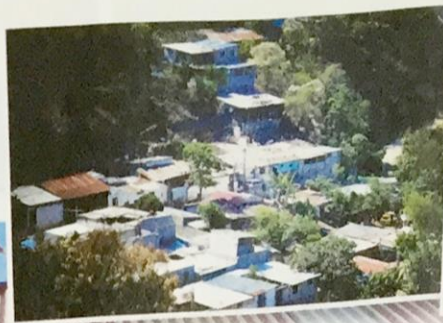


## A day in the life of...



# Kaysey Gilbreath

*When pupils stopped turning up for school because their only shoes were ruined by the six-month rainy season, this Guatemala-based teacher stepped up to help out*



I FIRST visited Guatemala while studying for my degree in education, but on returning home to Florida, I longed to go back. After graduating, I returned for a six-month teaching job and fell in love with the country. I've now been here for two and a half years.

There is a great need for non-profit schools here. Although public schools are free, many families cannot afford the additional costs of buying books, uniforms and other supplies.

I currently work at the School of Hope, run by UK-based charity Education for the Children. The school offers free tuition and provides supplies for the children, aged 5-16.

The students, from reception to grade 4, receive half their classes in English and the other half in Spanish. The school is located just outside the city of Antigua Guatemala on a coffee farm.

Each morning I wake up at 6.30am to a view of the twin volcanoes, Fuego and Acatenango. If I am lucky, I catch a glimpse of Fuego puffing smoke. I live with a friend and her family about half an hour away from

the school, and travel there on a retired US school bus that's usually packed to the brim.

The cobblestone streets are lined with brightly coloured houses. I arrive at school at 7.30am and from 8am until 2.30pm I teach my grade 4 and 5 classes (ages 9-11). There are about 25 students in each class and periods are 40 minutes long, with an hour-long lunch spent together in the classroom. At 4pm, I return home on another crowded bus.

Teachers at the school are trusted to know our students well enough to make the best decisions for them, with the help of the school leadership. The school focuses on student-centred learning, often in groups, with the goal of producing well-rounded students who believe in themselves.

We conduct home visits to ensure the needs of the family are being met. I have found that some of my students' homes have dirt floors and are made of corrugated iron. Many share a small, one-bedroom house.

Some students live in very dangerous areas, at risk from gangs, drugs and violence, but

also mudslides from the rain or damage from the frequent earthquake tremors. Many are unable to complete homework because they do not have electricity at home.

Most of our students have only one pair of shoes and this became a problem at the beginning of the six-month rainy season, when they began missing school because their only shoes were ruined, so I raised funds to supply boots to all students.

Most of my students are extremely motivated to learn and have high hopes for their futures. I consider myself lucky to have the opportunity to work with them. ●

### Your day

Do you want to tell the world's teachers about your working day, the unique circumstances in which you teach or the brilliance of your class? If so, email [chloe.darracott-cankovic@tesglobal.com](mailto:chloe.darracott-cankovic@tesglobal.com). We will give your school £100 if your story is published.