

## Support Women in Latin America: Include Mary's Pence ESPERA Community Lending Pools In your Giving Tree Tradition

A Christmas Giving Tree is a wonderful way to give generously to others during the Advent and Christmas season. Including Mary's Pence allows you to address the needs of women, support positive social change, and improve the lives of our sisters and their families in Latin America at this special time of year. Financial contributions will go to support ESPERA Community Lending Pools.

For 25 years, Mary's Pence donors have lived their faith by supporting women who live in poverty to have a say and a hand in how poverty can be alleviated and social equity achieved. We have pooled our resources to fund women in North, Central and South America and the Caribbean who are working for social justice. We do this because everything we have in excess belongs to the poor. It is theirs.

### ESPERA Community Lending Pools

ESPERA Community Lending Pools in Central America, Haiti and Mexico are financial resources that are owned and operated by local women, to be used for loans for income-generating projects. Access to financial resources and the support of a community of women improves women's lives and prospects. For instance, women in Haiti have increased their profits, frequently doubling or quadrupling their income. With the extra money women can buy the things their families need – food, clothing, and school supplies. Each gift makes a real difference in the lives of women and their families.

### Why include Women, Social Change and Latin America this year?

#### Funding Women

Worldwide women make up 70% of the poor, and 66% of the illiterate. Studies show that when women have resources they invest in their families. When families are healthy communities are healthy, and the world is better off.

#### Funding for Social Change

Catholic Social Teaching calls us to work for a just world. By supporting Mary's Pence you fund projects that educate communities about injustice, build skills so people can advocate for themselves, and help groups organize so they have a strong voice in their community. This is social justice.

#### Funding in Latin America

Mary's Pence funds women's groups here in the U.S., but also funds initiatives across the Americas and the Caribbean; these are our neighbors. We give at home, in North America, because there is need. We give internationally because there is even greater poverty and because our policies and economies are linked.



*"If it was not for ESPERA, I would not be able to send my children to school," says Dieula Paul, 38-years-old and mother of four, member of Mothers' Club of l'Artiboliere in Jeremie, Haiti (pictured above).*

### How to Include Mary's Pence on your Christmas Giving Tree

- Share this material with the Christmas Giving Tree committee in your church or faith community.
- Contact the Mary's Pence office and let us know how many giving tree tags you will need. We can also send along supporting materials such as Mary's Pence bookmarks and newsletters.
- Use this description for Mary's Pence ESPERA community lending pools, above, to highlight Mary's Pence in your bulletin or giving tree materials. Be sure to share why it is important to support women and to support our sisters in Latin America.
- Place the tags for Mary's Pence on the giving tree, and have individuals send their financial donations directly to Mary's Pence, including their contact information completed on the accompanying tag.

*Call us with any questions about the Giving Tree materials, or about our organization and the ESPERA community lending pool project. 651-788-9869 or [staff@maryspence.org](mailto:staff@maryspence.org)  
Find out more at [www.maryspence.org](http://www.maryspence.org)*