

Encarnacion Centro is a quiet, strong “Gentle Ben” who came to Christ through “Celebrate Recovery” in 2009. He had been an alcoholic but now he is a faithful brother in Christ. He is poor yet began volunteering in our garden, offering his “green thumb” from a heart to help! He was the first one to catch the vision of our “Moringa Project”. When I saw him create a nursery of moringa trees on his own initiative, I took note of him and we began to work together. We began to experiment with planting and cultivating moringa. We learned how to process the leaves into a super food powder and our men with the kidney failure disease began to take it. We were riveted with the results and began to focus on cultivating this nutritional dense plant. The problem was that we had to have a dedicated building in order to process this new nutritional supplement.

At that time we had been working the bakery business for several months. I had become more aware of the ingredients in the bread and although it was food, it was not healthy. After considering our mission statement, which focused on health, spirit, soul and body, and the health result success of the moringa, we decided to transform the bakery into a fully dedicated moringa-processing factory.

We built drying racks instead of bread rising racks and

put translucent sections in the roof to heat the room and fans to ventilate the room.

Encarnacion gathered and trained his team of 6 field workers, who previously were unemployed and delighted to have a consistent part time job. They began to plant fields of moringa together. One 29-year-old woman with 2 children, Ileana Montes, is a widow of a brother in our church who died of the kidney failure disease in 2014. Ileana was downcast and hopeless without a way to care for her children. Encarnacion invited her to come work on the team. Her whole countenance has brightened since she began to help in the project! She can buy food for her family, she feels valuable, she has healthy caring relationships around her, both in the church and in her work and she has a hope for her future to advance in her job as the project matures. She has seen the realness of Christ's love and His faithful care for her and her family. She is an asset to the team who all are so grateful for this opportunity and work together in unity, with joy, laughing and talking as they labor. They come 6 days a week at 6 am and work 3-4 hours to care for the fields, harvest the moringa and tie it in bundles, wash it and hang it up to dry. Another team of 2 strips the leaves off onto screen racks and a different team of 2 grinds the leaves after they dry. These 10 people have had jobs during the entire

season when everyone else has been unemployed from the sugar cane and hungry. They own this as their own business and have dreams of tripling their business next year.