

insights

TYPES NOT MAPPED YET April 01, 2024 | TTR not mapped yet | Thomas Rea

Tommy Rea Shares Experience Volunteering at Honduran Nutrition Center

Days after joining Thompson Coburn as a litigation partner, [Tommy Rea](#) was presented with a unique opportunity to spend eight days more fully understanding the day-to-day operations of [NutriFund](#), a non-profit with whom he works. The opportunity led him back to the mountain town of Yoro, Honduras, a place that left an indelible mark on him some 30 years ago.

Yoro is a three-hour bus ride into the mountains southeast of San Pedro Sula, Honduras' second-largest city. Yoro is home to the San Yves children's nutrition center, which is directly supported by NutriFund. Although Honduras is rich in agricultural lands, the country struggles with widespread poverty, including thousands of children in the surrounding communities who suffer from life-threatening malnutrition.

Tommy first made the trip to Yoro in 1993 while a student at St. Louis University High School (SLUH). He volunteered at a Yoro nutrition center and had the opportunity to work in remote mountainside villages throughout the area. He returned a second time three months later to continue his work. Those trips deeply impacted Tommy. He was equally moved by the kindness and generosity of the Honduran people.

NutriFund was founded in 2018 by Patrick Mulligan, another SLUH graduate, after he volunteered at San Yves for five months and saw the opportunity to have a greater impact on the many children in need. Almost seven years since his arrival in Yoro, Patrick Mulligan continues to carry out the mission of NutriFund and San Yves: to contribute to the recovery and prevention of malnourished children throughout Honduras.

[Click here](#) to learn ways to get involved with and support NutriFund.

Tommy began formally working with NutriFund in 2021 as a member of its Governance and Internal Affairs Committee. But he didn't make the trip back to Yoro until March 2024, when he was asked to accompany seven SLUH student volunteers and one teacher who would be working at San Yves for eight days. During the trip, Tommy and the volunteers worked long days interacting with the 15 children, feeding and changing them, doing laundry, mopping, cleaning, and finding ways to assist the hardworking, dedicated staff with its daily routine, which was never routine.

"Eight days is nothing when you think about it in the context of the struggle to survive that each of these kids has faced in their very short lifetimes. Each kid is a fighter. To be able to interact and support them and the staff in any way during this journey back to health is an honor and a privilege," said Tommy upon his return.

Although Tommy began at Thompson Coburn shortly before the trip, the firm fully supported him taking the time to go. "This is a firm that encourages lawyers to spend the time needed to fully understand what a particular client or entity needs," he said, expressing gratitude for the opportunity to be on-site in Honduras and gain first-hand knowledge of how NutriFund operates in conjunction with the nutrition center and better understand its ever-pressing situational needs.

Just as Tommy experienced some 30 years ago, the trip was a very impactful experience for the SLUH volunteers, but also very difficult. "These guys were immersed in a Spanish-only speaking culture, working hard to help malnourished kids every day. They were forced to consider a very different worldview, one where health, clean water, food security, and education can never be taken for granted," he said. "At the end of each day, I kept reminding them, 'To whom much is given, much is expected. What does that mean to each of you moving forward from here?' That is a question I have been working hard to answer since 1993."



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