*Wok & Roll by Peter Kwong, (Frederic) Inter-County Leader*

**Part 2: James achieves his goal, teaching us all to dream big**

*Editors note:*[*Last week’s column shared the story of James Meyer*](https://www.wnanews.com/2019/10/22/learning-from-james-big-dream/)*, a local 10-year-old boy who was adopted from Guatemala by Damon and Arlaina Meyer. He raised $17,000, surpassing his goal of $10,000, to assist families in need in Guatemala. This week’s column, written in collaboration with Arlaina Meyer, shares more of the Meyer family’s story, including how they and the community helped raise the money.*

For years, Damon and Arlaina Meyer prayed for a family.  Recognizing their pain, Arlaina’s sister Allison shared a news clipping advertising an adoption informational meeting.

When Arlaina entered the meeting, the director of the adoption agency was in the front of the room with her head bowed in prayer asking that someone would come to give a home to a little one in Guatemala who so desperately needed one.

Nine months later, Damon and Arlaina tucked in a small 1-year-old boy and shared a bedtime story that would be repeated over and over again.

“Once upon a time there was a little boy named James Ronaldo Meyer. His mommy and daddy loved him so much that they traveled far, far away to another country to bring him home. He is their gift from God and his life will bring God glory.”

Since 2012, James Ronaldo’s classmates from St. Joseph Catholic School in Rice Lake have come together for a play date for his birthday each year. Instead of presents, they brought coins, and throughout the years those coins filled and overflowed several glass pitchers.

The outpouring of generosity from these little ones and James’ extended family enabled the purchase of water pumps, chicks, piglets and goats for families in need in Guatemala through an organization called Food for the Poor, [foodforthepoor.org](http://foodforthepoor.org/).  Based out of Coconut Creek, Fla., Food for the Poor, helps provide food, housing, clean water, education, emergency relief and more to help fight poverty in 17 countries in the Caribbean and Latin America.

In 2016, James turned 10 years old. For his golden birthday, his parents shared that they would be taking a mission trip to Guatemala with Food for the Poor. Upon returning from Guatemala, the Meyer Family was determined to do something to help share God’s love with their brothers and sisters in Guatemala. But what?

With the faith of a child, James decided he wanted two new homes built in Guatemala for families that so desperately needed adequate shelter. Food for the Poor helped the Meyer Family establish a Champions for the Poor site, [foodforthepoor.org/jamesronaldo](http://foodforthepoor.org/jamesronaldo), to assist others in contributing towards James’ goal through online giving.

A total of $14,400 would be needed to build the two double-unit homes and James had decided that he wanted to accomplish his goal by the end of 2016, giving him just over one month to achieve it.

James had $6 to give and $14,394 to go. Thanks to Wisconsin winters, he earned a bit more shoveling snow for a friend from church, but he definitely needed help.

James had “set a goal so high that unless God was involved it would have been impossible.” His Grandpa Gonske, known for his positive attitude, was not afraid to share his grandson’s goal with everyone he could.

Aunt Amber asked James to be a guest on her WJMC radio program. Normally, this shy young man would have passed on the offer, but God gave him the strength to share his passion with others.

He mustered up the courage to speak to church members at Bethany Lutheran and then at Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church. Friends and family put together a chili supper and Peter Kwong shared his talents by cooking for an additional fundraiser meal. Family, friends, churches, businesses and even those he had yet to meet stood behind him with gifts of prayers, encouragement and financial support.

On New Year’s Eve, the Meyer family gathered with friends in a church group called Anchored in Christ. James was just $250 away from reaching his goal. Before midnight, a donation for $250 came in with the message “James! You reached your goal! God brought all of us together to help build houses because of you. God used you and your giving and caring heart to work miracles! His love is extravagant.”

Eight months later, two families in El Durazno, Amatitlan, Guatemala, were sheltered by new homes. James dreams of becoming an agriculture teacher someday and traveling back to Guatemala to meet those who have touched his life.

The Meyer Family is composed of a dad, mom, son and daughter.  All were born in different places with different last names. Through tears of struggles and joy, God brought their family together through the gift of adoption.

Through the gift of adoption, we are all able to be part of God’s family. We may have different genetics, backgrounds and talents, but when we share love and our gifts with others, we bring God glory!