

SIFAT Journal



Sharing God's Love in Practical Ways

Fall 2011

Training for Today and Future Generations

By Sarah Corson
SIFAT Co-founder

In Africa, I met Sam Mutongole again. He graduated from SIFAT's practicum 11 years ago. Returning home to Uganda, he organized and taught the first SIFAT practicum in Africa to 20 pastors. He brought one of those graduates to meet me. "I am your grandson," Pastor Michael said. "Sam is the spiritual son of SIFAT, and I am Sam's spiritual son." Since Pastor Michael graduated from Sam's practicum in 2000, he has started churches in 11 villages where there was no church. Their villages have been changed by the members of those churches as they live out the integrated Gospel for body, mind and spirit. What a joy to hear both Sam and Michael tell of their work among the AIDS widows and orphans.

With no land for orphanages, they help grandmothers take care of their orphaned grandchildren. I went with Sam to a slum packed with widows and orphans. In one place, Sam was making it possible for 20 widows to send their grandchildren to school. He was sharing the Bible with them regularly, bringing them enough basic food for nutrition and helping them begin microenterprises. The slum was a crowded, extremely impoverished place. The children had only a few feet in front of their tiny 10 ft. by 12 ft. huts to play. Their only sanitation was a ditch running right through their tiny yards.

Rose, one of the grandmothers, invited me into her home... a tiny hut where she lived with four grandchildren and a 32-year-old son dying of AIDS. She worked 40 hours a week scrubbing the floors of stores and received \$10 a month salary. How could she pay the school fees for the children? But Sam kept the children in school. "I don't have the funds to take these beautiful people out of the slums," he explained. "But I can teach them about Christ, and send them to school. Then they can change the next generation." I felt overwhelmed with the terrible living conditions, but I was impressed even more by the children.



Look at the faces of the Widow Rose's grandchildren in this terrible slum! They are happy, well-nourished, loving. Sam and his wife Josephine are molding these young lives with God's love so that they can change the next generation. Learn more about Sam and his ministry in Uganda at www.friendsoftheneedyug.com.

I visited several SIFAT graduates in Africa and saw their communities putting into practice the things they had learned at SIFAT. Most had started churches and were leading the poor in self-help projects. It was thrilling to meet other Christian workers whom our graduates have taught (SIFAT's grandchildren). SIFAT's work is being multiplied and used to help communities we had not known before.

I am glad I had the chance to see firsthand in Africa what SIFAT's graduates are doing when they return. SIFAT's training is the best way I know to change our world one village at a time. You can influence a whole village for Christ by sending a check to SIFAT designated "Scholarship."

Shopping Online for the Holidays? Use GoodShop.com to select your favorite online merchant and a percentage of your purchase will be donated to SIFAT when you place your order!



Fall 2011

2012 Short-term Mission Team Information

By Peggy Walker
Short-term Team Coordinator

Short-term mission construction, VBS and medical teams are needed in 2012 to partner with SIFAT on projects in Bolivia, Ecuador, Uganda and Zambia. Please consider leading a team or joining one already scheduled to go. Contact Peggy by phone (256.396.2015) or e-mail (perdidopeg@aol.com) for more information on any of these projects.

Bolivia

IXIAMAS: In this remote jungle area, SIFAT is answering the needs of a growing population by expanding our training facility to offer sustainable agriculture classes to adult students in Ixiamas and surrounding areas. Teams are needed to complete construction on training facilities, help set up our demonstrative farm and provide VBS for up to 200 children. Costs are \$900 in-country for 10 days, a project fee of \$100 per person or \$2500, whichever is great, and airfare.

QUESIMPUCO: All teams are filled for SIFAT projects in the Andes village of Quesimpuco in 2012. New opportunities will be announced for 2013.

Ecuador

The months of June and July are almost filled, but teams are needed in all other months for two projects. In the spring and fall only, two teams are needed to repaint Little Seeds of God, the SIFAT-built day care center in Atucucho. In Puengasí, teams are needed all year to complete the second floor of a classroom facility at Niños con Esperanza (Children with Hope), where we

partner with Compassion International to provide a safe place for children, when not in school, in this marginalized community. Medical teams are also needed in several areas outside of Quito. There will be a VBS component on each of these teams. Costs are \$800 in-country for eight days plus a project fee of \$100 per person or \$2500, whichever is greater, and airfare.

Uganda

Construction teams are needed to help build dormitories and other facilities at the Agape Total Childcare Center in Mukono, outside of Kampala. Agape, established and run by SIFAT graduate William Nsubuga, will have a Christian school for 250 and orphanage for 60 HIV/AIDS children. All inclusive costs for 12 days in May through September start at \$3,700, depending on seasonal airline fares. Two teams - one in late June and one in early July - need members. Contact Peggy if you would like to join.

Zambia

A facility for appropriate technology training is urgently needed in Africa as visas become more and more difficult to obtain for foreign nationals wanting to study with SIFAT in Alabama. To answer this need, a SIFAT training and conference center is being built outside of Lusaka to be used jointly with the United Methodist Church of Congo and Zambia. Construction teams are needed from April through September to build dormitories and conference/training facilities. All inclusive costs for 12 days in May through September start at \$3,800, depending on airfare, hotel and safari in Botswana add-on, plus project fee. Contact Peggy if you would like to join a team scheduled for mid-July.

Thank You to our 2011 Teams

Bolivia Auburn UMC, Auburn, Ala. • Auburn University Engineers Without Borders, Auburn, Ala. • Mt. Bethel UMC, Marietta, Ga. • Texas A&M University Health Sciences Center, College Station, Texas **Ecuador** Auburn UMC, Auburn, Ala. • Auburn University School of Nursing, Auburn, Ala. • Bluff Park UMC, Birmingham, Ala. • Christ UMC, Mobile, Ala. • Gulf Shores UMC, Gulf Shores, Ala. • Guntersville FUMC, Guntersville, Ala. • Henderson Medical, Palm Bay, Fla. • Southeast District of the North Alabama Conference of the UMC • St. Luke UMC, Pensacola, Fla. • St. Luke UMC, Tupelo, Miss. • St. Mark UMC, Anniston, Ala. • Manchester UMC, Manchester, Mo. • Montgomery FUMC, Montgomery, Ala. • Spanish Fort UMC, Spanish Fort, Ala. • Trinity UMC, Birmingham, Ala. • University of Tennessee, Memphis, Tenn. • Wiggins Community Church, Denver, Colo. • Wilmer UMC, Wilmer, Ala. • Woodbine UMC, Pace, Fla. **Uganda** Western Heights Baptist Church, LaGrange, Ga.
Zambia Auburn University Wesley Foundation, Auburn, Ala.

Our First Team Travels to Uganda!

By Nicole Kunczewski
Western Heights Baptist Church,
LaGrange, Ga.

Our team consisted of members from LaGrange, Ga., Newnan, Ga., and Alexander City, Ala., who had the privilege of traveling to Mukono, Uganda to assist in the building of a new school facility for the Agape Total Childcare Center, founded by SIFAT graduate William Nsubuga. William is doing a phenomenal job helping 45 precious orphans to know and love Christ. While we were in Uganda, we got to visit the current orphanage in Lugazi. This experience gave us much insight into just how crucial it is for these children to have a new facility. Their current home is far too crowded and does not meet code with the country's housing regulations. The children live in rooms approximately 10 ft. x 12 ft. with two sets of bunk beds, many of which sleep two children per mattress. As of now, they are expected to be out of this facility by December 2011.

The new location in Mukono has plans for a Christian school that children from the community will be allowed to attend for a fee, which will enable the orphanage to be more sustainable. There are also plans for a dining hall, male dormitory and female dormitory. During our stay this July, our task was to put a roof on the new school building and to finish painting the administration building. We brought most

of the necessary tools with us and ordered the supplies to be delivered locally. The condition of the wood we had to use for the beams was somewhat warped, to say the least. To be perfectly honest, this wood would have been tossed to the burn pile in the U.S., so I think we were all a bit skeptical from the outset. However,



Four of the children living at Agape Total Childcare Center in Uganda stop for a photo during a picnic with the first SIFAT team. The team roofed one of the buildings at the new property for the orphanage and future school, held VBS for the children and worked on other construction projects.

we are happy to report that the roof is completed, the administration building is painted inside and out and a crop of sweet potatoes are harvested. I cannot help but think of Psalm 118:22, "The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone; the Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes." Just as many would have rejected this wood that will now house these precious little ones, Christ was rejected by the church and He has become the one who holds the church together. Truly this crazy wood served as a beautiful metaphor for our precious

Savior, Jesus Christ.

The building project was important, but the most wonderful part of our trip to Uganda was our time with the children of Agape. Words cannot express how precious, loving and respectful these children are. If they saw one of us standing, they would

immediately give up their chair for us. I have never heard the words "thank you" more in my entire life. These children were so appreciative and thankful that we had come to be with them. The day of our first meeting, the children were so excited that they crowded around the door to our bus to lavish us with hugs. We could barely get off the bus! It was the best welcome ever! We had amazing times of praise and worship, and we were all overcome by the feeling of family that overtook us. Worshipping with our brothers and sisters in Christ from Uganda is an

experience that none of us will ever forget. Some of the children shared testimonies and the resounding theme was that "God is love," and we are to "love each other as God loves us." Each of these children has a story that starts as a tragedy, but thanks to the obedience and sacrifices of William, they have been given a new hope in Christ. Many of these children lived on the street, experienced true poverty and have grieved over the death of their parents. Some were abused. But today, the joy of the Lord radiates from their faces.

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Have You Traveled Around the World in a Day?

By Mary MacInnis Corson
Learn & Serve Coordinator

Around the World, an interactive day-trip for all age groups, provides students with an opportunity to participate in activities with an international perspective, while focusing on the geography and cultural studies of Asia, Africa and Latin America. Additionally, this program includes multiple hands-on components, including an introduction to simple appropriate technologies. During the program, your group travels through each country simulated in our Global Village. We provide this experience for public, private and home school students, as well as youth and scout troops.

Spring Dates

- February 20
- March 8
- April 27

Please Note: Other dates can be reserved for groups with more than 30 participants

Cost

The cost for Around the World is \$15 per person and does not include a meal.

How do I register?

E-mail Mary MacInnis, learnandserve@sifat.org, for more information or to register your group.

Uganda ————— ✦ (Continued from page 3)

This is an amazing example of the powerful, redemptive work of Christ. I went on this trip hoping to positively impact the lives of these children for Christ. But the scope and magnitude of this vision is now so much greater. This orphanage, this family has the capability of shaping a nation for Christ, and we are invited to be a part of that!

One of the main questions people ask when you are organizing an expensive mission trip like this is, "Wouldn't our money be better used by donating that amount and hiring locals to do all of the work?" The answer to that question was stated very eloquently by one of our team members, and I would like to close with his thoughts.

Receiving a gift of money is almost always appreciated. I suppose the degree of gratitude depends on the heart of the recipient, but even the most hardened heart is happy to get something they didn't have to work for. Money, however, is a one-dimensional gift. It doesn't model character, work ethic or persistence. It doesn't teach another person how to accomplish a goal or achieve an objective. Money can't hug a person, wipe away a tear or encourage a broken and frightened spirit. Most importantly, it does not exemplify love to its fullest extent. God could have chosen to save the world by simply saying "it's done," but He didn't. He showed up on the job-site! He sent Christ to die to show the full extent of His love. Money is a resource that meets a need, but it can't create a relationship in the way sharing another person's adversity does. Christ traveled a long way to get to us, and we are at times called to travel a long way to be the hands and feet of Christ. To these children, we are not one person; we represent all Christians from around the globe who have come in answer to their prayers. We are the vessels that God sends to prove He hears and answers prayer. They see God's hand in their lives through us, giving them hope and building their confidence in the fact that our God is an awesome God who hears and answers our prayers.

Thank you to William and SIFAT for this amazing opportunity to be a small part of this mission. Thank you, Lord Jesus, that you do not need us, but that You choose to use us for Your glory. May we all be vessels of Your love and mercy to a world in need of You. This is not "mission accomplished," but rather "mission started."



Members of the Western Heights Baptist Church team prepare to roof one of the buildings at Agape Total Childcare Center's new property in Uganda.

Sarah Corson Visits Africa

By Sarah Corson
SIFAT Co-founder

Sarah recently made her first trip to Africa. While there, she worked with a team in Uganda, visited SIFAT's training center being built in Zambia and visited several graduates of SIFAT practicums.

William pulled up to the gate and blew the horn. How happy I was to be in Uganda to meet in person the children saved from the streets by SIFAT's graduate William Nsubuga. At the sound of the horn, the gate burst open, and a crowd of youth ran out, laughing and yelling with arms wide open, welcoming us. Four or five teenagers at a time welcomed each of us with big hugs. "Thank you for coming!" They were saying amidst squeals of joy. "You are from SIFAT! You helped Papa William give us a home!" We were not expecting such warm, loving, expressive kids! It was a beautiful, emotional introduction to Africa.

Seeing the small home these 45 teens and preteens lived in, we realized how much they needed the new Agape Childcare Center, which the team had come to help William build. Yet their faces showed no need, only joy. Four years ago, they had no home, no schooling and not enough to eat. Now, they were part of a loving, happy, Christian family. The joy of their hugs was my introduction to Africa. Their happiness rubbed off on all we saw and felt.

We joined the team from Western Heights Baptist Church in LaGrange, Ga., who were building a school on the new Agape lot. Suddenly, we were plunged into sadness, as a group carrying a body entered the one-room house of the elderly widow living alone next door. Her son had died of AIDS, leaving his two children to become part of more than a million orphans in Uganda today. There was no cemetery plot in which to bury him. Men from our team joined the neighbors to dig his grave in her side yard. Five more of her children were buried there, too. There was no casket. His body was wrapped in a rough material made of the inner bark of trees. Mama Maria, as we affectionately called her, had no shoes and struggled to walk the few feet to the grave for the funeral. As we stood beside Mama Maria, burying the eleventh child of the fourteen she had borne, her sorrow clouded all that we saw and felt.

That was our first day in Uganda—a day of sharing the joy of the orphans and the sorrow of the mother. One of the lessons I learned from Africans was the importance of sharing. Whatever they faced, joy or sorrow, they shared it together...and with us.



SIFAT graduate William Nsubuga and Sarah Corson meet again in Uganda! William founded Agape Total Childcare Center, a home for children who lost a parent to HIV/AIDS and have no where to live. ATCC provides a safe home, meals, medical care and an education to these children.



Members of the Western Heights Baptist Church team join William Nsubuga and Tom Corson to pray with Mama Maria, whose son died while the team was working next door at Agape Total Childcare Center's new facilities.



Fall 2011

My Three Weeks in Zambia

By Emily Newby
Auburn University Wesley Foundation

To try to explain what SIFAT has begun to do alongside the community in Lusaka, Zambia, in a short few words is challenging. What I can offer, though, is testament to a vision truly endowed by God to grow together with brothers and sisters. What I can attempt to convey is what I truly think community and empowerment looks like. Being almost 22, I have no desire to act like I think I know what I am talking about, by any means. However, I know when I see my Father at work, and I know when I experience Him through brothers and sisters from every walk. The three weeks I spent in Lusaka taught my team and me a lifetime's worth of knowledge. I want to share a conversation with you.

One Saturday, we set off to teach the infamous rocket stove to the community; something I became all too familiar with during my time at SIFAT stateside. I settled against the wall in the shade with a few women. These ladies were some of the funniest, most sarcastic, loving and true women I have ever met. From day one, if I did something quirky or odd, they laughed at me. "EEEemalaaayyy," they would joke. Our relationships immediately took off when I realized that our humor connected us more than our differences separated us. As the joking and laughing continued, I turned to Mavis and Charity and asked about their church in Kanyama. They began to tell me something that shocked me to my core. They explained their love for the community and how they band together when someone is in need. In my mind, I wanted to ask what they thought about Matthew 28:19. I know what I see as a Westerner, but what do they see? Before I could even begin to word a

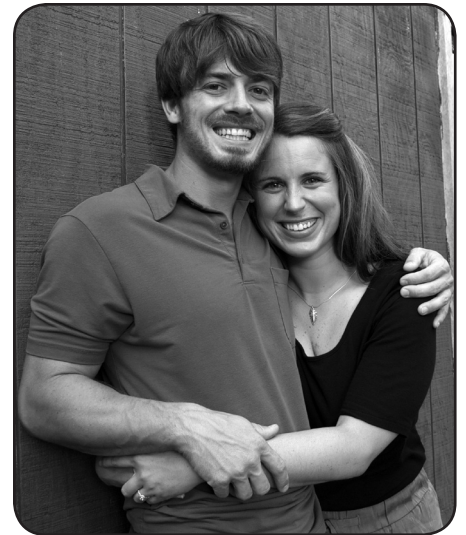


SIFAT graduate Sebastien Kalinde works alongside SIFAT executive director Tom Corson and members of the AU Wesley Foundation team at the project site of the SIFAT Training Center/ UMC Conference Center being built in Zambia.

question, Mavis said, "We know how to love because Jesus knows how to love. He told us when he said to make disciples. That is why I help my community." Then I asked something I would never have thought I could say. I asked Mavis, "What do you think about us mzungus coming here?" And she said, "We go where God lets us to make each other powerful, that is community. That is family."

Though only being involved with SIFAT for about a year, I have learned the beauty in sharing God's love in practical ways. I know that true eradication of poverty simply exists in empowering people, whether it is a student at camp, those in material need, or someone from a different background. I share this to reveal that SIFAT could not have found, rather God could not have led them to, a more like-minded community with whom to begin this endeavor.

Congratulations!



Our Learn & Serve Coordinator Mary Elizabeth MacInnis married David Hobart Corson on October 22. We wish Mary and Dave the best as they begin their life together!

Helping after Hurricane Irene

By Addison Shock
Learn & Serve Program Director

On a Thursday afternoon, I received a phone call from Cameron King of Bahamas Habitat saying that the Bahamas were going to take a direct hit from Hurricane Irene. She was assembling a team to execute the relief operations. She needed a ground operations manager, and she had me in mind. A few hours later, Cameron picked me up at a nearby airport, and we flew to Orlando, Fla. Irene had moved through earlier in the day, and all communication was cut off from her friends in the Bahamas.

The next day, I was on a plane flying to the Bahamas. I had never been to the Bahamas, so I did not know what to expect or what I was going to see. I did, however, know that the murky water that surrounded all of the islands was not normal. We flew by the homes of friends on Eleuthera and saw houses of people whom Cameron and Abraham McIntyre, director of Bahamas Methodist Habitat, called their family. We flew by not only to check on their homes, but to let them know that we were coming. When we landed, the signal had gotten across. Friends were there to meet us. Hugs and kisses went around to everyone, and we received news that no one had been killed.

I got to meet some of the most beautiful people I have ever met in my life. One was named Wadayna. She is an 11-year-old girl who told me that she wanted to be a singer, hair dresser and doctor when she grew up. We became big buddies during my day on the island. We unloaded our plane with the supplies that we brought

and jumped in a car to go check on other friends on the island. The damage that we saw on the road was incredible. There was not a standing telephone pole, and many houses were roofless. Everywhere we went were damaged roofs, downed telephone lines and debris, but also smiles. After about four hours on the island, we loaded back in the plane and headed to Orlando. During the next week, I would be stationed in Ft. Lauderdale, Fla., coordinating donations, stocking supplies, loading airplanes and sending pilots to Eleuthera and other islands in the Bahamas. Approximately 5,000 people had access to relief supplies. The

pilots logged up to 250 hours of volunteer flight time; our team of three volunteers put in 315 hours on the ground in Ft. Lauderdale. About \$45,000 dollars of airplane fuel and airplanes' fly time was donated.

I had the opportunity to go back to Eleuthera the day before the relief operation fulfilled its purpose and came to a close. I saw the people who had been receiving the supplies we were sending. I got to see houses that had previously had holes in them, and now were covered with the tarps that we sent. The situation was under control and the Bahamian people were ready to get on with life.

The exciting thing for me was seeing how our work was transitioning from relief to development. I was able to use the things that I have learned at SIFAT about development to serve and be served by my new brothers and sisters in the Bahamas. Now, they have a long road of development ahead, but life is continuing. One constant still remains— God is faithful.



Abe McIntyre, director of Bahamas Methodist Habitat, Addison Shock of SIFAT and pilot Cameron King of Bahamas Habitat flew the first plane of relief supplies into Eleuthera, Bahamas.

Take a SHARE in SIFAT - Commit to Donate Monthly

Become a SHAREholder of SIFAT by giving monthly. Visit www.sifat.org/share.html or contact Marie (lanierm@sifat.org) for more information.



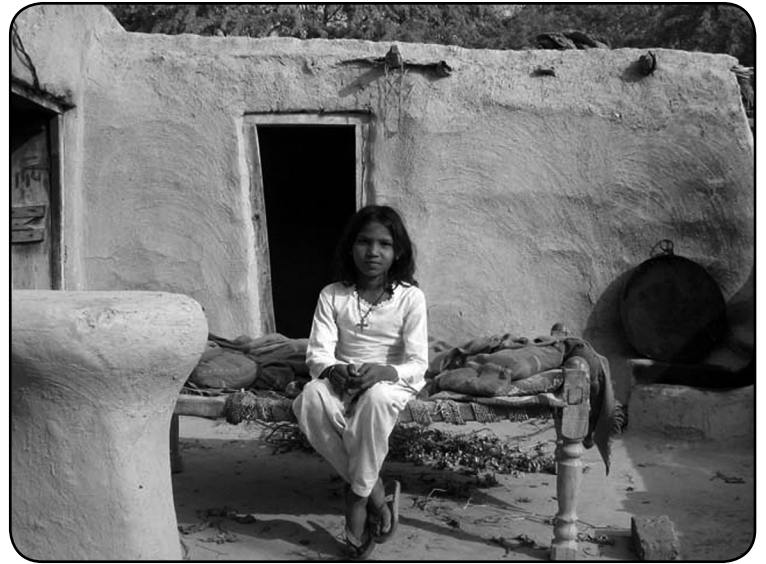
Alumni Update: Pakistan

Last year, we shared about one of our graduates' projects in Pakistan. He came to visit this summer for a few weeks. For his safety, we are not using his name in this article.

Since the flooding in Pakistan last year that affected a third of the country, the traditional weather patterns have not returned to normalcy. This year, the monsoon rains continue to cause flooding and make the life of the poor harder than ever.

The goal of our Pakistani graduate is to develop the Christian school he has built into a high school, so that these village children in poverty today can go on to the university and help change things for the next generation. Like SIFAT, he aims for the community's development through his school. During times of emergency like this flooding, it is hard to save money for a better school, when neighbors' saturated, mud brick homes are caving in. People are also hungry, because they depend on picking cotton during July and August for their yearly sustenance. This year, the rains destroyed the cotton crop.

This Christian school is an approved SIFAT project, which means you can help through SIFAT in this great need for the



A young girl with no opportunity to go to school or escape the poverty into which she was born sits outside of her home in Pakistan. One of our graduates runs a Christian school, where both Muslim and Christian children can receive an education.

villagers whose lives and livelihood have been endangered by the extreme rain. The school has 285 students, but many more are on a waiting list, hoping for a chance to enter school. With our help, it can happen! Truly, this is a village where we want to share the love of God in practical ways—both in relief from hunger and flooding and in development of the school. If God leads you to help, designate your check to SIFAT “Pakistan Project”.



Changing with Generations

By Sarah Corson
SIFAT Co-founder

In October, Benjo and Isaac Paredes presented a five-year plan for CENATEC to help their people develop. Benjo established CENATEC during the last generation as an agency to help his people in a remote area of the Andes in Bolivia. Today, his son Isaac is director leading the people of Quesimpuco.

This photo shows Benjo in the typical clothes of their tribe, and Isaac wears the modern suit of educated Bolivians today. Their dress reveals their methods of working together...with respect for the past traditions of the Quechuans, while at the same time, helping them to develop spiritually in Christ and physically with better farming methods, clean water, education and health services.

Reaching Out to Our Community

Worship on the Water

This year was the second year SIFAT sponsored Worship on the Water (WOW). WOW is a casual, nondenominational service held at 9 a.m. each Sunday from Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day weekend at Lakeside Marina in Wedowee, Ala. WOW volunteers Chuck and Evelyn Smith help schedule different speakers and musicians for each week. WOW gave a copy of *Risking Everything* by Sarah Corson to each family that attended.

WOW's motto—Come by boat. Come by car. Come as you are.—definitely held true with 2,459 people participating in services this summer. Some 268 boats, kayaks and jet skis brought them.

We would like to thank volunteers Elvis and Betty North and Chuck and Evelyn Smith for their dedication and service each week, as well as SIFAT staff members Marie Lanier, Peggy Walker and Tom Corson. We could not do this without you!



Almost 2,500 people attended SIFAT-sponsored worship services on Lake Wedowee this summer. Worship on the Water (WOW) meets weekly from Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day weekend.

County Road 88 and Summer Service



Fiona DeSimone plays with one of the children in a Hispanic community on County Road 88. SIFAT staff hold an afternoon day camp each Thursday throughout the year.

For the past five summers, Learn & Serve participants have served in our local community. In addition to the County Road 88 project, they helped the Ashland Street Department, Clay County Health and Wellness Center, Get 'n' Buy, Lineville Nursing Home and Will's Way.

English as a Second Language Classes

By Cheryl Hurtt
SIFAT Volunteer

Cheryl Hurtt and Laura Paulk, both resident volunteers at SIFAT, worked with Pastor Juan Villaneueva to hold English classes. Both church and community members were excited to have the opportunity. Pastor Juan suggested that we hold the classes at Lineville Baptist Church, rather than his church, because of needing larger classrooms. God provided that request and Jerry Colquett, pastor of LBC, allowed us to use their facilities for the classes.

A 10-week class was held with classes for beginners and intermediates. Each class lasted for about an hour, followed by a short break with refreshments. Then, both classes met together to sing songs and hear a Bible story in English with Pastor Juan translating. While their parents participated in the classes, 15 children listened to a Bible story and had recreation time.



Reflecting on L&S

By Jeremy Knight

Associate Pastor for Youth and Families
at Main Street UMC, Hattiesburg, Miss.

Recently in all of our morning worship services, students shared about SIFAT and their Learn & Serve (L&S) experience with our congregation. It was in the moments after that I realized several things that bear repeating.

L&S has become more than an experience; it is now a movement. As I listened to students, many of whom have attended numerous times, I thought to myself, “The experience they are sharing with others is not just what they did, but is actually who they are becoming!” What SIFAT has done during the past few years with the L&S program is remarkable. When we—as followers of Christ—see others and ourselves live-out the characteristics in which we are taught, we see the Kingdom of God in such an astounding way.

Secondly, we are much more self-aware. I work with young people—with teenagers mostly. If you know one or have been one, you can agree that self-awareness is sometimes a fleeting characteristic. I am witnessing, before my eyes, students who are keenly aware of how they interact with those that they serve. I hear them ask the right questions of themselves when provoked to respond to a need in our community.

Lastly, after having witnessed the L&S program the past three years, I am convinced that God’s spirit is ever present in the planning, training, facilitation and implementation in ways that cannot be captured in words. From the depth of thematic programming to the humility of both full-time and summer staff I stand in awe. An awe that I will continue to seek. An awe that I know is being planted deep within the hearts of my students by the faithful servants at SIFAT. God is doing an incredible thing, and we at Main Street are blessed to be a part of it.

Book your winter or spring retreat now!

Did you know that our Learn & Serve staff hosts retreats during the school year? Whether we provide all of your programming or just the facilities, our staff works with each group to create a unique experience for all ages. Contact Mary MacInnis Corson, learnandserve@sifat.org, to start planning your next trip to SIFAT.



SIFAT Journal



My Fourth Year at L&S

By Kennedy Shock
Learn & Serve Participant
from Pontotoc UMC, Pontotoc, Miss.

This year at SIFAT was probably the most effective of the four years I have been to Learn & Serve (L&S). Through the course of the week, I recognized that I have multiple broken relationships. I do things daily that cause broken relationships with myself, God, creation and other people. Until camp this summer, I had never even thought of having a relationship with creation, or really even myself. During the five days at SIFAT, I really tried to work on the relationship with myself. I decided that was my starting point in my attempt at reconciliation. I felt like the root of my other broken relationships came from a bad self image. Looking back on that week, I think identifying my broken relationship with self really helped me. I learned a lot about myself, and I think it changed my point of view.

I have also seen a big difference in my youth group. There are a lot of times now that we verbally consider the effects of our actions before we do them. We also have discussions about the roots of other relationships that are already broken and how to reconcile them. In my own life, I have a lot of people that I am very close to now, because I spent time thinking about the root of our broken relationship. In most of those situations, the broken relationship was my fault because I did not want to forgive people for small things. At camp, I identified most of those people I needed to forgive, and I have made a lot of progress since we have been home. If I had not gone to camp, I would not even know I had broken relationships at all. I would not understand the root of the problems either.

Until this year at SIFAT, I never understood how connected the whole world really is. I think that was another big thing I got a lot from, learning that we are all connected in some way and we choose how that is on a daily basis. Knowing everything that I know now about broken relationships, roots, reconciliation and being connected, I definitely came back from SIFAT more aware. I think I also came back more prepared to go out everyday and attempt to be a servant for God. I have been to SIFAT for four years, and I think this year changed me more than ever before.





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SIFAT's Vision: Bridging the First and Two-thirds Worlds to alleviate spiritual and physical poverty, encouraging people to develop their God-given potential.

SIFAT's Mission: To share God's love through service, education and personal involvement with a needy world.

From the Desk of Tom Corson

This summer, SIFAT hosted work teams in a continuing effort to complete a SIFAT Training Center in Zambia, Africa, which also will serve as the main office for the Provisional Conference of the Zambian United Methodist Church. During our stay we were able to visit Bruce Kaumba (far left in photo), a recent SIFAT graduate. Bruce has started a church, an elementary school, and a number of development projects in his humble community. Walking toward his school, we passed three neighbors working with scraps cut from the soles of old flip flops. They greeted us and explained that they were making a rope and washer water pump out of the broken sandals. "Bruce studied at a school called SIFAT," one man told us. "He learned to make this rope and washer pump to bring water out of the wells. We couldn't afford diesel pumps, but this one, we can make ourselves." He happily showed us his garden where he could grow more food for his family, because he could irrigate it with the water brought up with this pump.



SIFAT graduate taught others what they learned here. This rope and washer pump is just an example. Through this simple technology, God has truly used Bruce to bring clean water to his community for the first time. Some of you have helped sponsor community leaders such as Bruce, by providing scholarships to study at SIFAT. Others are helping us build this urgently needed training center. I wish you could see the big difference Bruce and other SIFAT students are making in their communities after returning to their homes.

As it becomes increasingly difficult for deserving Christian leaders to obtain visas to study in Alabama, we are excited to soon be able to teach people like

Bruce in Zambia, in Appropriate Technologies to meet their basic human needs. I want to express a big Thank You to all who have helped get this wonderful project started. I also want to encourage others of you to prayerfully join us financially, or by taking a mission team next spring, as there is still so much work to be done to complete our new SIFAT African training center!

It is reaffirming to find people we have never met making something to help their families live a better life because a