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Good Service and Lasting Impact: StoveTeam's Commitment to Stoves That Serve Generations

By Emily Cupo

Each year, more than 1,200 families in Guatemala receive a new fuel-efficient cook-stove through StoveTeam International. But our commitment to each family begins long before the stove is installed and continues for years afterward. Families are supported throughout the entire process, from the initial assessment to installation and beyond. Once installed, families can begin enjoying the benefits of their fuel-efficient cook-stove, including meals cooked over a safer fire, smoke-free kitchens, and savings on firewood.

The Justa Stove is a solution for open-fire cooking in Central America: a simple rocket elbow design that uses locally sourced materials and fits the needs of families living in rural Guatemala.

But our support doesn't end when the stove is installed. StoveTeam visits every family annually to inspect their stove, take care of any maintenance needs, and answer any questions the family may have. We believe that, even as a non-profit, good customer service is crucial to creating lasting impact.

Our vision is *"A world where every family cooks safely and sustainably, fueling healthier lives and resilient communities."* That vision would not be possible if families didn't like their stove and eventually returned to open-fire cooking. It also wouldn't be possible if families used their stoves every day, but then stopped because of a basic maintenance issue they couldn't resolve on their own.

Providing a stove is just the first step. Making sure that stove continues to work and that families have

the support they need to keep using it is how we can help make that impact last for years to come.

In late 2025, StoveTeam began piloting its Enhanced Monitoring & Maintenance Program, which includes annual visits to all stoves placed in Guatemala by StoveTeam International and the completion of any maintenance needs, including detailed cleaning and replacement parts such as the chimney tube, grid-dle, and combustion chamber. StoveTeam's current inventory of built and active stoves is roughly 3,000 stoves.

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Over this past year, our team has enjoyed reuniting with stove recipients and hearing stories about their stoves. Our Project Coordinators have been going door to door in communities we worked in, checking in on families, asking about their stoves, and assessing the stove's condition. If a stove needs a replacement part or two, they will talk with the families, ask if it is something they would like, and then add them to the list for a maintenance visit.

Before this pilot program came to fruition, StoveTeam's Guatemala Team had already been fielding requests for replacement parts and performing as many maintenance visits as possible. In the highlands of Guatemala, tucked far away from StoveTeam's home base in Retalhuleu, StoveTeam's Project Coordinators had a rewarding year visiting families who value their stoves and have fully incorporated them into their everyday lives.

Doña Ceferina's story is a powerful example of why StoveTeam's commitment to service and maintenance matters. At 85 years old, she was excited to welcome our team back and have some worn-out parts of her stove replaced. After years of daily use, her chimney was showing signs of wear, so she cre-

ated a makeshift repair using sheet metal and binding wire rather than give up on her stove. She did this because the stove had become an important part of her daily life. It made preparing meals easier, improved the conditions in her home, and had become something she relied on every day. Her resourcefulness and enthusiasm to keep using her stove are a reminder that lasting impact is not simply about putting a stove in a home, but it is about making sure families can continue to depend on that stove, year after year. That is what good service looks like, and it is how a stove provided today can continue improving lives for years to come and, ultimately, for generations.

Doña Ceferina's story is a reminder that the impact of a cookstove goes far beyond the day it is installed. When a family embraces a stove and makes it part of their daily life, it becomes more than a way to prepare meals—it becomes a tool for a healthier home, a more sustainable future, and a better quality of life.

But StoveTeam cannot do this work alone. Businesses have an important role to play in making lasting change possible. Through the 1,000 Stove

Challenge, companies can join a growing community of businesses helping families in Central America gain access to safer, more efficient cooking. Sponsorships start at \$250, with opportunities to participate at a level that makes sense for your business. Every contribution helps provide a stove while supporting the education, monitoring, and follow-up that make that stove a lasting solution.

For companies looking for a meaningful way to give back, the opportunity is simple: Help put a stove in a

home, and then help make sure it stays there. Together, businesses and StoveTeam can ensure that the benefits of clean, fuel-efficient cooking reach more families, and that the stoves we provide today continue serving families year after year. Join the 1,000 Stove Challenge and be part of a solution that is changing lives, one family and one stove at a time.

Learn more at stoveteam.org/challenge.

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