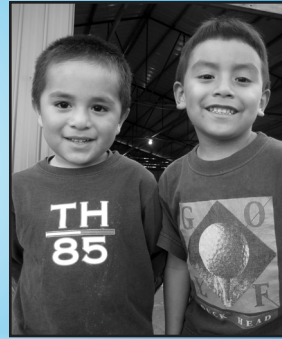


SIFAT Journal



Two friends from our local ministry on County Road 88 are always smiling and ready to play!

Sharing God's Love in Practical Ways

March 2008

Harvesting Rice, Seeing Change

By Rachel Parsons
Director, Internado Cristiano in Ixiamas, Bolivia

A new school year has arrived along with 20 new students here at the internado in Ixiamas. We are blessed to have so many girls this year. As of March 10, we have 25 girls and 15 boys staying with us. Their ages range from second grade to seniors in high school. We are hoping to have our first high school graduate this year. So if anyone is ready to be part of a big Bolivian graduation party, be ready to come to Ixiamas in November 2008!

Besides the students, we are also blessed to have two interns staying with us for three months. They have already been busy making bricks for the new fuel efficient wood stove and learning how to drill wells at the community level for very reasonable prices. They also give regularly scheduled classes in computer skills, English and guitar. When not doing that, we keep them busy with the rice harvest.

Rice Harvest

The rice harvest has kept us all busy the past month. The whole process takes
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Regina, one of the students in the internado, helps separate the harvested rice.



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Short-term Missions in 2008

By Peggy Walker
International Team Coordinator

2008 promises to be a productive year for SIFAT teams to Ecuador and Bolivia.

With 688 people scheduled to go on 23 teams to Ecuador, we hope to be able to almost complete the church building attached to Mama Yoli's Daycare Center ahead of schedule. The sanctuary is already usable and teams will hold services for the community every Sunday beginning in early summer. What a blessing this will be for the people in Atacucho who have been discipled by our SIFAT staff for several years, but have had no place to worship until now.

Six medical teams will go to Ecuador this year to work with the women and children in many of the most impoverished areas of Quito. We will also send teams to continue working with the Tsachila Indians in Santo Domingo and in partnership with Compassion International in the Andean village of Cayambe. It's truly amazing to see how healthy and active the children are from our day care

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SIFAT Remembers...

As SIFAT approaches our 30th year of sharing God's love in practical ways, cofounders Ken and Sarah Corson are writing this column to focus on accomplishments, struggles and important moments from past years. Ken is posting bonus material on our blog, too. We hope you enjoy remembering these years with us!

The Integrated Gospel

Because of our experiences of working with the church in Cuba, Costa Rica, Puerto Rico and later in Bolivia, we were often asked to speak in churches on the subject of "missions." In addition to telling our experiences, we were telling a part of what we essentially were and what we still are today. Our faith is what we believe in enough to act on. Some churches and people caught the vision of a holistic Gospel of faith and technology. We found that men especially were interested in things they could do with their hands for Christ.

Still there were times when faith and technology were greeted skeptically. Once while representing SIFAT in a seminary, a student looked at our display. "Faith and Technology?" he questioned. "What does technology

have to do with faith?" Then he conceded, "Well, maybe...I went to Haiti, and I saw that the Gospel was not enough for Haiti. They are starving. They need food. I guess technology would be o.k. for them."

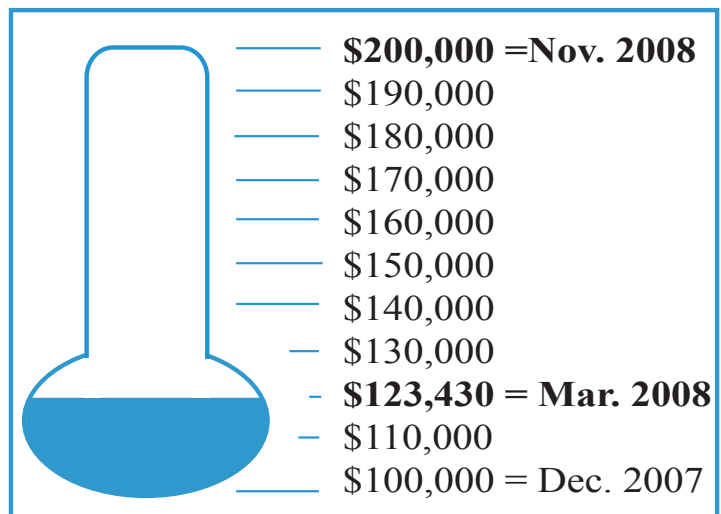
Immediately, I knew something was wrong with his statement that the Gospel was not enough for Haiti. I responded, "Oh, the Gospel is enough for everyone in this world! It is YOUR CONCEPT of the Gospel that says it is not enough for Haiti!" God cares about every aspect of our being...our bodies, our minds, our emotions, our soul. We who minister in His name need to care about the whole person, and not just individuals, but the whole community as well. That is the integrated Gospel!

Sarah Trust Fund Update

In the February issue of the SIFAT Journal, the wrong graphic was printed to update you on the Sarah Fund. The correct February amount was \$113,040.

Because of your faithful support, the Sarah Trust Fund is continuing to grow! As a reminder, the interest from this fund will offset our core staff salaries, which will allow more of SIFAT's future funding to directly support our projects. Program staff and training staff are needed to continue our mission of sharing God's love through service, education and personal involvement with a needy world.

Are you interested in matching funds for this trust, donating stock or other planned giving? If so, contact our executive director Tom Corson, corsont@sifat.org.



To contribute to the Sarah Trust Fund, please write "Sarah Fund" in the memo field of your check.

Bridge Update: Honduras trip



Bolivar Sanga (left), Chris Canon, Glenn Glover and Tom Corson helped dedicate this bridge in Honduras.

In late February, Tom and two members of Auburn UMC's Quesimpuco team traveled to Honduras to meet representatives of Bridges to Prosperity and see a footbridge being built. Engineer Bolivar Sanga, a SIFAT graduate from Ecuador, will be working with the communities in the Quesimpuco area to prepare the bridge site. Bridges for Prosperity commended Bolivar's ability to encourage the members of the community and get them involved with the project.

Benjo Paredes, director of CENATEC (SIFAT's sister organization), said that cutting a road to the bridge site for materials to be brought in is going to be a difficult task. He already has commitments from four communities to help build the bridge. He believes at least 10 communities will join efforts with SIFAT and Bridges to Prosperity to make this bridge a reality.

Benjo reaffirmed the need for the bridge when he said school still has not started in Quesimpuco since many students are unable to cross the river to come to the internado. Another present concern is that if they cross and the rains continue, they will be stuck on the internado side and not able to return to their families during breaks.

The need for this footbridge is evident every time a team serves Quesimpuco and each time Benjo calls us. The bridge will be more than 300 feet long, and one of the longest using this technology.

Training News

United States Training:

SIFAT, in conjunction with the University of Alabama at Birmingham and the Sparkman Center for Global Health will offer two intensive field trainings designed for those working at the community level in international development. Training will be held on our international campus. Field training is one component of the UAB Global Health Certificate Program. It may be taken alone or as part of the certificate program. For more information, visit the training section of our website or contact international training director Kathy Bryson by e-mail, brysonk@sifat.org.

May 28-June 7 "World Hunger and Malnutrition: Practical Skills to Make a Difference"

This 10-day intensive course focuses on specific technologies and strategies that can greatly impact hunger at the community level.

Oct. 6-18 "Water & Sanitation: Low Cost Technologies and Strategies for Community Development"

This intensive two-week course introduces technologies for clean water and basic sanitation in the context of long-term community development.

Philippines: April 1-May 17

SIFAT is partnering with Don Mariano Marcos Memorial State University to offer training to university students in practical technologies and community development. This training will involve SIFAT community workers and pastors in poor areas to foster a creative educational exchange.

Ecuador: April 21-May 2

SIFAT is partnering with MAP International and Compassion International to train some of their community leaders in practical technologies that address basic human needs. We are excited about this partnership and collaborative community work in the future. This is the first of three training sessions.

Ixiamas

(Continued from page 1)

quite a while, but it is interesting. We use knives made out of tin roofing to harvest the rice with a technique that I haven't quite gotten down (just last Sunday a 9 year old girl harvested three times as much as me in one morning!) We then have to "step on" the rice to separate it from the straw. Then, we have to make sure it dries just right, which can be a real challenge in the rainy season. We take it to the rice mill to finally come down to the nice white grain that we all know as rice. The harvest is probably one of the most difficult times of the year, but the profit is very worth it! We eat rice twice a day, and this rice should last us for the whole year. So, we are already becoming self sufficient in the food area. Last year, we ate more than 3,500 pounds of rice!

Seeing change: Alex

It is neat to see change in the kids from one year to the next. Alex came to us from the streets of Cochabamba last year. He came as a very rough and tough boy who would anger quickly. As a fourth grader this year, he is already leading the other new kids around. We learned some basic first aid skills last year, and it looks like it stuck. One day he brought me one of the little boys that had fallen while playing and cut his foot. Alex came up to my office and said, "He hurt himself, but don't worry, I already washed it with clean water and soap and now he is ready for the hydrogen peroxide and Band-Aid." I just smiled and said thanks for bringing him to me.

Every day can be a real challenge working with 40 kids and all the little problems that each one has. But when I see even a little change in one kid, it makes it all worth it. It makes me think of maybe how God sees us. He has to put up with all our little problems day by day, but if we do just one good deed he smiles down at us and says "that's my son, I'm so proud of how he has grown." If only we could all make God smile at least one time every day!

Help SIFAT continue making a difference in our world:

Become a SHAREholder by pledging to give monthly. Together, we can demonstrate Christ's love to impoverished peoples. Contact Marie Lanier, lanierm@sifat.org, or visit www.sifat.org/share.html.

Partnership for Clean Water

The World Health Organization says that 70 percent of the world's illnesses would be eradicated if everyone had access to clean water and sanitation. In Bolivia, SIFAT works with homesteaders that do not have access to clean water. We are beginning a partnership with *Water for All International (WFA)*, to learn an appropriate technology that can make this needed clean water a reality.

WFA Director Terry Waller is training SIFAT intern Addison Shock at a site near Santa Cruz, Bolivia. With the assistance of WFA, Addison will return to Ixiamas and begin drilling a well for our children at the SIFAT internado (boarding home). We hope to use their model of setting up water clubs to be able to implement this technology to bring clean water to all the homesteaders all over the Ixiamas area.

SIFAT has worked with many missionary drilling programs. Traditionally, drilling equipment to install shallow wells for clean water cost \$10,000 to \$15,000. Then, you have the issue of maintenance for diesel or gasoline engines, belts or chain drives and other mechanical components.

WFA's technology is simple and can be made in a village workshop with a welder using car springs and plumbing

Continued on page 5



SIFAT staff practiced drilling a well with Addison before he left. Several staff got to provide the power for the drill! Vicky Planta (right), a 2007 Practicum graduate, will join our current interns later this spring.

Wells

(Continued from page 4)

parts. Manual labor instead of motors can drill a well up to 200 feet deep. Water clubs help one another drill wells, install pumps and maintain wells. The cost of the materials for each well is minimal. The equipment stays in the community to be used by them to help others have clean water.

WFA has drilled almost 2000 wells in Bolivia, as well as in six other countries. Working together, we hope to take this technology into other countries through SIFAT's training programs.

At SIFAT, we have a history of helping communities receive clean water. During the Practicum, we train community leaders in many forms of water purification, making pumps and installing water systems. Bolivian director Benjo Paredes has helped bring water to more than 100 villages by capping springs. However, in Ixiamas, WFA's drilling system is more appropriate than these other technologies. Water is life and we look forward to being able to literally save lives by helping the people of Ixiamas find clean water with this technology.

For more information about WFA, visit their website at www.waterforallinternational.org.

Volunteers Needed!

Whether you come daily, monthly or for an extended stay, your skills are valuable and needed.

Contact Haley Lewis, lewish@sifat.org, for more information.

Sure, I can do that!

When Ellen Harper began volunteering at SIFAT in 2000, she was looking for a place to become involved. She and her husband, Jim, moved here from the Atlanta area, where Ellen actively volunteered in addition to her church activities.

Although most of her volunteering is with the CARES program, Ellen has also decorated for events (such as 2007's International Festival and 2008's Team Leader Training), cooked and helped put together packets and booklets.

Ellen has presented almost every module in all the CARES programs -- Around the World, Appropriate Technology and Native American. Her favorite to present is Nepal, though, because it was the first she did in any detail. Ellen shares, "I had to come up with a lot of the information because it hadn't been done before. I feel I have ownership in the Nepal module."



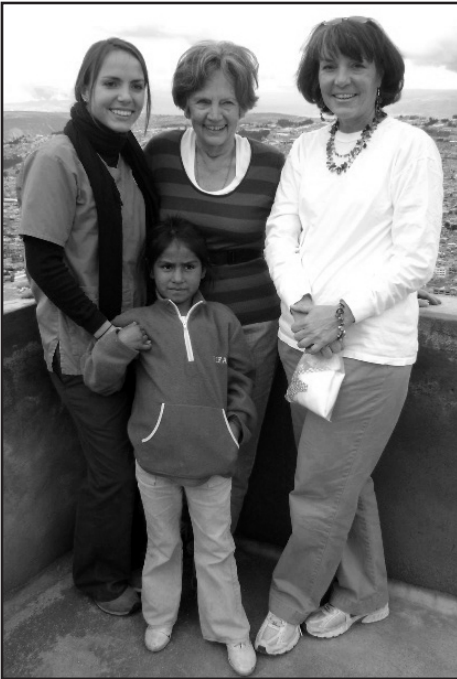
When not presenting Nepal, Ellen (left) often helps Sofia present Guatemala.

Ellen was a first grade teacher for five years, but says she is a natural teacher who likes things that are hands-on. Presenting these cultures to CARES is important to Ellen, because "every single minute you devote into helping and every cent you may donate is used properly at SIFAT. This is one place you can make a difference in someone's life. It may be a small difference, but with the CARES program, we can plant a little seed in the minds of our privileged children about what it's like to not be privileged. People need to know, not just children, that not everyone is as fortunate as we are in this country."

Ellen encourages her friends and those she meets to volunteer at SIFAT. She is always "telling people that if they think they wouldn't like it or couldn't do it, I know they could. There's something that everybody could do. You don't have to spend days and days; you could spend three hours and do something. There are some three-hour jobs, as well as 36-hour jobs."

At SIFAT, our staff knows Ellen is willing to help out in whatever way she is needed, whether it is a behind the scenes job or being a CARES presenter. Whenever asked to do something different, we count on hearing, "Sure, I can do that."

Three Generations on recent SIFAT team



Rebekah Hackney (left), Jean McMillan and Leigh Hackney were part of the Auburn University Women's Healthcare team to Quito. Jean and Leigh worked with the Bible school component of the team, while Rebekah, a nursing student, worked in the women's medical clinic.

Current Trips

The following teams are serving in Ecuador this spring. Please pray for them as they prepare and travel to share God's love in practical ways.

March 15-21	Mt. Bethel Youth
March 22-30	University of Missouri Wesley Foundation
April 4-12	Mt. Bethel Spring Break

STM Teams

(Continued from page 1)
centers compared with the children from the community in general. The meals we serve these day care kids every day may be meager by our standards here at home, but what an incredible difference they have made in their development and overall health.

These children have also been nourished in their mental growth by the mothers working with them in the day care centers who have been through the SIFAT training. It was a proud moment last year when we found out all of the children from Little Seeds of God passed their entrance exams with flying colors to attend public school. Now, we just need to initiate a program that will continue to support and guide these kids as they progress to higher levels of education and begin to integrate more with children in other communities. Many teams have expressed interest in making this happen, and we are working with our Ecuador staff to introduce a viable program so these kids will not fall by the wayside after they leave our day cares.

The VBS teams will be working every morning this summer in Los Roldos, the area where we hope to build the next day care center. Teams have already offered to support this project if we can overcome the hurdles for getting clear title on a suitable piece of land. Dr. Roberto is encouraged that we will be able to do this by 2009, and we expect to have mothers from that community attend the SIFAT training to be ready to teach our SIFAT curriculum when the center opens.

In Bolivia, we have 8 teams traveling

to Ixiamas and Quesimpuco with 150 team members excited to begin working on new projects in both villages.

Auburn UMC will send several teams to build the footbridge proposed last year to cross the Chayanta River, providing much needed year-round access for the people across the valley from Quesimpuco. This is new territory for SIFAT teams and Bolivar Sanga, a former SIFAT graduate from Ecuador, will head the project with technical help from Bridges to Prosperity, from whom he received hands-on training in Honduras.

In Ixiamas, Rachel Parsons has a promising new staff and several interns to work with the kids at the internado and to help with the new well projects in the area and continue building the girl's dorm. These interns, from Auburn, Samford, Mississippi and the Philippines are energetic, motivated and truly excited about working on the projects and, more importantly, about mentoring the young people in our internado. Classes in computers and English have already started. What wonderful role models they will be for those kids.

I have just returned from Ecuador with our first team for the year. If their enthusiasm for SIFAT's work there is any indication, this should be our best, most productive year ever to spread our message of sharing God's love in practical ways. This was a ladies medical team, most of whom had never been on a SIFAT team before. They were so touched by what we are doing with long-term development in those poor communities that almost all have already signed up for next year. What a wonderful beginning for 2008!

¿Quieres pintar?

By Holly Bolinger
Volunteer, County Road 88 Coordinator

I recently spent eight days in Ecuador with SIFAT in an area called Carmen Bajo. I traveled there as part of a women's health team (*photo below*). Most team members were nurses or nursing students, but a few of us tagged along to lead a Bible school for the children, while the medical types ran the clinic each day.

Although I've been taking a Spanish class at SIFAT for a few weeks now and should, in theory, be fairly conversational at this point, I used one phrase over and over in Ecuador that we never covered in our Monday night class: "¿Quieres pintar?" (That's Spanish for, "Want to color?")

My Spanish might be a little rusty, but I know that God uses our willing hearts and hands just as much as our willing mouths (sometimes we probably should use our hearts and hands more than our mouths anyway). As I colored pictures, sang songs and played with the beautiful children in Carmen Bajo, God opened my heart to this community.

Our ministry in Carmen Bajo was truly an example of

SIFAT's holistic approach to ministry: we responded to both the physical and spiritual needs of this community. The nursing team cared for the health of the community's often-overlooked women. The VBS team, which I was a part of, cared for another aspect of the community's health: we poured love into the lives of the children there, God working through us to soothe the hurts of kids whose families are so busy trying to make ends meet that no one has time to laugh, play, and give hugs.



I learned that we were the first team this year to work with the people in Carmen Bajo. I also learned that we were the first team in *many* years from SIFAT to work in Carmen Bajo. This community is ready for change; it was exciting for me to stand on the threshold of a new season for these families and be part of the team that laid the foundation for a new partnership.

Keep the community of Carmen Bajo in your prayers... that the women would begin to understand God's love and hope for them, that the children would have the resources necessary to receive an education, and that God would move in the hearts of the community to mend old hurts and build a new future for the people there.



He took a little child and had him stand among them. Taking him in his arms, he said to them, "Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me but the one who sent me."

Mark 9:36-37, NIV



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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

The last chapter of Matthew recounts the story of the resurrection. Easter is a special time for Christians. It reminds us again that no hardship, no problem, no darkness can overcome us, because Jesus rose from the dead, and we who follow Jesus are also Resurrection People!

Jesus' command to His disciples after the resurrection is recorded in Matthew 28:18-20.

*"Preach the
Gospel at all times.
If necessary, use
words."
St. Francis of Assisi*

"Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing...teaching..." SIFAT exists to carry out this commandment. At SIFAT's spring board of directors meeting this month, we had a lengthy discussion as to how we do this. After an hour of discussion, we realized that we still use the same method on which SIFAT was founded 29 years ago. We still follow I John 3:18: "Let us not love with word or tongue, but with actions and in truth." Our motto is "Sharing God's love in practical ways." We include both faith and technology. We believe that God's answers to spiritual and physical needs go together to make the whole Gospel, the integrated Gospel.

When we from SIFAT go to one of our graduates' communities for the first time, our responsibility is to model the love of Christ. First we listen to the people to try to understand their needs and priorities. After living with them, loving them, walking in their shoes with them, offering training and help in the technologies they ask for, inevitably they ask us about our God. Then it is appropriate to add words to our practical help.

This method brings lasting results. Those who become Christians do so because they want to, because they see Jesus as He is and love Him, not because we have manipulated them to receive Christ. St. Francis of Assisi said, "Preach the Gospel at all times. If necessary, use words." We found that our job is not to prove to them that Jesus is the Son of God; that is the job of the Holy Spirit. Our job is to love them, to be a model of Christ's love in all we say, think or do to share his love, peace, joy.