

SIFAT Journal

Sharing God's love in practical ways since 1979

Who is Mama Yoli?

During the past three years, stories about Mama Yoli's House and short-term mission teams have often been featured in the *Journal*. This month, we would like to share Mama Yoli's story and how her legacy continues.

Yolanda "Yoli" Cassidy, a native of Colombia, served as a team member and translator for Woodbine United Methodist Church in Pace, Fla., for two years during the construction of "Semillitas de Dios" daycare facility. Her son, Daniel Perez, is serving as a summer intern in Ecuador this summer.

"Today is July 15th... three years since my mother, Yoli, passed away and went to be with the Lord," Daniel writes on the interns' blog. "She poured her soul, and every ounce of her love out to these children... She said, 'When I walked the streets in Atacucho, it was the first time that I really felt like Jesus. I walked and prayed for the lame, prayed for healing, and through Christ, people were healed.'"

The last year Yoli served in Ecuador (2004), she visited a site where SIFAT asked the team to pray about construction for a new facility. While praying, Yoli was so excited that she began to cry and said she would give anything to see a center built for these children.



Later that year, Yoli visited family in Colombia. A week after returning, she rushed to the scene of a car wreck that one of the Woodbine youth was involved in. As she crossed the street, a car struck Yoli. She lived less than

24 hours after being hit.

Before Yoli died, she was trying to find ways to devote more time and resources to SIFAT and its vision in Atacucho. As SIFAT began plans to build a new daycare facility, individuals in Woodbine UMC wanted to raise money for this project as a tribute to Yoli and what her life meant to so many. The church established the "Yoli Cassidy Memorial Fund" for the purpose of making this newest facility a reality in her memory.

Woodbine mixed Yoli's ashes in the foundation, proclaiming that God would fill this building with his children. Daniel has gotten to see the building grow and knows that she is rejoicing in heaven.

In addition to a daycare facility, SIFAT's teams are now building a connecting facility that will house a church, pastor and SIFAT offices for this community. Daniel says that this addition is "going to make God's presence so much more powerful."

"My heart is leaping with joy and tears to have my mother's legacy to continue through all of this. I am so grateful for all the teams who pour their resources into this project, for the kids and for my mother's legacy. I rest with peace knowing that she would be so thrilled, so filled with the Holy Spirit, and so proud, not to have her name in the daycare, but to have a daycare that will house more than 150 kids and a church that will be active with the community." — Daniel Perez

www.sifat.org Has a New Look!

Our new website launched at the end of July. You will immediately notice a difference when the homepage loads, and you begin to enjoy a short slideshow of pictures. Featuring updated photographs and content, visitors to www.sifat.org will find valuable information about training opportunities, youth and children's programs and short-term mission team availabilities.

The site now offers new ways to get connected with SIFAT. You can join mailing lists for e-newsletters and updates. Visit our blog for the latest SIFAT news releases, updates and accomplishments. Calendars allow you to see when events are happening on campus, when teams are

traveling abroad and our training schedule.

We hope that you will be able to find information quickly and more easily than you were able with our previous site. All of our forms for mission teams, training and campus activities are now available online, and you may email them to us. Donating to SIFAT is easier than it has ever been, because you can now use a credit card or a PayPal account and donate directly from our website!

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a credit card
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Please spend some time surfing our online presence. If you have comments or questions about the new site, please contact Marie Lanier at (256) 396-2015 or lanierm@sifat.org.



Students and leaders from Indiana learn team building skills by conquering the wall.

What a Summer!

By Jamie Waldhour

Amazing things happened this summer during Learn and Serve (L&S) 2007 as 226 youth and adults, representing 18 churches and seven states, came to SIFAT. Through L&S, they were *exposed* to global needs, *experienced* different cultures and two-thirds world living conditions and were *equipped* and *empowered* to address similar needs in their own communities. Each week, our staff combined active learning, SPEAR (small group) discussions, recreation, awesome counselors, team building, community service and powerful worship to create an experience that we pray will make a lasting impact in the lives of these youth and adults as they return to make a difference in the lives of their communities.

To find out more about L&S, go to www.sifat.org/learnandserve, where you will find information for students, parents and youth leaders, as well as our blog that has posts with pictures from this summer. If your youth group is interested in information L&S for 2008, please contact Jamie at (256) 396-2015 or waldhourj@sifat.org.

Make a difference in a hurting world: Take stock in SIFAT! Become a SHAREholder by pledging to give monthly. Together, we can demonstrate Christ's love to impoverished peoples. Contact Marie Lanier (lanierm@sifat.org) for more information.

Great is Thy Faithfulness

*By Janet Coppage, Christ Community Church,
Columbus, GA*

I must begin by thanking God for his faithfulness. He has been faithful in providing everything our teams from Christ Community Church (CCC) have needed for the last six years. Our church has had the immense blessing of working with SIFAT to help the Lord build a Christian boarding home (The Internado) for children in the very remote village of Ixiamas, Bolivia. Beginning in 2001, through 2007, members of CCC and others cleared the land, planted the first banana trees and loaded and unloaded the first load of bricks for the Internado. We laid the stone foundations for the building



Janet Coppage (left), Phyllis Chappell and Lauren Jones work on building a wall of the new building at the internado.

with river rock and hand mixed concrete. Scriptures were written on those rocks to strengthen the foundation. Then came the walls, stucco and paint—three stories worth built on a foundation of God's word, His love and faith that He would bring the children from their villages in the jungle to live at the Internado. Our prayers were answered and the first children came in 2004. What a blessing for us to be there that year and see the children that God brought to the Internado! There are now about forty children living there.

The Lord has given CCC the opportunity and responsibility to help Him touch and change the lives of a new generation in a very remote, largely ignored part of the world. The children at the Internado are amazing! In a rich environment of God's love, His word and prayer, they are thriving. It is my prayer that many of them will be spiritual leaders in their villages and will also be able to share the practical, life-sustaining skills that they are learning at the Internado.

It is SIFAT's belief and mine that a community most benefits from long-term projects that involve the local people. Projects that teach them appropriate technology and new skills. The Internado was built at the request of the local people by the hands of Godly people from the United States, local builders, parents of the children and the children themselves. This type of development takes much longer and is sometimes inefficient. However, the local people have ownership and pride in what they have accomplished and the ability to apply the skills they have learned. In this manner, we empower people rather than giving them a handout and creating dependency.

The truth is that what I have written here does not begin to scratch the surface of the experiences I have had in foreign missions. The Lord has blessed me and changed my heart in ways that I never could have imagined! What we have poured out over these years has come back to us in immeasurable blessings for every person who has gone with us.



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From the Desk of Tom Corson

In July, Rev. Tony Rowell led people from eight different churches in South Carolina to help us work on a dorm for SIFAT's youth home in Ixiamas, Bolivia. Although they spent twenty-something hours on a bus traveling Bolivia's Death Road to get to the site, their spirits were not dampened. They were a wonderful team, working hard to get to know and help the children, as well as to do the construction work set before them.

Before pouring the cement floor, we buried a time capsule beneath it. Each team member put an object in the capsule that represented something meaningful they had been doing. One who helped with a sewing project put in a spool of thread. One who hauled rocks for the foundation put in a small rock. Another who laid bricks put in his trowel. Maybe, many years from now, after our buildings have disintegrated, someone will find our capsule and ponder over the meaning of the message the team wanted to send into the future. However, even if our time capsule is never unearthed, we are burying a time capsule in these students' lives each day.

Someone once said, "Children are a letter we write to people in a future we will never know." Our time capsule was meaningful, but it was only symbolic of what we are sending into the future. Each child attending school, learning appropriate technologies that will help their families survive and be more healthy, hearing the message of Jesus and his call on their lives is a time capsule we are sending into the future. We emphasize long-term development, sowing seeds of the Kingdom of God into the hearts and minds of children who would not have a chance to learn these things otherwise. The children are our real time capsules. Through your prayers and support, you have joined us in helping send these children as our time capsules into a better future.



Tony Rowell helps bury our time capsule