

SIFAT Journal



Sharing God's Love in Practical Ways

Summer 2010

Meeting Needs in Haiti

By Jan Burton
Short-term Mission Team Member

It was such a joy to be able to serve the people of Haiti. My heart was saddened to still see so much of the destruction and rubble still present. I cannot imagine having lost everything I have and living in a tent. There are still thousands having to live this way. The Lord reminded me to be grateful and thankful and not to complain about anything.

Our team went to Kenscoff to do a medical clinic in a small church. There were 193 people that signed up, and they all came, too. There were several people that really touched my heart, one of whom was Luis Occius. After I treated his medical condition, I asked him if He had asked Jesus into his heart. He replied no not yet. I asked him if I could share about Jesus with him, and he said yes. I shared Jesus using the evangecube, and Luis received Christ that day! The angels were rejoicing in heaven as another was added to the Lamb's Book Of Life.

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Jan Burton (right) checks Luis Occius's blood pressure. Jan not only treated his medical problems, but also ministered to Luis spiritually. Jan's team was one of the weekly teams sent to Haiti by SIFAT and partner organizations to run medical clinics in Port-au-Prince.

Invest in a Community Leader

Each year, community leaders from developing countries come to the SIFAT campus in rural Alabama for 10 intensive weeks to learn appropriate technologies and self-help skills to make a difference in their villages and cities. We refer to them as students, but their ages range from early 20s to late 60s. Some are pastors, while others run nonprofit organizations. All of our students care deeply about their communities and want to learn ways to foster community development and self-help.

During the Practicum, students learn to purify water, make rooftop gardens, build simple water pumps, make low-cost reading glasses for literacy programs, preserve foods, improve child survival, promote safe motherhood, foster microenterprise and small loans, build fuel-efficient cookstoves, prevent tropical diseases and much more. They also learn how to organize communities for action and write project proposals.

We need your help! Would you give or raise a \$500 scholarship to enable a student to be trained from Vietnam, the Philippines, India, Thailand, Zambia, the Congo (DRC) and other countries? We have several potential students hoping and praying to be able to come this year to be empowered to return and help others.

Your \$500 is a long-term investment in a community leader who returns home to share all that he or she has learned. It is a blessing to see the results and fruit continue to bear from SIFAT alumni through the years. Please contact Kathy at brysonk@sifat.org.

Get Involved: Donate a Scholarship

Help empower community leaders in developing countries by making an investment in the SIFAT scholarship fund. The practical technologies and training students receive at SIFAT will improve the lives of children and adults living in developing countries for years into the future. Please designate your donation "Scholarship Fund".



From Shepherdess to Doctor: Ruth Noemi's Story

Ruth Noemi Mamani Copatiti, the oldest child of a Quechuan peasant family, graduates medical school in December 2010. She continues to overcome the challenges of gender, ethnicity and culture as she strives to accomplish her dreams, which began with simply wanting to attend high school in Quesimpuco, Bolivia.

Ruth Noemi grew up in the community of Caracota, which is near Quesimpuco—where SIFAT has helped establish a boarding home, high school, hospital and church. After completing elementary school, she was expected to follow the role of the oldest daughter by shepherding the family's sheep and helping care for her younger siblings. However, Ruth Noemi heard news delivered to outlying communities: SIFAT's boarding home and high school were accepting two students from each community. She wanted to be one of the two from Caracota!

Ruth Noemi's father did not support her decision, and Ruth Noemi's mother was little help. Finally, a compromise was made. If her oldest brother Johnny moved to Quesimpuco with her, Ruth Noemi could attend high school. She agreed, excelling in her studies and ranking highest in her class each year. The first female graduate, Ruth Noemi finished John Wesley High School in the first graduating class as valedictorian..



Ruth Noemi (right) is finishing her residency in a hospital in La Paz, Bolivia. After graduation, she will return to Quesimpuco to serve as a doctor in the medical clinic built by SIFAT teams.



Ruth Noemi (left) and a supervisor review patient files. Ruth Noemi, the first female graduate from the high school in Quesimpuco, will complete her medical degree and residency requirements in December.

While living at the boarding home, Ruth Noemi attended Bible studies and also went to services at the local church, and she learned who she was before God. This knowledge has been an encouragement to live a Christian lifestyle, as well as to overcome adversity.

After graduation, Ruth Noemi accepted a scholarship given by Anniston First United Methodist Church and Auburn United Methodist Church. This scholarship gave her the opportunity to move to the capital city of LaPaz and attend medical school. When Ruth Noemi arrived in LaPaz, it was the first time she had ever been out of her state. She found the capital to be a foreign culture, although it was still in her own country. Despite being homesick and having to learn a new way of life, Ruth Noemi persevered. In December 2010, she will graduate medical school and return to Quesimpuco, where she will serve in the hospital SIFAT teams built. Her understanding of the native language, culture and beliefs will help Ruth Noemi provide culturally sensitive medical care to the thousands of people in surrounding communities, including Caracota. In a remote area where it is difficult to find a doctor willing to serve and care for the sick, Ruth Noemi is ready for the role of Doctora Ruth Noemi.

Excerpt from: *Risking Everything*, Sarah Corson's latest book

By Sarah Corson
SIFAT Cofounder

One night, during our first month in the Alto Beni, Bolivia, everything came to a climax for me. We had all gone to sleep, when, in the middle of the night, Karen, our youngest, who was sleeping on the top bunk bed above her sister Kathy, suddenly began to scream. Our little living room served also as dining room and bedrooms, so we were separated from the girls only by a straw mat, which we had hung up to create a provisional wall. But it was dark and we were still unaccustomed to the house.

When we heard Karen's piercing scream, Ken and I both jumped up, but we got tangled in the mosquito netting and then the straw mat. We stumbled in the dark, for there was no electricity that late and we couldn't find a match for the candle. While Ken searched for a light, I rushed toward Karen's bed. As I reached her side, she became hysterical and either jumped or fell from the top bunk, slipping through

my fingers. She hit a chair and then the floor and lay there screaming and writhing at my feet.

All the gruesome events we had witnessed in the past week flooded my consciousness. I feared that Karen's neck or her back might be broken. I saw in my mind that dangerous twelve-hour-long road we'd have to travel before we could get any real medical help. I saw our neighbor weeping beside the lifeless body of her son; I saw the man with the half-blown-off hand. I saw a vast throng of people in a place called the Alto Beni, where few lived to be old. Mentally I was screaming out in anguish, but my main thought remained unexpressed: *What have we done? Have we brought our children to this lonely, forsaken place to die?*

In a flash, I felt the presence of Jesus, and His answer broke over me in such a forceful way that I knew all over again that we had done the right thing in coming here. As I knelt there, trying to calm my daughter, even before Ken found the light and even before I knew how badly she was hurt, the realization came to me that there is more than one way to die. We will all die physically. But if we are afraid to follow God, if we are afraid to step out into the unknown when He calls us, then we can die mentally and spiritually while still existing physically.

Oh, Karen! my heart cried out to her. *If we had been afraid to do what we knew we should do, if we had stayed in our comfortable situation at home and not dared to risk the lives of all of us here, we would have dried up and died in another*



(left to right) Ken, Tom, Chris, Kathy, Sarah and Karen Corson in the jungles of Bolivia.

way. I knew in that moment that God was reminding me that it is far better to die physically than spiritually.

Ken found a match and lit the candle. It was only a nightmare, and even though Karen was slightly bruised from her fall, she was over it in a few days. But the incident made me come to grips—not with the fear of my own death; I had passed that long ago—but with the fear of harm to our children. After that night I experienced a new freedom in our daily life, and much of the depression of those first days was gone. For in that moment after Karen's fall, it came to me so positively that the greatest heritage we can leave our children is not an easy way of life, nor even a particularly long life, but rather the ability to overcome the fear of risking everything in order to follow God's call.

Coming this fall...

Risking Everything will be available this fall at the SIFAT Village Store. If you would like to preorder a copy, please e-mail info@sifat.org.

Risking Everything chronicles the Corsons as they arrive in Bolivia and serve in the jungle community of Sapecho.



Summer 2010

Learn & Serve 2010: Fruit

We can learn from the natural world. The production of fruit is a process; it does not just happen. At SIFAT, we understand the process of growing fruit. Blueberries, tomatoes, squash and other food are produced on our 176-acre campus. Every year, SIFAT trains community leaders from around the world in more sustainable ways to produce fruit that will nourish their people physically and spiritually.

Likewise, when Jesus says that we are to bear much fruit, we have to understand that there are steps that have to be taken to bear the fruit of which He speaks.

This summer, we look deep into scripture at how Jesus calls each of us to bear fruit in our daily lives wherever we are.

Letter from Home: A Mom Says Thank You

By Laura Owens
Oviedo FUMC, Oviedo, Fla.

When Tara came home from SIFAT, her dad and I got to listen for more than an hour about every detail of her amazing journey. She gushed with stories! I could see confidence and a sense of accomplishment oozing out of her. SIFAT gave my daughter so many hands-on experiences of how she can serve others, whether in a developing country or locally. It showed her how little people may have and the hardship they endure, but how they find ways to come together, to survive, despite their constant challenges.

The camaraderie, the team building activities, the quiet, silent meditation and journaling, the testimonies where everyone shared and cried, all of it combined was a great gift to my daughter that I know will stay cemented in her heart and actions forever. SIFAT changes people I sense; it gives the kids the joy of camp and camaraderie and the spiritual maturity that comes from learning to serve and to empower people in need. It takes kids out of their daily existence of enormous abundance and gives them a sample of how blessed they are, and how they can share their blessings.

Thank you so much for the many gifts you and the counselors gave our daughter. Words cannot express how much I believe SIFAT impacted her heart and soul to empower herself and others.

L&S Quick Facts

Number of Participants: 410

Number of Youth Groups: 25

Number of States: 7 (Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, Texas, Florida, Ohio, Illinois)

Top: A student crosses Mad Indian Creek on the way to the Global Village, where he would later spend the night. Youth spent 24 hours in the village during a simulation of what daily life is like in a developing country.

Middle: A group picks tomatoes from one of the gardens in the Global Village. Cafeteria meals often feature fresh produce grown on campus.

Bottom: Youth also helped harvest blueberries and potatoes (seen here) that were put up for use during the coming Practicum.



News from Bolivia

By Ivan Roman
Latin America Project Manager

As part of my job at SIFAT, I keep current with the Bolivian press. A couple of recent articles caught my eye as they depict the predicament we encounter as we serve there:

- Since 2004 the annual salary raises decreed by the government sum up to 58 percent. *La Razón, June 8, 2010*
- A new office for the legalization of medicines donated has been set up and is operating as a joint effort between the Ministry of Health and the Bolivian Customs. This means new rules, regulations, forms and perhaps the taxing of these donations. *La Razón, April 9, 2010*

These new laws have a direct impact in the work we do in Bolivia, not only increasing the paperwork but also increasing the cost of operating our programs there. Despite this, the Lord has shown his faithfulness through your prayers and contributions. Through your willingness to hear about these changes and the resulting demands, we have been able to face the increased budget.

Your faithfulness has allowed us to keep showing God's love in practical ways.

- Our school in Quesimpuco is serving students from numerous communities.
- For the first time, we have a seminary educated Quechuan pastor.
- The second stage in the construction of the parsonage and Fellowship Hall/Sunday School Area has begun.
- Three teams have visited the site bringing medical and veterinary supplies and personnel, Vacation Bible School for the kids, hearts full of love and the joy of sharing and celebrating His image in us.

We are most grateful for this and dare to look forward in hope as we seek to:

- Raise funds to repair the bridge over the Chayanta River before this year's rainy season.
- Raise a scholarship fund to help Quesimpuco's high school graduates receive the education that will empower them to become the leaders Bolivia so desperately needs—leaders with the right vision for service rooted in a life changing experience with the risen Lord.

World Hunger Field Study

By Laura Lieb
Field Study Participant

As an American student studying public health, my experience at SIFAT helped develop several new tools that I hope will make a true difference in the lives of those I work with in the future. First, the community atmosphere of the SIFAT campus helped me to realize not only the strength, but also the vital component that relationships play in our everyday life. Though it was only for a two-week period, living with people from other countries and cultures nurtured a new perspective in my vision of the world. The knowledge and practical skill development I attained at SIFAT are invaluable, particularly since my interests are within the interplay between nutrition, agriculture, and health and well-being issues. I appreciate the numerous experts that SIFAT incorporated into the program and am thankful to all of the hard working staff/volunteers that contributed to my experience. Last, but not least, I had a lot of fun learning and plan to continue building upon this new foundation of knowledge.



Laura Lieb (left), a graduate student in public health, participated in the May field study, which focused on world hunger and malnutrition. Above, she and a classmate bring swiss chard from the garden to the cafeteria for a meal.

Want to take a field trip?

CARES field trips take place in SIFAT's Global Village and provide a unique opportunity for students to explore different cultures through interactive activities. Homeschool groups, public and private schools and churches can find out more at www.sifat.org/cares. Contact Laura Paulk, paulkl@sifat.org.

Nurses Minister to Young Girl

By Regina Mobbs
Short-term Mission Team Member

It was day four of our clinics in the area of Tabarr in Port Au Prince Haiti, the hottest day we had experienced since arriving. The patients were at the clinic well before we arrived that morning, sitting in the sweltering, concrete room waiting to be seen by a volunteer nurse. As we entered the waiting area, I smiled at those waiting on benches and greeted them, but like every other morning, the response was that of faces filled with the look of hopelessness and despair.

The morning was busy, and I was assigned the babies and children for the day. I, along with my friend Jeffrey Summerhill, had seen runny noses, parasites, a ruptured eardrum and tonsillitis, and respiratory infections. All had been routine until right after lunch when a little girl and her mother came in.

The girl was eight years old and very lethargic. Her eyes were hollow, and her body was weak. She leaned on her mother to avoid falling into the floor. Her mother stated she had not eaten and had been sick with a fever and cough for three days. I took her temperature, but I didn't have to as her body radiated heat without touching her. Her body was dehydrated, her lungs were rattling, and she was almost limp. Jeffrey and I put her on the exam table, gave her some children's Motrin and took her clothes off to begin an alcohol bath in the attempt to lower her body temp. I offered her a cup of Pedialyte, and as she lifted it to her lips, her hand was trembling from weakness. I had to help steady the cup. She drank the entire eight ounces without hesitation. We continued her alcohol bath, and after an hour and a



Regina Mobbs (left) examines an eight-year-old girl that she and teammate Jeffrey Summerhill rehydrated. The girl and her mother walked for two and a half hours to receive medical care.

half, gave her more Motrin and a total of a liter of Pedialyte. Her temperature had lowered from 104.8 to 101 degrees, and she was becoming more alert.

I asked her mother if they lived close by the clinic. She said that they lived about 45 minutes to an hour walk away, but that it had taken them two and a half hours to walk to the clinic that morning because the little girl had to stop repeatedly to rest. I gave her prescriptions for Ibuprofen, antibiotics and some Pedialyte to take home. Jeffrey and I pooled our money and paid for a "tap tap" (the transportation system) to get them home.

Every morning at our guest house, the first thing we saw when we came down the stairs was the refrigerator. On the door was a sign that said "Bondye bon Tout tan", translated "God is good all the time". I was reminded of that when we finished our day, and we were given the opportunity to pray for the patients—to pray for their physical ailments, their emotional trauma and their spiritual healing. We live in a blessed country, where we take each

Jan - Haiti
(Continued from page 1)

Another lady came and sat in the chair in front of me for treatment. She had the most beautiful smile, and I could see such joy in her face. She was the pastor's wife. At the clinic Raefeka, our team saw so many women, men and children that were so sick. We treated for dehydration, urinary tract infections, vaginal infections, skin infections, upper respiratory infections, acid reflux, wound care and much more. You could just see sickness in their eyes. A young pregnant girl came on Tuesday to receive treatment. She shared with our translator that her father had kicked her out of their home and cast a voodoo spell on her. Several in our group encircled her to pray over her and her unborn baby.

I just want to praise God for sending and using us to plant seeds. I had mentioned to my friend Regina earlier about us going to Haiti, and the Lord answered with the opportunity. I am thankful that we obeyed and answered the call.



Jeffrey Summerhill (right) examines a patient's foot while serving on a medical mission team in Haiti.

breath and freedom for granted. Please thank God with me for SIFAT and the privilege we had to serve in Haiti.

Have you Eaten an Insect Today?

By Ken Corson
SIFAT Cofounder

Have you had insects in your diet? A world class conference took place at SIFAT April 23-24, 2010, called Exploring Alternative Foods for World Hunger: The Potential of Edible Insects.

Many “bugs” do contain good nutrition, including protein, minerals and vitamins. In fact, dried caterpillars contain 18 times more protein per gram than chicken. It is estimated that 85 percent of the world’s population eat insects at least in certain seasons of the year. We probably will not see a McBug franchise of restaurants opening soon, but attitudes toward insects definitely changed in those who attended.

One of the speakers, Dr. Xiaoming Chen, of The Research Institute of Resource Insects in China, said, “In the West, many see insects as pests. In our country, we see them as resources. We use insects in industrial products and medicines, as well as food.” Dr. Chen is the head of one of the world’s largest organizations that does extensive research with insects.

Some of the leading scientists in the field of edible insects headlined two days of conference with representatives from Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America, as well as a number of states. Auburn University’s College of Agriculture, Tuskegee University and the UN World Food Programme’s Universities Fighting World Hunger cosponsored this seminar with SIFAT.

Many people will laugh when the subject of eating bugs is presented, but the topic has serious consequences in addressing the issue of hunger around the world. Bart Hogebrink, a Dutch inventor at the event, said, “Insects are highly nutritious; they generally contain more protein and less fat than traditional meats. They also have an almost 20 times higher food conversion efficiency than traditional meats. Furthermore, they reproduce much faster than cattle, are easy to raise and need far less living space.”

Although 1,400 insects worldwide are reportedly eaten by human beings, TV educator David Gracer of Rhode Island pointed out that some insects are poisonous, and one must know which ones are edible. He also warned that people who are allergic to shellfish are also allergic to insects, as shrimp and other shellfish are related to insects.

Saturday night the conference closed with a Bug Banquet. Three tables were filled with delicious gourmet dishes, using insects in different ways in the menu, including roasted bamboo worms, baby crickets sauteed in garlic butter and meal worm cookies. The centerpiece was a lobster surrounded by shrimp—just to remind us that they are all arthropods!



Dr. Julieta Ramos-Elorduy of the National University of Mexico and David Gracer of Rhode Island prepare insects for the international conference held at SIFAT.

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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

More people die from unsafe water than from all forms of violence, including war. This statement was made by the Secretary-General of the United Nations on World Water Day this year. More than a billion people in our world lack safe water to drink. In recent months, we have seen firsthand the immense need for safe water in Haiti. We are thankful for each of you who have helped us provide New Life International water systems in Haiti, and we are thankful to New Life for working with us.

SIFAT has trained 16 Haitian community leaders in a three-week session to help their communities rebuild. This included how to install and maintain these water systems, which use salt and an electric current (ac/dc or solar) to chlorinate water. We continue working in Haiti in practical trainings for basic human needs.

As I write this, I am in Bolivia with SIFAT's engineer Bolivar Sanga, who helps the poor here drill their

own clean water wells. Water for All International (WFA), led by Terry Waller, has trained Bolivar in how to get water with a drill powered by people, not diesel or electricity. Even the poor can afford this appropriate technology. Bolivar has had success in facilitating water clubs to provide the human power to drill several wells in communities near Ixiamas.

Last week, Bolivar worked in Puerto Ruso in an area of more than 20,000 acres of rainforest in the Madidi National Park set aside as a reservation for the Chimanes, an indigenous tribe.

The Chimanes live mainly by hunting and fishing in the sustainable way passed down to them from their ancestors. In this beautiful pristine environment, they have identified more than 1,300 varieties of jungle animals, reptiles, birds and fish.

Nature is their pharmacy. They shared with Bolivar different plants for various illnesses. The sap from one tree

could heal wounds and leave no scars. But in this lovely breathtaking environment, the Chimanes are often sick because their source of water is a polluted, muddy river. Their ancestors did not have to deal with polluted water. The Chimanes had no cure for the diarrhea it caused, nor did they understand that the water was the cause of much of the dehydration and death in their children.

Now, Bolivar is working with them to drill a well for clean water at the small school on their reservation and to improve the health of the community overall. We are very thankful to Terry and WFA for sharing the great technology with us of how to drill a simple, affordable well that village people can use.

Whether in Haiti, Bolivia or the United States, water is a basic need physically. It is also a basic need spiritually. Jesus said, "I am the Water of Life."