



## Love at Work Ministries Uses the MatchMaker and Qgiv Integration to Manage Gifts and Donors so They Can Focus on What Really Matters: **Helping a Community in Need**

### WHO THEY ARE

Love at Work Ministries is an international Christian ministry, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, working with children living in the urban slums of Alajuelita, Costa Rica to break the cycle of poverty and help them reach their God-given potential. They are committed to serve and partner with people in need, regardless of religion, ethnicity, or gender.

While vulnerable children have always been at the center of all initiatives, they relentlessly promote the well-being of children's families and the community through holistic and integrated programs in the areas of education, housing, health and nutrition, economic opportunity, and spiritual and social development.

The husband-and-wife team of co-founders, Carole and Larry Prible, first visited Alajuelita, Costa Rica in 1991 for a Habitat for Humanity International Board meeting. While there, the Pribles met someone who invited them to visit Alajuelita and see the level of extreme poverty.

The story of how Alajuelita—which is a suburb of the capital, San José—came to be is heart-wrenching in itself. Two decades ago, the face of this community changed overnight, the result of a poorly planned urbanization project of the government, which ultimately led to a collapse of the community. The “beneficiaries” of this project were the poor of San José, who were rounded up and moved to a section of Alajuelita called Tejarcillos. They were given some land and told it, “It’s yours, as long as you build a house here.” The problem is they had no resources, so they gathered whatever scraps they could find, and the result is a shanty town, where thousands of families now live in endless rows of miserable, cluttered huts.

*“There’s a saying that people don’t die from old age in Alajuelita.”*



They're living in inhumane conditions, with mud floors, sewage running through their homes, without access to health care or clean water and good food to live a healthy and active life. This high concentration of extreme poverty combined with absent or poor education has turned Tejarcillos into a crime-ridden, violent area. The police won't even enter the area unless they go in with riot squads. As one resident expressed, "There is no vigilance here. There are no recreation centers. We can't even go outside. Our houses are our jails."

This is where Love at Work serves.





It's sobering to hear that 1 in 6 people in the world today live in urban slums. The number of people living in these slums is growing by 50,000 per day, and the UN projects that half of the world's population will be living in urban slums by 2050.

Only about 1 in 6,000 missionaries or social workers are serving in urban slums. Why? Basically, they really don't know what to do there. The problems are so large that they simply don't know where to start. Love at Work Ministries has found that you can't just build a house and walk away—that doesn't really solve the problem. It's part of the solution. A simple, decent house is a foundation every family needs, but you really have to look at everything that contributes to being trapped by circumstances beyond their power to change. The result is they've lost the one thing people need to survive—hope.

## HOW THEY DO IT

What makes Love at Work Ministries unique is that they don't just tear down a shack and build a nice new one in its place; they don't just feed children, or take them to the dentist when their teeth hurt. They work at building long-term relationships with boys and girls, their families, and friends. Their holistic approach includes helping them grow physically, mentally, socially, and spiritually.

The good news is—this approach is working! In a given year, Love at Work Ministries touches the lives of over 2,000 people. They're also having a significant economic impact on the area of Alajuelita, where they've become the largest employer, aside from the municipal government. Over a 5-year period ending in 2015, the economic stimulus generated by Love at Work was 7.8 million dollars. That number includes salaries and pensions for their 35 full-time employees in Costa Rica, as well as for people they've hired for various construction projects. It also includes the increased earning potential of students who have graduated from their school.

These incredible results have captured the attention of the community and have built trust. People who live in extreme poverty don't know what they can do to help themselves, and they don't know whom they can trust. Love at Work gets buy-in from the community by building homes and moving people into healthier environments where they can sleep and study. They give them hope that they can and will overcome their circumstances.



Perhaps the most transformational thing Love At Work Ministries is doing is Love at Work International Christian School (LAWICS). In Alajuelita, poor education threatens children's chances of ever escaping poverty. Of 100 children entering the education system, less than 30 will graduate. The primary enrollment rate is 48% and only 32% for secondary. Several schools have been declared uninhabitable and have had health closures. The quality of education is so bad, those who do graduate will not be able to pass college entrance exams. In fact, until Love At Work's school came along, no one from these neighborhoods had even attended university!

Love at Work's school reflects the diversity of Alajuelita and surrounding areas. Some families who could send their kids anywhere, such as a private school in San Jose, choose to send them to LAWICS because of the safe environment, where all children feel known and loved. The purpose of their education is not to make it possible for these kids to earn a ton of money, just so they can buy a lot of things. The purpose of their education is to equip them to serve others in whatever vocation they choose—doctors, lawyers, teachers, pastors, public servants, or entrepreneurs. They come from places where they're not always encouraged to help or care for their neighbor. But at LAWICS, they're learning and understanding that they can make a significant difference in someone else's life, and they want to give back.



The people of Alajuelita are family to Love at Work. About a year-and-a-half ago they did a series of interviews with the people they serve. One of the questions they asked was, "What would happen to Alajuelita if Love at Work Ministries wasn't there?" One of the teenaged girls got a look of shock on her face and said, "What would happen to me? I AM Love at Work. You're our family." That's the number one thing Love at Work hears—they're family.





## FUNDRAISING: A FORM OF MINISTRY

Love at Work knows that nothing beats meeting with somebody face-to-face. Many people have a hard time asking for money. It can be humbling. Love at Work views it a little differently, because they're not asking for themselves. They're asking for the kids, the families, AND the donors. It's a form of ministry. They're not ashamed to ask because they've found that most people want to help. Love at Work's personal experience has been that people don't become poorer; they become richer by giving. Asking people for money is giving them the opportunity to be enriched in every way by their generosity.

In addition to face-to-face meetings, they add a human touch to their donor communications. Larry likes to update his Qgiv email receipts every month and include some pictures of people they serve so that recurring donors can see what their gift is actually doing. Donors also receive a hand-written note from Larry or Carole twice a year, personal phone calls, and meetings. Their entire philosophy, from those they serve to those who support them, is based on building relationships, and it has served them well!

Dear Qgiv ,

Thank you for your kind and generous gift of \$1.00 directed to .

We want you to know how genuinely we appreciate your support of Love At Work Ministries. Your "hand up" is strengthening the lives of children living in extreme poverty by providing access to quality education, decent housing, good health care and nutrition, economic opportunity, spiritual and social development.

Please know you are playing a vital part in the amazing things God is doing.

Our sincere thanks,

Larry and Carole Prible, Co-Founders and Directors



The details of your gift are below. Please keep this email receipt as your official record:

Name: Qgiv Test  
Recurring ID:  
Donation Amount: \$1.00  
Frequency: One Time  
Directed To:  
Dedication:  
Payment Type: Visa

This is your record for tax purposes. Love At Work Ministries is an international 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, Federal Tax ID # 26-4824660, committed to improving the well-being of children, their families and the community through integrated programs in the areas of education, housing, health and nutrition, economic opportunity, spiritual and social development. We did not provide you with goods or services in exchange for this gift.

## LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Love at Work's most effective strategy to get people on board as committed donors is to actually get them to Alajuelita. Larry says,

"You can't understand unless you go there to see. That's been the primary thing. Once people get to Alajuelita, it becomes very personal. It's no longer just a story about suffering people in a distant place. It's Maria, Christopher, James, Kathy ... faces, names, people you know. When you are around these children and families, you may not remember much of what we said, but you'll always remember how they made you feel. And you want to help. The people who end up supporting us stay with us for quite a long time."

Love at Work gets about 90% of their support from individual donors. They admit that it's becoming increasingly difficult to gain new donors, especially since the violence in Alajuelita has increased over the years. The Pribles know they need to use new approaches, and with the help of MatchMaker FundRaising Software and Qgiv, they can do just that.

"One of our board members has urged us to start using virtual tours to help us reach new donors."

Diana Hoyt, President of MatchMaker FundRaising Software, suggests combining this new technology with a very old form of fundraising: parlor meetings.

Parlor meetings, which date back to biblical times, involve getting a group of about 10-20 people together so you can educate them about what you're doing. You can get them together for dessert and coffee, during which someone from your organization—a board member or someone who works in the field—tells everyone about their experience with your organization and then shows the virtual tour. In Love at Work's case, this would involve a tour of the slums and include footage that shows the difference they are making in the community. After the tour, you can field questions or tell stories of people from the area you serve. At that point, you have an opportunity to say that you need help in supporting the work people have just seen on the screen: here's the problem, we're part of the solution, and we need your help! It's incredibly effective!

"Having these small-group meetings in someone's home is key. People feel comfortable in an environment with family, neighbors, and/or friends. It's kind of like having a one-one-one meeting, but it's with twenty people!"

## HOW LOVE AT WORK MINISTRIES USES QGIV AND MATCHMAKER

Love at Work Ministries uses Qgiv for their online donation needs. To manage their donors, they use MatchMaker Fundraising Software, which integrates with Qgiv to import donations. Larry loves the seamless import of information into MatchMaker from Qgiv.

"I sign on to MatchMaker and immediately get notified that I have donations to import from Qgiv. We have a high percentage of recurring donors, so it's nice to know that even when I'm not paying attention, donations are being processed...I can bring up MatchMaker every once in a while and everything is already done for me!"

What Love at Work likes best about MatchMaker is that they're not just a software company; they're in the business of helping nonprofits succeed. They provide a lot of resources, training, advice, and best practices from years of experience—added value you cannot place a price tag on.

“Diana has expertise as someone who understands our business, and she uses that to drive everything she does. There may be other packages that have more technological pizzazz, but she has more depth to what she offers. The main thing we know is that we have someone leading the organization who understands the business, not just someone who has a lot of technology experience and just a little nonprofit experience.”

Over the last three years, 70% of Love at Work's donations have come through Qgiv. They've been on board with Qgiv since 2009 and have processed over \$1.2 million through the platform. The relationship between the two is based on trust: trust that every donation will be processed accurately and in a timely manner, and that donors' information will be treated in a secure manner.

“We have donors that are comfortable giving us \$20,000 donations online—that speaks a lot about their trust in Qgiv's system and its security. Qgiv is good at what they do. That's the bottom line!”

## FEATURE FAVES



### SEAMLESS LOOK ON ANY DEVICE

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### CUSTOMIZABLE RECEIPTS

“I like that I can customize the acknowledgements that are sent out... and they're sent out immediately. It creates a very good first impression with donors. Believe it or not, I give donations to things other than LaWM and I don't get that sort of receipt. I'll give and I may get a donation receipt months later, but I don't get instantaneous acknowledgement. That's really important to us!”



### FLEXIBILITY AND EASE OF USE

“We love the flexibility in terms of accepting any type of payment—recurring, tributes, large payments. I'm also constantly changing the restrictions we have based on what we're focusing on at the moment.”