

SIFAT Journal



Sharing God's Love in Practical Ways

May 2008

From 12 to 99: Supporters Bridge Generations

SIFAT is able to touch hundreds of people in need around the globe each month because of people who participate with us in showing God's love in practical ways. The young and the old, the rich and the poor, people from many different countries, cultures and languages join together in SIFAT where they serve others in the name of Christ.

At 12 years of age, Bethany Lake was the youngest member of Mt. Bethel UMC's SIFAT mission team to Ecuador. She was moved by the needy, but friendly, children she met on the mission trip and resolved to raise \$100 to participate in SIFAT's mission to them. On her Christmas list, she asked for money to help her reach her goal. She wrote, "...This is



Bethany (right) and her Ecuadorian friend Dayana spend time together. Bethany's first trip to Ecuador led her to raise \$100 for our work there.

something I am passionate about and I want to help. And remember this, Matthew 17:20 says with faith the size of a mustard seed, you can move mountains. Knowing that I have faith, I know I can get \$100 by April 2008." And she did!

Mrs. Ina Murl Moore, of Winfield, Ala., donates to SIFAT regularly. She always writes a short note with her check, telling us how she is doing and encouraging us in our work. This month she wrote us that she is exhausted from her 99th birthday celebration! Mrs. Ina Murl is not just an individual supporter of SIFAT. She also has her Agape Circle involved in donating. Knowing Mrs. Ina Murl takes time to pray for us and still includes us in her budget at 99 years of age is an

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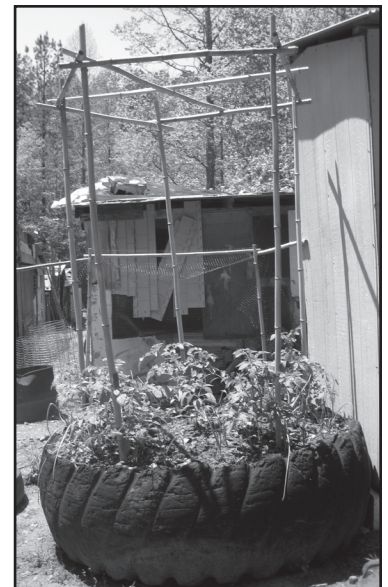
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A Garden in a Tire?

How does someone in an urban area with nonexistent financial resources get land to cultivate?" Martin Price, Ph.D., raises this question in a draft of his upcoming book, "Gardening on Rooftops (and other above-ground locations)". Dr. Price's work has been an excellent resource for gardener John Carr, who is developing SIFAT's urban garden.

Dr. Price is a senior agricultural scientist and cofounder of ECHO, an organization that seeks "to network with community leaders in developing countries to seek hunger solutions for families growing food under difficult conditions." The need for food is not only a problem in rural areas. Everywhere,



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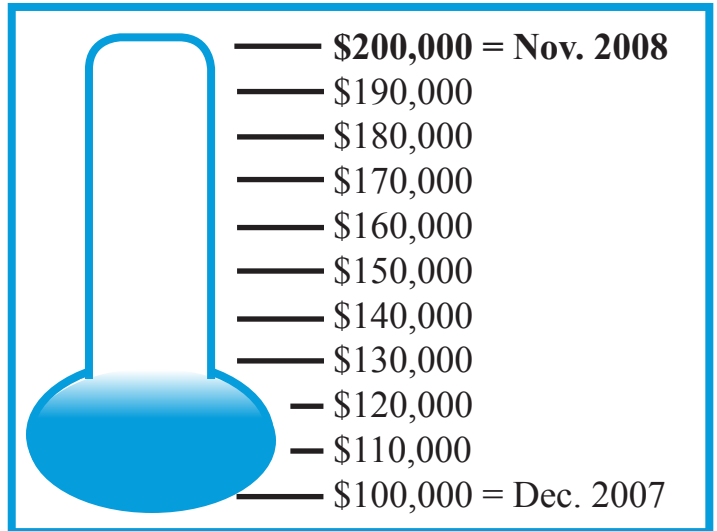
Supporters

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encouragement beyond words.

We at SIFAT are able to show God's love to needy people in so many different places because of you who participate in this ministry with us – in prayer and/or in contributions. From the youngest to the oldest, you are very important to us. Every day that our staff is able to come to work and continue our ministries, we know that God is using you to enable us to do it. You come from different states, denominations and generations. But you are SIFAT! You give of your time, talents and money. Thank you for all you have done and continue to do. Like Bethany and Mrs. Ina Murl, you are individuals who are treasured!

Sarah Trust Fund Update



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

Bolivia Intern Update

Addison and Jarred have returned from Ixiamas and will share about their experiences in next month's Journal.

Vicky arrived in Bolivia on May 1 and is working with the students in our boarding home in Ixiamas. Please join her in praying for a visa extension, so that she is able to fulfill her goal of serving through the fall.

Four summer interns from Auburn University's Wesley Foundation will travel to Bolivia at the end of this month.

Continue to check our blog for updates from our interns!



Jarred (left) and Addison successfully drilled a well at the hospital in Ixiamas using appropriate technology

Upcoming STM Trips

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

Ecuador:

- May 31-June 6 Taylorville UMC
- June 6-16 Woodbine UMC (Mama Yoli's House Dedication - June 11)
- June 14-21 Faith UMC
- June 14-21 St. Luke's UMC (Medical)
- June 21-28 Wilmer UMC
- June 22-29 St. Marks UMC
- June 28-July 5 Jacksonville FUMC

Bolivia:

- June 15-21 Christ Community Church
- June 19-28 Anniston FUMC

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.

Visiting Pastocalle – Nine Years Later

By Sarah Corson
SIFAT Cofounder

Today is the ninth anniversary of the opening of El Sembrador School in Pastocalle, Ecuador. The streets around the church are filled with people and small trucks decorated in vibrant colors. Children laugh as they crowd around the trucks in their costumes. Some are painted as clowns. One small boy leads a huge sheep. The parade begins. A sweet little girl dressed in her beautiful handwoven indigenous clothes reaches out to me with a red rose and a timid, but warm smile as they slowly drive by. The parade passes on through the town and I go inside the church yard to take a tour of the school.

For years these church people dreamed of making a school that would give a quality Christian education to the children of this small town, yet they had very little resources. But they were determined. They started it when they only had a few small rooms nine years



Dr. Roberto accepts a plaque from the community in appreciation of SIFAT teams helping build El Sembrador.

ago. Their faith kept them working, dreaming, talking to others. They had a vision and refused to let it go. After their pastor studied at SIFAT, he asked us to bring a team to help. For several years a SIFAT team went to help build the larger school. Today the two-story building is finished. Their dream is a reality.

What a joy to see the school now! There are 92 children in grades one through seven. In addition to the regular classes, they teach English, their native languages Quichua and Spanish, computer science and Bible. The students are these children and their parents in the parade today.

As praise and worship music begins, we enter the sanctuary. A visiting group with their musical instruments lead as the church fills to capacity. More than 150 people from this small town pack into the church, though many of them are not members. As the service begins, small girls in their Quichuan dress, walk among the people with a little cup made from a gourd and a pitcher of a typical homemade juice. They serve us during the service, since people are hot and tired from the parade. There are speeches praising God and thanking different people for their help in making their school possible. The children bring plaques of gratitude for those who have helped. They call Dr. Roberto Contreras, director of SIFAT Ecuador, to receive a plaque in appreciation for the SIFAT teams who worked side by side with the local people.

The president of the Parent/Teacher's



One of the young students in her native Quichua dress serves a homemade juice to those attending the service.

Association gives a speech thanking the church for leading them in developing their community and in giving hope and a future for their children. Pastor Rodrigo asks the members of the church to come forward. There are only 13 members, almost half of them elderly, one man with only one arm. In their smiling faces, one could glimpse the Spirit of God shining through. This small group of people with such few resources has led this community, and today we see the results.

The community people had cooked huge pots of food in the church kitchen to serve everyone after the service. As we eat, Pastor Rodrigo says, "Hermana, SIFAT sowed their seed in good soil when they came to Pastocalle!" I can see that. And I am a witness of the respect the people of the town feel for this church and for the God whom they represent. More than ever I know what SIFAT means when we say, "Short-term teams for long-term development!"

Sarah traveled to Ecuador to lead Practicum sessions on community development and spiritual formation. She had the opportunity to visit some of our past projects, as well as the current projects.

May 2008



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!



A Foundation for SIFAT

SIFAT was created by people of goodwill, who wanted to do something to make a difference in the lives of people in need. Beginning with a small organizational structure without the encumbrances of bureaucracy allowed us to live out our vision. Unfortunately, there was little funding to operate. We had to live off the land to make our own way.

The budget for SIFAT the first year, 1979, was \$12,000. This included the administrative costs, promotional costs to help people know about SIFAT and all our program costs. SIFAT was capitalized by faith, goodwill and volunteers.

Before our family of six had lived in a one room, thatched-roof hut living on a subsistence income in order to do the mission God called us to. Now friends and churches built a modern home for us on Sarah's parents' farm. This was God's provision for our base of operations to establish SIFAT. It was our capital and a resource from which we could explore new forms of ministry using faith and technology.

Our new home became the first office for SIFAT. Actually our dining room table was the office. A section of the basement became a darkroom to develop pictures for promotions, as well as a dorm for two to 12 volunteers at a time, a cafeteria and a guest house for the many visitors who began to come. I remember one day people from seven different countries passing through Alabama dropped by without prior notice to find out about SIFAT right about noon. We shared our vision of sharing God's

love in practical ways over lunch, which miraculously stretched to feed everyone. Even though our home was in a pine forest, the world seemed to find its way to our door. Such spontaneous interest confirmed to us that the SIFAT vision was worth pursuing.

Our yard became a workshop for experimenting with appropriate technologies. Appropriate technology to us meant taking the resources at hand for our basic needs. Our experiences had taught us that welfare is not a good way truly to help people. Appropriate technology could promote self help instead of handouts for people around the world.

In a very large way, the goodwill of the people who built a house for us had furnished the working capital for SIFAT and the seeds of what SIFAT has been able to do over these nearly 30 years. They not only built a house. They furnished the foundation of a ministry that has trained people working in 79 countries, built churches and schools which have equipped numerous Christian workers, a hospital, day care centers that care for 1200 pre-school children living in the slums, encouraged self-help microenterprises, trained health promoters. More than 100 villages now have a clean potable water system. Boarding schools have made it possible for many children to attend school that otherwise could not attend. Many have come to know Christ for the first time. Those who had faith in a vision called SIFAT have touched the lives of tens of thousands of people. Their faith has gone around the world, and our God of love has been, and is being, proclaimed in both word and deed.

Urban Garden

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people's need for food is evident.

John has designed a rooftop/urban garden in the slums of our Global Village. There are three main types of rooftop gardens: shallow bed, shallow pool and wick. Hybrids of these types are often used, such as the ones John cultivated.



SIFAT gardener John Carr's urban garden is under development in SIFAT's simulated slum.

Herbs, tomatoes, onions, peppers, as well as many types of leafy vegetables that are very high in nutrients, are planted in tires, logs and rock-lined beds, using growing mediums of cola cans in socks, water and regular soil. Quail grass, vegetable amaranth, New Zealand spinach (a heat tolerant spinach) and Ethiopian kale are some of the leafy plants John has planted on recommendations of ECHO and Dave Kennedy, cofounder of Leaf for Life. Leaf for Life helps people improve their

health by showing them ways to make better use of vegetables, especially leaf crops, in their diets.

SIFAT will be using our new urban garden during the upcoming Field Course Study on May 27-June 7. Both Dave Kennedy and Martin Price will be instructors in this course. If you are interested in learning more about the course, please visit www.sifat.org/fieldstudy.html or call Kathy Bryson, international training director.

Search the Web for SIFAT

Do you often turn to your computer to search about a topic in the news, a restaurant menu or maybe even a phone number you need? Now, using GoodSearch, you can search the Internet and raise money for SIFAT at the same time. For each search, GoodSearch donates one penny to SIFAT.

One penny may not seem like much, but let's do a little math to see what a few people can do. Each month, we mail approximately 2,200 SIFAT Journals. If each person used GoodSearch once a week for a month (4 times), SIFAT would receive \$88. If everyone did this for an entire year, SIFAT would receive \$1,056.--and that's without ever increasing your monetary donations.

$$2200 \times 4 = \$88 \times 12 = \$1056 = \text{Sharing God's Love in Practical Ways}$$

Instead, by just donating a little of your time, for a search you are already doing, you have helped SIFAT. GoodSearch gets even better - you can also GoodShop. Many merchants donate a portion of your purchase to SIFAT, and by using GoodShop, you purchase directly from the company of your choice, but raise money for SIFAT in the process.



How do I do this? It's simple. Visit www.goodsearch.com. Type in SIFAT in the box for the cause, then type your topic in the search box, just like similar search engines. To shop, just click on GoodShop. (or go to www.goodshop.com). GoodSearch lets you download toolbars for your Internet browser, letting you have the ability to quickly search for your topics.

The next time you are researching a mission trip to Bolivia or trying to find out how to construct a bamboo house in your backyard, go to www.goodsearch.com and find the answers to your questions, while raising money for SIFAT!

Don't forget: you can donate online!

You can donate online using a credit card or PayPal account!

Go to www.sifat.org, and click "donate" to get started!

Do you want to designate your gift for a particular fund or in honor/memory of someone? If so, just e-mail Claude (hurttc@sifat.org) after donating, and he will credit it appropriately.



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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

Breaking News! On May 1, 2008, four years since beginning to work with the people of Atucucho, SIFAT officially signed an agreement with the Ecuadorian Methodist Church to work together to plant a church in this marginalized barrio.

A number of people have become Christians through SIFAT teams. Our Ecuadorian co-worker, Cecilia de Cobo, follows up with discipleship classes, but we have lacked a pastor to plant a church in Atucucho, our home away from home.



Pastor Ramiro and Sofia

Now, Rev. Ramiro Balseca, pastor of Emmanuel Evangelical UMC in Quito, will lead these new Christians. Pastor Ramiro has the heart of a true missionary – compassion and a love for the poor. His family joins him in building this mission church. Sofia, his wife, directs the Sunday School and helps with the youth. Their three teenage children help too. On April 27, forty children and 15 adults joined the Balseca family in worship.

The official agreement that made this possible was signed by Dr. Salomon Cabezas, bishop of the Ecuadorian Methodist Church and Dr. Roberto Contreras, director of SIFAT Ecuador. It stated that SIFAT will help direct and fund Pastor Balseca and his wife Sofia in starting the first Ecuadorian Methodist Mission Church, which will be located in SIFAT's building in Atucucho next to Mama Yoli's House. SIFAT needs \$1000 a month for salaries, transportation, Bible and Sunday School materials and other supplies. We also need a sound system. The sanctuary on the first floor is almost finished, but we need about \$40,000 to be able to finish the Sunday School rooms on the second floor and the parsonage and/or rooms for teams and visitors to stay there in the community with the people. This new church will bring the community together both to worship and to work in active community projects.

We have longed for a church in Atucucho. Now with the help of the Ecuadorian Methodist Church and the Balseca family, the work has begun. Let's pray for them and for the needed resources to help them work. We are excited about this big leap of hope for us and the people of Atucucho. God has used many of you to get the blocks in place. Opportunities for churches to partner with this mission are still available. Please contact me to find out ways your church can sponsor the new church in Atucucho. We are looking forward to seeing what God will do in the next four years in Atucucho!