated by Vince DeGarlais, a Denver attorney who now lives in Guatemala and helps the local people through the rotary and a group called Project Village.

We had planned to go to “get away” from it all, write, and practice our Spanish.
“The Children Have No Books”

As we prepared for our trip, we learned about Project Village, a group helping indigenous families in communities hit hard by the country’s civil war, which ended in 1986.

Farm workers founded the tiny village of San Bernabe after the war. Before this, the workers essentially had been indentured servants to a large coffee farm. After the war, 16 families took a loan to buy the village property. 6 families remained after a year of sleeping in nylon tents and eating only corn tortillas, and these families form the heart of the 200 person village. Project Village funds the community school, among many other valuable projects.

When I asked Vince DeGarlais how we could help Project Village, his words inspired our living memorial to my brother, Aaron, an avid reader:

“Our next program in the school itself probably will be to establish a small library in the school.

The school currently has a catalogue of 0 (that is right -- zero) books other than the few textbooks that they provide to the students.

Guatemala has no public libraries and there is NO tradition of reading. Bedtime stories are something that happens in television programs and not in the homes.

Books are a very expensive luxury and are cost-prohibitive for the families who are living on a minimal, subsistence level.”

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Our Call to Action

Gifted with the unique opportunity to take books to the children in Guatemala, we set out to collect books for the Aaron J. Ryan Living Memorial Library . . . in 4 days!

We spent the days before takeoff finding, buying, & collecting Spanish-language children’s books . . . wherever we could find them!

We hit up our generous family members, friends and business colleagues for book donations, and we were able to purchase books from Barnes & Noble and Goodwill Industries.

Phase 1 Book Collection was a success! We gathered almost 100 children’s books in 4 days, like Spanish Dr. Seuss, Harry Potter, Berenstein Bears, and other children’s favorites!
We Arrive in Guatemala!

After enjoying a couple of days of writing, we visited The San Bernabe School, just outside of Antigua.

The children love their school!
We Made New Friends
¡Mucho Gusto!

The children loved their new books!

Smiles – in any language!
Los amigos del alma
Books for All!

¡Libros por todos!
A Beautiful Sight

¡Estan en las glorias!
Pay it Forward

We started the Aaron J. Ryan Living Memorial Library in San Bernabe, Guatemala with a $450 personal contribution and donations from our friends and family.

We currently are accepting donations of new and used Spanish language children’s books.

We also have started Phase 3, which will include a sister library of Spanish-language children’s books in Denver.

For More Information, contact Kimberlie Ryan at kim@ryanfirm.com

We plan to make a contribution to The Pay it Forward Foundation in honor of those, who like Aaron, pay it forward and help others.
Many Thanks to Our
Aaron J. Ryan Living Memorial Library
San Bernabe, Guatemala Phase 1
Book Contributors!

Mr. Kyle Bosket
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Mr. James I. Harlan, Esq.
Ms. Lori Ranzino
Ms. Tessa Alexander, Esq.
Mr. Bill C. Berger, Esq.
Mr. Stefan Kazmierski, Esq.
Mr. William J. Martinez, Esq.
Mr. Whitney C. Traylor, Esq.
Members of the Plaintiffs
Employment Lawyers
Association
Kimberlie K. Ryan, The Ryan Law
Firm, LLC
A Personal Note about Aaron

My brother, Aaron, sang like an Angel.
(Ok, a Christian Boy Band Angel).
He inspires me to sing again too, I sing duets
with him to his cd *Testify to Love*.
He loved *Dune*.

He read voraciously and studied religious texts.
He loved to drive his truck.
He traveled to Mexico
to build homes and help people.
He loved his dog, Thor, his beloved Schnauzer.

He claimed to be “the only person in North America who
doesn’t want a cell phone.”
He liked to write me ”short” notes of “less than 50
thousand words.”

He was not a morning person in any way, shape, or form.
As he said, “I only recognize one six o’clock a day,
and it comes as the sun is setting.”
He has an excellent sense of humor and kind heart.
He is loved and missed by many.
In Loving Memory of Aaron, Who is With us Still.

DO NOT STAND AT MY GRAVE AND WEEP
I AM NOT THERE; I DO NOT SLEEP.
I AM A THOUSAND WINDS THAT BLOW,
I AM THE DIAMOND GLINTS ON SNOW,
I AM THE SUN ON RIPENED GRAIN,
I AM THE GENTLE AUTUMN RAIN.
WHEN YOU AWAKEN IN THE MORNING’S HUSH
I AM THE SWIFT UPLIFTING RUSH
OF QUIET BIRDS IN CIRCLED FLIGHT.
I AM THE SOFT STARS THAT SHINE AT NIGHT.
DO NOT STAND AT MY GRAVE AND CRY,
I AM NOT THERE; I DID NOT DIE.

-Unknown