

# SIFAT Journal

1979-2009: 30 years  
of Sharing God's Love  
in Practical Ways

Sharing God's Love in Practical Ways

Summer 2009

## Our Practicum Students Need Your Support

By Kathy Bryson  
International Training Director

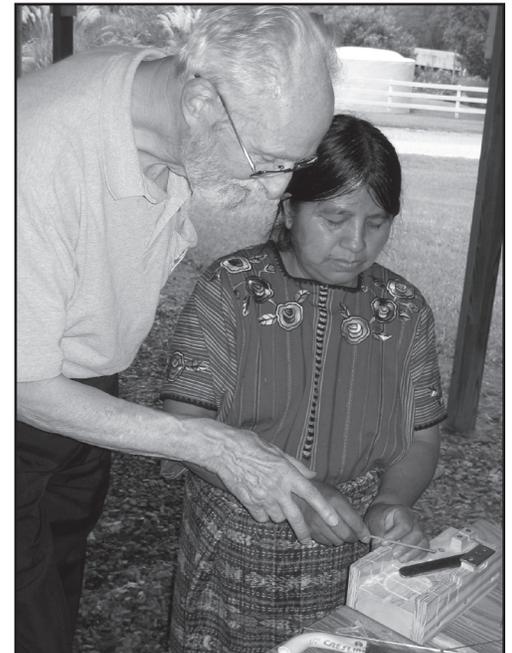
Have you ever watched heart-wrenching documentaries of war-torn countries, of hungry children, of people suffering because of lack of clean water? Have you seen pictures of urban slums where disease and despair run rampant? Maybe you know the statistics that about 27,000 children less than five years old die of easily preventable causes every single day, that one out of five people on the planet lives on less than \$1 a day, that millions

are illiterate and have no job skills.

I want to give you an opportunity to make a lasting difference in one community in the developing world. How? By investing in a Christian leader from a poor community to come to SIFAT and learn practical skills of how the poor can help themselves. These candidates have been selected by their own people to come and get training—how to have clean water, better gardens, prevent disease, build latrines, start a revolving village loan fund, develop micro-enterprises, vaccinate children, teach literacy and more. After the 10-week intensive training this fall, they return home to share all they have learned to benefit the entire community.

We believe this is the best way to make a lasting impact on poverty and to bring the light of hope that we have as Christians for a better life in Christ Jesus. We strive to follow Christ's example of ministering to the whole person—meeting physical, mental, social and spiritual needs.

We have top caliber students—community leaders from Africa, Asia and Latin America—eager to come and learn how to help meet the basic human needs of their communities as a witness to God's love. Most of them have salaries of less than \$200 per month and depend upon scholarship funds to receive training. Many of these people are from places where you and I will likely never go. but we don't have to. We can impact people around the globe by investing in training



*Glasses for Missions founder Eugene Koning teaches graduate Dolores how to make reading glasses during an appropriate technology class.*

their leaders here in Alabama with the integrated Gospel!

I invite you to take a share in a student's scholarship. Would you consider a \$500 scholarship? Maybe your Sunday School Class or Women's Group would adopt a student as a project? Whatever you can give would be greatly appreciated. We invite you to visit SIFAT during the Practicum to meet your student, to invite him/her home with you for dinner, or to

*Continued on page 9*

SERVANTS  
IN FAITH AND  
TECHNOLOGY

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# Summer 2009

## First Graduate from our Internado in Ixiamas

### 2008 Report

By Rachel Parsons  
Ixiamas Administrator

A new school year has started here in Ixiamas. Although classes have been going for more than two weeks now, kids are just starting to arrive from their homes in the countryside where they have been busy helping their families with their rice harvests. More are still expected to arrive, so we are anxiously waiting to see what our family will look like this year!

We have also been busy with the rice harvest at our “Two Trees” property. This year, there has not been as much rain as in past years, so quite a few families lost their harvest because of the drought. God has blessed us very much in that we have not lost anything — it looks like it will be a very bountiful harvest!

Last year, we had our first high school graduate – Miguel Angel Nacho. He was a great blessing to us here at the internado. Miguel learned to fix just about anything for us at the house and even helped the younger kids with their homework. We attended his graduation in the crowded and hot auditorium at the new high school. I was so proud to see him standing up front looking so grown up! It’s neat to see some results of our work here in Ixiamas. This year he plans to either finish up his required year of military service or begin studying at the university. I will keep you updated on his progress.

When the kids come back from their two-month summer vacation, I always ask them what they did and how their time was with their families. One girl, Nancy, who lost her mother in a truck accident several years ago and has mostly been raised by her grandmother, had lots of stories to share. None of her relatives are Christians and her first exposure to our faith was here at the internado. Last year during one of the short term mission group visits she gave her life to Christ. Since then she has been struggling with her former lifestyle, but is learning what it means to lead a Christian life and seems ready to start changing. She



*Miguel Nacho is the first student living at the internado to graduate high school. Miguel came to the internado his freshman year. His mother was excited for his graduation day!*

said that during vacation she dragged her little brother (Julio, who also lives in the internado) to church a couple times in the city where her grandmother lives. She had never been before and said she really enjoyed it. She also started talking to her grandmother and aunts about their beliefs in God. I am excited to see the changes that this year will bring for her.

Please keep us in your prayers as the new school year comes into full swing. We are hoping to start an after school program for elementary kids that live in town and also teach some classes for older kids and adults. We also want to be in God’s will in everything we do and all the decisions we make, especially about which kids will be a part of the internado family. Please pray with us that we will always be seeking His will and not lose sight of Him.

### The SIFAT Journal Frequency Changes in 2009

To use all of our resources as wisely as possible, we realized our newsletter would have to change frequency this year. We are sorry for this inconvenience, but you can check the blog on our website to stay up-to-date with the latest SIFAT news.

Please let us know if your address has changed. Each month, copies of the Journal are returned because the address is invalid. Please help us keep our mailing list current.

## Mission Teams Needed for 2010

The decision has been made. We are going to complete all four floors of Dulce Refugio (see story below).

Just as with Mama Yoli's, SIFAT teams see this need for the children in Villaflora and are committed to this project.

SIFAT needs 20 construction and 9 medical teams for Ecuador 2010. To reserve your week, contact Peggy, [perdidopeg@aol.com](mailto:perdidopeg@aol.com), now.

## The Flores Family



SIFAT alumna Anita Flores (right) and her husband Pastor Rafael are hosting teams in Villaflora, Quito, Ecuador. This year's construction teams are helping lay the foundation and first floor for an addition to their church for Dulce Refugio (Sweet Refuge), which partners with Compassion International to provide a lunch, tutoring and Bible classes for students.

## 2009 Short-term Mission Trips

2009 is a year of change for mission teams to Ecuador. For the last 4 years, they worked in Atucucho to complete Mama Yoli's daycare and the new Methodist church, Agua de Vida. The church is now a part of the community and has services every Sunday. Mama Yoli's has 250 children attending our preschool daily. What wonderful work the teams have done!

In 2008, SIFAT had 14 pastor and community leader graduates from our Practicum in Ecuador. This year, our medical and VBS teams are working with these graduates in each of their communities, and SIFAT construction teams have made much progress on Dulce Refugio (Sweet Refuge), a four-story building with classrooms for 400 Compassion children in Villaflora, Quito. This is the project we have adopted for the next three years and many teams will be needed to complete the building.

Our teams to Bolivia are serving in Ixiamas and Quesimpuco. In Ixiamas, we are continuing construction on the new dorm building and doing maintenance on existing structures. They will also be working with students living at the internado (boarding home). In Quesimpuco, teams are providing veterinary care to the farmers' animals, ensuring the new bridge's safety, holding a medical clinic and hosting VBS.

If you are interested in leading a team for 2010, please contact Peggy, [perdidopeg@aol.com](mailto:perdidopeg@aol.com).

We want to give a big "Thank You" to each of the 2009 teams listed below (in order of team trips).

Auburn University School of Nursing	Ala.	Ecuador
Tuscaloosa FUMC College Ministry	Ala.	Ecuador
Mt. Bethel UMC High School Spring Break	Ga.	Ecuador
Auburn UMC	Ala.	Bolivia
Taylorville UMC Medical	Ala.	Ecuador
Guntersville FUMC Medical	Ala.	Ecuador
Crenshaw County	Ala.	Ecuador
St. Lukes UMC Medical	Fla.	Ecuador
Wilmer UMC	Ala.	Ecuador
Southeast District	Ala.	Ecuador
Montgomery FUMC	Ala.	Ecuador
Tallassee UMC	Ala.	Ecuador
Christ Community Church	Ga.	Bolivia
Woodbine UMC	Fla.	Ecuador
Spanish Fort UMC	Ala.	Ecuador
Brookhaven UMC	Miss.	Ecuador
Friendship Community Church	Tenn.	Ecuador
Texas A&M University	Texas	Ecuador
Mt. Bethel UMC Men's Team	Ga.	Bolivia
Henderson Medical	Fla.	Ecuador



# Summer 2009

## Alumni Update: Sara & Eva Mamani

*Sara and Eva Mamani, graduates of the 2006 SIFAT Practicum, also interned at SIFAT. During this extended stay, our staff became close to these sisters from Bolivia. They often send e-mail updates with news of their current work. We would like to share one of their emails.*

Some weeks ago, we went to teach a group of women from many churches in Tarija and Potosí. The training was in Villazón, a small city in Potosí that is well-known for the smuggling trade that exists. Villazón is a very cold place with an average temperature of 33.8° F. We slept in a church together with all the women.

Fifty women presidents and leaders of their churches attended. They wanted us to share how to fight against poverty and first aid.

In the morning, we spoke about the poverty, and many sisters realized that God doesn't want us to be poor. He wants the best thing for their children. If we give our lives to Him completely, He will provide.

In the afternoon, we taught first aid. All were very happy to learn, because most came from communities where there were no doctors close by. Now these women can help their communities with some basic things.

What they liked even more were the teachings about poverty, because most of them were poor people with big desires of conquering poverty.

God has put many resources in you, let us allow the Lord to use you like a tool in His work. You are special!



*Sara (kneeling) and Eva Mamani, 2006 Practicum graduates, teach CPR to ladies attending a seminar in Villazón, Bolivia.*

## World Hunger Field Study a Success

By Kathy Bryson  
International Training Director

Fifteen students from four continents, including five graduate students from the University of Alabama in Birmingham, recently participated in SIFAT's two-week Field Study in "World Hunger & Malnutrition: Practical Skills to Make a Difference."

Students left the traditional classroom and went into our Global Village to learn new skills to implement at the community level. The Field Study included modules on urban gardening, maximizing small plots for family nutrition, clean water technologies, child survival, food preservation, food fortification with green leaf powder, fuel-efficient cookstoves, assessing malnutrition and development strategies.

We are convinced that specific, low-cost appropriate technologies coupled with good community development can greatly impact hunger, malnutrition and the health and survival of many around the world. The intensive Field Study offers a unique concentrated hands-on training opportunity for those wanting practical skills to combat hunger and malnutrition in the field. Contact Kathy, [brysonk@sifat.org](mailto:brysonk@sifat.org), for more information on future field studies.

*Students mix materials to build a cookstove during our Field Study on World Hunger & Malnutrition in May. Participants from four continents learned hands-on practical ways to impact the world.*



# Annual

# 2008

# Report



## *International Training in Community Development and Self-help Skills to Share God's love in Practical Ways*

### *In Alabama*

In November, 16 students from 5 continents and 10 countries graduated from the 10-week Practicum. We had our first students from the Ukraine. Core courses taught throughout the Practicum included spiritual formation, Christian community development, program planning/proposal writing and development issues. Each week, different appropriate technologies were taught such as primary health care, agriculture, small animal husbandry, water and sanitation, alternative energies, efficient cookstoves, nutrition, Leaf for Life, making reading glasses and communication.

SIFAT also conducted seven seminars in 2008. Some were day-long seminars, others were for a weekend and one was two-weeks long. The seminars addressed such subjects as making reading glasses, Lab in a Suitcase, global health, cross-cultural communication and leadership training.

### *Philippine Training*

In addition to many workshops given by SIFAT Filipino graduates who are now missionaries in various Asian countries, SIFAT Philippines holds a SIFAT Practicum each summer. They have been working with Don Mariano Marcos Memorial State University (DMMMSU) for more than two years.

In partnership with DMMMSU, SIFAT Philippines gives the SIFAT training at the university in the summer to the students, and the university then works with the SIFAT students to let them earn a college degree. In 2008, this training was centered in helping the Lacong District to lead the way for their province combating hunger.

SIFAT Philippines has 16 sponsored students enrolled at DMMMSU. These students are already engaged in community development projects in Lacong District. SIFAT Philippines is teaching 150 high school dropouts to prepare them for qualifying exams to enter college.



*Dr. John Brown Okwii (center) taught the 2008 Practicum students during part of the 10-week training.*

### *Ecuador Training*

In Ecuador, 12 Christian leaders graduated from a SIFAT Practicum. SIFAT teams plan to work with these graduates in 2009 to help them expand their service projects among the needy in their communities.

### *Africa Training*

SIFAT Africa held a two-week seminar at ECWA Theological Seminary in Jos, Nigeria. The students helped villagers dig pit latrines, build bridges and roof grass thatched houses. They also conducted CHE—Community Health Education/Evangelism. Fifty people gave their lives to Jesus Christ during the seminar.

SIFAT's African coordinator, Dr. John Brown Okwii,

*Continued inside*

# Short-term Teams for Long-term Development

## Ecuador: Atucucho

Seven years ago, a SIFAT team walked through Atucucho, an area of almost inconceivable poverty outside of Quito. There was no infrastructure, children were playing in raw sewage running through muddy unpaved streets, women peered at us through locked doors with fear and distrust in their eyes, pagan symbols were painted on walls and everywhere one sensed a feeling of complete hopelessness.

Never one to back away from a challenge to bring Christ to those who do not know Him, SIFAT graduate Cecilia Cobo passionately convinced Tom to work with these people and employ principles we teach in community development and self sustainability to try to bring about permanent changes in Atucucho. To change a slum community controlled by drug lords like Atucucho is not a short-term project. But in these seven years, miracles have happened there.

Teams have built Little Seeds of God day care and Mama Yoli's, a wonderful five-story day care center finished in 2008 for the preschool children who were abandoned during the day while their parents worked. SIFAT has helped empower the mothers, so that they can now support and operate this day care center with a minimum of oversight from SIFAT Ecuador. However, even though the children in our day cares are well prepared to enter school when they become six years old, many are back on the street again, unable to go to school because their parents do not have enough funds to buy their uniforms or books. Compassion, International provides for school age children, so they could take the children from our day cares into their program and help them continue their education. But since they only work through a church, they could not work with us unless we had a church with a pastor there.

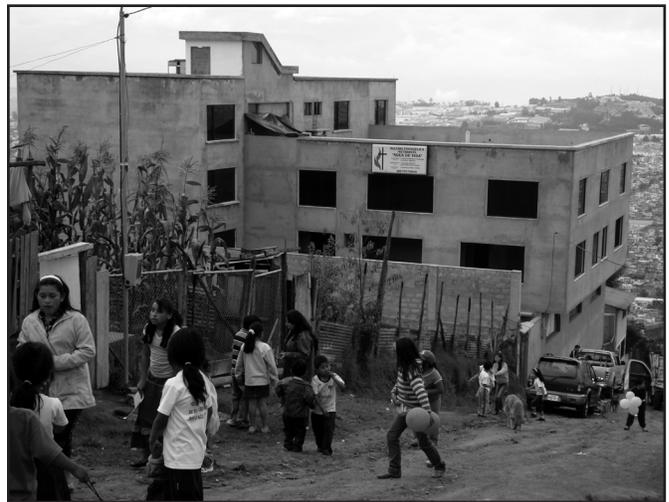
Although SIFAT's principal mission is not to establish churches, but to work within existing churches. In this case there was no church, so we decided to build one. The main part of Agua de Vida was finished in 2008. SIFAT supporters have agreed to fund this church with Pastor Balseca leading the new congregation for three years, after which the Methodist Church of Ecuador will assume responsibility. The congregation is small, but the church is growing and much needed in this community.

We leave Atucucho a much changed community, and our team members forever blessed for having served and worked along side the beautiful Ecuadorian people

there as they built Little Seeds, Mama Yoli's and Agua de Vida. Yet we know that the last seven years of hard work by hundreds of SIFAT's team members and staff was just a beginning. To establish the church in such a place will not happen overnight, but we trust it will happen as God's Spirit continues to work in the hearts of the children in the day cares, their parents and the whole neighborhood.

We have made an alliance between SIFAT, the Methodist Church of Ecuador and a Christian university to train the Agua de Vida Church members in developing microenterprises projects. The first project is making creams, sugar, tea and shampoo from a plant called dulcamara. We have also made an alliance with The Bible League, who will provide materials to disciple the children and women.

Atucucho is a hard place to work spiritually, because of the long history of the drug lords and prostitution rings, where police have not dared to come. However, seven years and more than 150 teams later, we feel that our work in Atucucho is almost done.



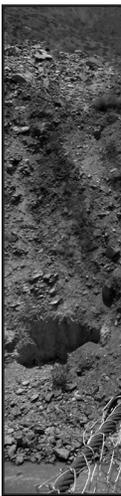
*In 2008, team members worked on building the first Protestant church in Atucucho. Agua de Vida gives community members a place to worship and fellowship, as well as develop microenterprise projects.*

## Bolivia: Quesimpuco: A Bridge Over the River

SIFAT and Bridges for Prosperity worked together to build a much needed bridge across the river near Quesimpuco. Auburn United Methodist Church paid the expenses and Bridges for Prosperity furnished the appropriate design

using local Sanga, and Practicum

This 300-ft appropriate it is one of in the wor simple call have to cr sick trying other side bridge eve We are ha What seen successful bringing u of the Cha



*In Quesimpuco, a foot bridge, school, previous thou.*

Jarred Gri counselors Addison s Water for wells with in Bolivia found cost are not ab one. After in Ixiamas

## 2008 Expenses

l materials. The project manager was Bolivar Ecuadorian graduate from the 1994 SIFAT in Venezuela.

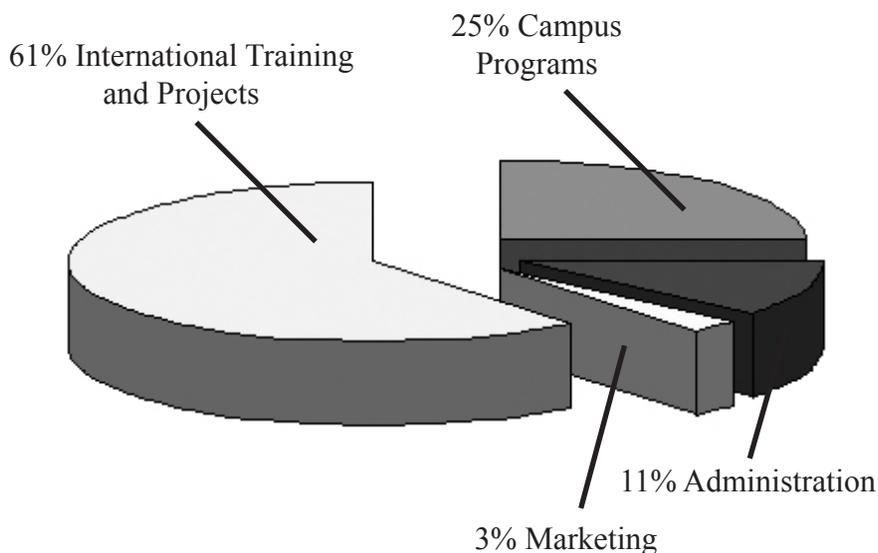
oot bridge is the longest in the world using this e technology. Bridges for Prosperity says that F the most incredibly dangerous river crossings d. Each year, people die trying to cross on the ble car they had before. The school children oss this cable to attend school, as well as the to get to our hospital. The communities on the of the river have asked us to help them get a r since we first began to work in Quesimpuco. ppy that we were finally able to help them. med like an almost impossible task has been ly completed. We are thankful to God for s all together to help the long suffering people yanta River Valley.



Quesimpuco, Bolivia, SIFAT teams completed a 300-foot bridge to give community members access to the high school and medical center and boarding home built during previous SIFAT trips. Even during the rainy season, the bridge now has a safe way to cross the river.

### Bolivia: Ixiamas

ffin and Addison Shock, 2007 Learn & Serve students, served as spring 2008 interns at the internado. They studied with Terry Waller in his organization, Christian Mission All International in Santa Cruz to learn to drill for water with a hand-operated drill. They make this drill available for \$1500. The cheapest other drill we have seen costs approximately \$25,000, and the local people are unable to maintain and operate it as they can this one. In the future, Jarred and Addison helped drill wells for the children's home and for the hospital.



### Training

*(Continued from Annual Report pg. 1)*

Dr. Okwii gave a one-day workshop on water and sanitation to 200 members of Living Truth Tabernacle in Spokane, Wash. While there, he also taught two classes to students in Gonzaga University. In August, Dr. Okwii taught a SIFAT course in microenterprise, health and pumping water on Ceicos Island of the Bahamas. In November, 890 students graduated from the two seminary campuses of which Dr. Okwii is president. All of these graduates studied a semester of SIFAT training as part of their requirements for graduation.

Dr. Okwii was awarded The Great African Merit Award 2008 (GAMA 2008) on Dec. 20, in Abuja, Nigeria because of his work among needy communities in Africa. He is now one of only 30 Africans who have received this award. We are fortunate to have him as our African representative.

They taught the local people how to continue drilling to get clean water.

After Jarred and Addison left Ixiamas, Practicum 2007 graduate Vicky arrived to begin a nine-month internship. Vicky taught computer and English classes to the students.

During the summer of 2008, four college interns from the Wesley Foundation at Auburn University helped at the internado. Bryan Goolsby, Olivia Singleton, Katie Kirkpatrick and Abby Northcutt spent their summer vacation building relationships with the students at the internado and working with the staff.



# Annual Report

## *Galilee Campus: SIFAT's International Headquarters*

Galilee Campus on Mad Indian Creek is a beautiful place to come for a retreat or to enjoy a SIFAT event. Thirty-four groups rented facilities on Galilee Campus for retreats in 2008. We appreciated the seven work teams who came to help us maintain or to build other facilities. During the year, the staff gave 67 tours to interested groups who came to learn about the SIFAT vision to be a channel for the love of Christ in practical ways. SIFAT staff also shared this vision in 118 churches and other places this year. The staff also hosted 33 day-long CARES events and 8 five-day Learn & Serve youth camps.

### *CARES Gets a Makeover*

CARES (Creative Academic Resources for Educational Success) is a day-long field trip for students in public or private schools, home school groups or church groups. Children may go Around the World or explore Appropriate Technology. The Appropriate Technology modules were moved to the Global Village and reworked to allow more hands-on experiences for participants to investigate the need for appropriate technologies in the Two-thirds World. In the Around the World program, children participate in traditional activities encountered in real life in countries from Africa, Asia and Latin America. From tinikling (folk dancing) in the Philippines and making homemade tortillas in Guatemala to adding leaf proteins to everyday foods and exploring different ways to gain access to water, 1,505 people participated in CARES this year. The CARES experience opens a window on the world, so that children can think as global citizens without having to travel overseas to understand other cultures.



### *Learn & Serve 2008: Three Sixty a Success*



In the summer of 2008, SIFAT's Learn & Serve (L&S) hosted the most students on record in one summer. Groups from seven states converged on our campus. The theme was "Three Sixty," which referenced that our students are at summer camp for five days, leaving 360 days in their communities, serving! The feedback we received from participating youth and youth leaders was incredible. After experiencing a week of L&S, we received reports that many youth had returned to their communities and began to engage in radical service after leaving SIFAT!

One of the most exciting components of Learn & Serve was the ministry and partnerships that were formed and developed with people and organizations in our community. This summer, we took 472 students and their youth leaders into Randolph and Clay Counties to invest in the lives of the people there.

## Agape Total Childcare Center Celebrates First Anniversary

By Kristi Hanna

Agape Total Childcare Center, an orphanage in Lugazi, Uganda, will celebrate its one year anniversary on February 10, 2009. The orphanage, which is home to 32 children, is a ministry of SIFAT Practicum graduates William and Adella Nsubuga. Although the past year has had its share of hardships, God has remained faithful in blessing this ministry. The orphanage, which was basically just a block building in its initial stages, now has running water, an outdoor kitchen, bunk-beds, mosquito nets and a dining hall. Other praises for the year are the maize project. William and the children were able to plant approximately five acres of maize which is now ready to harvest. They have also planted tomatoes, peppers, onions and other vegetables in tire gardens in the courtyard of the center. These gardens will enable them to provide a large portion of their own food in the coming year.

William and Adella are teaching the children skills they need to become self-sufficient. The orphans are learning to sew, make necklaces and paint as part of the center's microenterprise. The children attend the local school to ensure that they receive an education. They also have regular dance, music and art classes, which are offered by volunteers from the community of Lugazi.

Although the center is providing the basic needs of the children, its most important ministry is reaching the souls of these

beautiful children for Jesus Christ. Each of these children has lost both of their parents to AIDS. Through this ministry, they now have adopted parents in William and Adella, but what is most important is that they have come to know their heavenly Father.

This was so true for Juliana, a beautiful 8 year old girl at the center. Not long after the center opened, William and Adella discovered that Juliana had contracted AIDS from her mother. Juliana grew very sick and her body began to weaken. William remained by her side throughout her illness, and through his ministry, she came to know Jesus as her Savior. God blessed this little girl with a father to hold her hand through her sickness and to lead her to salvation, and then He called her home. The light in this story is that through this ministry children like Juliana and others who have lost hope can find it again and know that they are cherished by a loving God.

We would like to close this article by thanking the many supporters who have remained faithful to this ministry. Without your constant prayers, donations and financial support this ministry would not be able to continue. Please know that the orphans pray for all of our donors daily, and we are very thankful for your support. If you would like to help with the daily challenges of food, clothes, shelter and medical care for the orphans, you can send checks earmarked for Agape Total Childcare to SIFAT.



### Practicum ————— ✦ (Continued from page 1)

— speak at your church. This is a great way to get personally involved with missions without leaving the U.S.

I look forward to hearing from you soon and to linking you up personally with a SIFAT student from the developing world this fall.

*Left: Three students from Africa make fortified pasta using Leaf for Life training during classes on nutrition.*

### Give the gift of a scholarship!

If you would like to Share God's Love in Practical ways, why not make an investment in a SIFAT scholarship for a community mother to have training in practical technologies that would improve the lives of her children and her village? Please designate your donation "Scholarship Fund". Contact Kathy, [brysonk@sifat.org](mailto:brysonk@sifat.org), for more information.



# Summer 2009

## SIFAT Mission Team Returns to U.S., But Continues Medical Care in Ecuador

By Jessica Hines  
Taylorville UMC Team Member

On the second day that our church, Taylorville United Methodist of Tuscaloosa, Ala., went to work at a makeshift medical clinic in Quito, Ecuador, we first met Brandon. We were working at the Marianitas Project run by Pastor Mario and Pastora Jenny on the dusty plains north of the city where many of the poorest families in Quito make their homes. When Brandon first walked into the clinic, he did not act like a six-year-old boy should — laughing, playing, running. Instead, Brandon shuffled silently and slowly across the floor like an old man bothered by arthritis.

When our team's doctor, Dr. David Harding, examined him, he found that Brandon had a severe heart murmur (grade 6). Essentially, one of Brandon's heart valves was too small, and as he grew, the problem would only become worse. Eventually, the too small valve would fail completely, and Brandon would die.



*Dr. David Harding diagnosed Brandon with a serious heart problem. The mission team from Taylorville UMC raised funds for Brandon's life-saving operation.*

With his condition so severe, Brandon would need heart valve replacement surgery immediately. After consulting with SIFAT Ecuador director Dr. Roberto Contreras, however, it seemed that the surgery would be an impossibility for the family. A team of local doctors in Quito would perform the surgery at a greatly reduced price — \$4,500. But Brandon is one of 6 children; his father is a construction worker, and his mother takes in other people's laundry. They live in extreme poverty, barely making enough to support their family. The cost of the surgery, even at this lowered rate, far exceeded any amount they could pay. The following day, Pastor Mario collected Brandon and his mother. Together they prayed, with Brandon and his mother accepting Christ and asking God for a miracle.

Brandon's story weighed heavily on all of our hearts as we returned from Ecuador. While paying for Brandon's surgery was impossible for his family, it was by no means impossible for us. And so, within two weeks of having returned to Taylorville United Methodist, the church raised more than \$6,000 to pay for the surgery, medications and follow-up therapy that Brandon will need. He is now scheduled for surgery at Metrofraternidad Hospital, Fundacion Corazon. Soon Brandon's trembling shuffles will transform into the carefree running of a child that has been blessed by God's mercy and whose story has touched all of our hearts at Taylorville UMC.

*Update:* In early August, Brandon had successful surgery and is recovering at home. Thank you all for your prayers and for your support which allowed this beautiful little boy to survive and flourish.

**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, [lanierm@sifat.org](mailto:lanierm@sifat.org), or visit [www.sifat.org/share.html](http://www.sifat.org/share.html).

## Learn & Serve 2009: Defined



*On Mondays, students learned about meeting basic human needs and used appropriate technologies to experience how simple tools make a difference. From mixing materials by hand (above left) to making a perfect adobe brick in a cinva ram brick press, L&S campers completed lessons they would put into use later in the week.*

Learn & Serve (L&S) finished with a record breaking number of attendees. More than 500 youth and their leaders from six states invaded the SIFAT campus! This year's theme—Defined —looked at key words that Christians use all the time, such as righteousness and justice. Students were challenged to answer how these words were defined by God, society and themselves.

While at L&S, participants took part in activities that are unique to SIFAT, including spending the night in the Global Village and using appropriate technologies. This summer, students were surprised when they arrived in the village and were taken into the slum experience with no warning. After the simulation ended, they spent the night in the slums and woke up the next morning to live in the Global Village as residents in a developing country. Students put activities from earlier in the week into practice. Teamwork from the challenge course and purifying water from appropriate technology lessons were needed skills to survive. The week ended with local missions projects on Thursday and a soccer game and cookout with friends from SIFAT's local Hispanic community.

How was your experience at L&S? Do you have a story to tell from camp, or a story about what your youth group has done since returning? Let us know by emailing [learnandserve@sifat.org](mailto:learnandserve@sifat.org).

*Learn & Serve teaches some of the same concepts to youth that Practicum students learn. Below, L&S campers gather leaves and dry them using Leaf for Life technology. While living in the Global Village on Wednesdays, students used the leaf powder to make vitamin-rich tortillas.*



### Former Learn & Serve Counselors

Did you spend your summers at SIFAT working with Learn & Serve? If so, we need your help! We would like to hold a counselor reunion in the future, but need help finding contact information for our counselors. Contact Marie, [lanierm@sifat.org](mailto:lanierm@sifat.org).



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Bham, AL  
Permit # 3029

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**Return Service Requested**

**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

I just returned with a team from Ecuador, where we worked to extend the cramped facilities called Sweet Refuge (Dulce Refugio) where Anita and Rafael's church takes in 250 children after school each day. Their church is in a poor neighborhood where gangs threaten children on the streets. Since school finishes at 1 p.m., and the parents of the children have to work till supper time, these children have long afternoons with no supervision...except for those fortunate enough to go to Sweet Refuge. Compassion International provides funds to run it, but only if they have a building to use. Anita and Rafael carry out the program...to feed the children a balanced meal, get tutors to help them with their school work; teach them Bible, music, and art; and provide sports where space is available. All the children of the neighborhood long for a chance to be enrolled in Sweet Refuge, but there is only space for a small portion of them. The long waiting list contains several hundred more children's names...waiting...hoping.

SIFAT's policy is to work with our graduates who understand and put into practice the principles of Christian community development that we teach. Anita is a recent graduate of a SIFAT Practicum. She wrote a proposal asking for SIFAT teams to help extend their small building, so that they could take more children. We do not do it for them. Instead, we work with them to help buy materials and develop the project. SIFAT is built on the principle of self-help. Rafael and Anita's church is a good example of a group that operates on this principle. Now they are thrilled with the possibility of taking in 200 more children with SIFAT's help in extending it. Their church does not wait for SIFAT to return with the next team to finish it. Their own members are out working with our team and continue when we leave volunteering to do as much as they can after their other jobs.

I was touched by one man's testimony. He expressed deep gratitude at what SIFAT was doing for the children of the community. His job required that he work Saturdays when many of the members come out to work, so he could not join them. But when his work closed for a holiday, he came early and worked until dark...to do his part even though he was working alone. "Pastor Rafael and Anita do such a wonderful job with our children after school," he told me. "But they don't have room for all the children. Now with this new building, they can take in many more. I want to be part of this...helping our neighborhood to train our children well." This is SIFAT policy: Help provide tools (in this case a building) that empower Rafael and Ana and their church to continue ministering in their community years into the future. It is not just what we can do, but what we can help empower others to do to take the love of Jesus into some of the most needy places in our world.

Our teams are divided into construction teams and Bible School teams. As our team was teaching a Bible School with children packed in, others were outside looking in, wanting to join them. Anita has to divide the children up and assign a time each one can come, or else they would be overwhelmed by too many children. With this new building, they will be able to accept many more at one time for the Bible Schools, as well as for the after school program. SIFAT needs more teams this coming summer to complete both Sweet Refuge and our other graduates' projects which are urgently needed. Please contact Peggy Walker at SIFAT if you are interested in going on a team with SIFAT in 2010.