

SIFAT Journal



Sharing God's Love in Practical Ways

Winter 2012

Agape Total Childcare Center in Uganda opens its new school, but needs your help!

As many of you may know, Agape Total Childcare Center in Uganda had to move last month from Lugazi to Mukono. Because of unforeseen circumstances, SIFAT graduate and Agape founder William Nsubuga is forced to open the Agape Christian School now; he has been given one month by the Ministry of Education and municipality authorities to bring the school into compliance with Ugandan regulations. We need your support to open the school immediately, so the older children living at Agape will be able to attend secondary school this year.

The Ministry of Health gave Agape until January 2012 to move to Mukono from its Lugazi location because the buildings did not meet requirements for the number of children living together. They outgrew the space as more orphans came to live at Agape and many of the children became teenagers. William planned to transport the older kids by truck to the nearest secondary school many kilometers from their home, while the younger children attended a school within walking distance. Unfortunately, law enforcement now says he cannot transport the students in an open truck, and he has received citations and fines for doing so. Because of this, William realized he must open the Agape secondary school, although the building is not ready.



A team member from Western Heights Baptist Church in LaGrange, Ga., takes a break from working on the new school building at Agape Total Childcare Center to hang out with one of the teenagers. Agape needs your support to make the new school fully operational - classes started this February!

Agape needs your help! The school needs to be finished and furnished now. We need your help to make it operational and to meet all legal requirements. Please sponsor any of the items below to help furnish the classrooms and finish construction.

To equip the school:

Blackboards	\$ 240
Lab Equipment	\$8,400
Temporary Kitchen	\$ 800
Dishes, pots, cups	\$ 240
70 Desks @ \$64 each	\$4,480
School Supplies	\$2,000

To finish the construction:

Restroom Facility	\$4,115
Painting	\$2,175
Covered Veranda	\$1,790
Ceiling	\$1,725

Please designate *Agape—School* on your donation. To donate in honor or memory of someone, include his or her name and address with your gift.

Go to page 5 to read a history of Agape



It's not About the Numbers

By Joyce Henderson
Short-term Mission Team Leader



Phil Henderson and Daniela Quishpe meet in Cayambe, Ecuador. Phil and his wife, Joyce, have led medical mission teams to Ecuador for many years.

Once again, I am reminded that a mission trip is not about the numbers. On our medical missions, we want to know how many people we treated each day, how many doses of antibiotics we used, how many pairs of glasses were fitted. I bring home all of the patient forms and enter the information in a database, so that we can know exactly the ages, diagnoses, treatments and referrals of our patients. I justify this curiosity with the value of statistics for planning the next trip.

Two weeks after our most recent trip, I pulled out the forms to put them into order for entering into the computer. The first 25 forms from the last morning of the clinic are missing, probably left in the office where they had been taken for copying.

And God reminds me again, it's not the numbers that count in His world. It's the 14-year-old child who was being abused and now that her secret has been exposed, can live without the shame and fear, and

get the help she needs. It's the 8-year-old girl, blind from birth, who is started on the path of diagnosis, surgery and possible cure. It's the little boy whose emergency surgery will enable him to have children someday. It's about the mother who faced medical problems in her pregnancy and got immediate help.

I overheard Dr. Bill in the clinic asking his patients about their education, their jobs, their household living conditions. He took time with each person to learn about them, their hopes for the future, their dreams. He encouraged the youths to continue with their schooling, the teens not to rush into motherhood, the elderly not to worry about normal aches and pains. he gets it.

It's about the smiles, handshakes and hugs of arrivals and departures. It's about the puppets and bubbles shared with children while they wait to see the doctor, and the gummy bears that chase away the nasty taste of parasite pills. It's about the songs, memory verses and craft projects that will stick in children's memories for years. It's about enjoying the meals someone else has prepared for us, and the worship service shared with us.

It's about understanding that, although we come from a different place and culture, we have so many of the same problems and concerns, family issues and worries. But we also share the same love of God, and on a mission trip, get to express that one person at a time.

Joyce and Phil Henderson lead SIFAT medical mission teams to Ecuador. You can read more from Joyce on her blog, www.missionsmovingout.wordpress.com, from which this article was reprinted with her permission.

Short-term Mission Teams Needed in Ecuador and Zambia

Teams are needed this fall to Ecuador. Contact Peggy for possible dates and trip information or to join an existing team this summer.

Teams are needed to help build our training center in Zambia. You could be an integral part of pastors and community leaders opportunities to learn practical skills to make a difference in their communities. Potential students are waiting to have the chance to attend SIFAT training in Africa.

Contact Peggy Walker, walkerp@sifat.org, for more information.

Exciting Changes in Ixiamas

By Rachel Parsons Tenorio
Ixiamas, Bolivia

Greetings from Bolivia! March means rice harvest time in Ixiamas! Farmers spend most of their days from mid-February to April in their fields picking rice by hand. From experience, I have learned that it is a long and arduous process; it is a lot of work just to get one plate of rice. We usually head out to our Two Trees property every afternoon with some hired high school students to help with our harvest, which goes towards the self sustainability part of our project.

Once the rice harvest is done, most farmers take a break from their fields and come to live in town, looking for random jobs. Starting in May, we hope to take advantage of their spare time to offer them educational opportunities in sustainable agriculture. We are coordinating with a Bolivian university (Universidad Mayor San Andres) to offer short-term trainings to the local farmers on topics, such as low cost irrigation systems, control of leaf cutter ants, soil fertility, proper use of pesticides and controlled burning. We are also coordinating with a technical college to offer courses in raising chickens and pigs.

We plan to continue working with high school students in Ixiamas. Last year, we taught the students how to plant Bio

Intensive Gardens, develop a tree nursery, and the basics of raising animals. It was encouraging to see the students involved in a hands-on approach to their education, creating something different for them than just the average class. The students were able to harvest and eat from their gardens. Some were surprised that the vegetables actually tasted good! I hope these gardens get them to eat their vegetables.

Please keep Mateo and me in your prayers as we coordinate with farmers from the colonies and staff from the university to offer training courses this year. This is a new project for us. We have many expectations, but also many unknowns. As always, we strive to serve the Lord the best we can, but there are often many unexpected obstacles here in Bolivia. I have learned a lot this past year and to just “let go and let God” — a great lesson for anyone! Your prayers are greatly appreciated.



Students from the local high school learn how to make an organic pesticide using peppers. Rachel and Mateo are holding workshops with local farmers and classes through the high school to teach sustainable agriculture.



A student shows one of the trees he has planted during the trees nursery classes he took in Ixiamas, Bolivia., Hands-on classes start again this spring at the internado property.



Winter 2012

World Hunger and Malnutrition Field Study May 20-June 2, 2012



Haitian leaders learn urban gardening irrigation techniques during a previous field study at SIFAT.

Learn practical skills to meet basic human needs in a context of community development. Designed for church and community workers, university students and those interested in international development, this field study addresses agriculture, child malnutrition, clean water and environmental concerns.

To sponsor an international community leader or to participate, contact Kathy Bryson, brysonk@sifat.org.

Sarah Trust Fund Update

In 2007, we started the Sarah Trust Fund, which was created to fund ongoing staff support. With the help of donors and matching gifts, the fund reached \$200,000 in 2009. At this point, we were able to begin using the interest from the trust to pay our staff, which means more of the general fund will be used to fund SIFAT programs, such as our training and international projects.

Thanks to generous donations by our supporters, the trust has reached **\$230,853.30**. However, we can only use a small portion of this amount to fund staff administration costs, which is why this fund began. Help SIFAT continue for years to come by giving to the Sarah Trust Fund today. Invest in SIFAT's future by designating your gift Sarah Trust Fund.

Training Haitian Community Leaders in Self-help

Kathy Bryson
International Training Director

A year ago SIFAT started a three-year program in Haiti to train local community leaders to be health promoters. This month 40 promoters received the first year diploma.

The promoters come from different areas around Les Cayes and represent different churches, small local NGOs, and community projects. They have been very enthusiastic about the training, eager to complete each session held quarterly and put into practice what they have learned. The first year training has focused on key primary health care issues, community organization and development methods, and local sustainable solutions.

It has been inspiring to work with these Haitians and see them develop solutions for their own problems! They are committed to working with their communities long-term. To invest in training local Haitian leaders please contact me by e-mail at brysonk@sifat.org.



Community leaders in Haiti are meeting quarterly for three years for training to become health promoters. In February, 40 participants received their first year diploma. SIFAT staff member Byron Morales (center, standing) is leading this training.

Get Involved this Spring and Summer

Do you want to get involved with SIFAT, but aren't sure what opportunities are available? Look at the list below to find a new way to partner with us! We want to be a resource for churches and individuals to get involved personally in missions.

- **Tour SIFAT with a group** — bring a Sunday School class or group from your civic organization or church to visit our Global Village and appropriate technology demonstrations. Contact Mary Corson, learnandserve@sifat.org for available dates.
- **Schedule a spring retreat** for your children's, youth or college group during spring break or on a weekend. Bring a group to **Learn & Serve summer camp**. Visit www.sifat.org/learnandserve for more information.
- **Participate in our May field study**. Learn appropriate technologies that you can put into practice in your community or internationally. Visit www.sifat.org/fieldstudy.html or contact Kathy Bryson, brysonk@sifat.org for more information.
- Take part in an **international mission trip** to Bolivia, Ecuador, Uganda or Zambia. Team members are especially needed on several teams to Ecuador. Contact Peggy Walker, walkerp@sifat.org, for available dates and locations.
- **Volunteer** at SIFAT either individually or as a group. **Work teams** are needed to help maintain our campus. Contact Nate Paulk, paulkn@sifat.org, for possible projects.

History of Agape Total Childcare Center

William Nsubuga moved to the United States after surviving the Rwandan genocide. In 1997, he attended SIFAT's community development training, and although he lived in Birmingham for the next 10 years, he never forgot what he learned and never lost his desire to help HIV/AIDS orphans in Africa. In 2007, William completed SIFAT training again in preparation for his move to Uganda.

In 2008, William founded Agape Total Childcare Center in Lugazi, Uganda. He opened the doors to children aged 6 to 12 who lost one or both parents to HIV/AIDS and had no place to live. William envisioned Agape being a Christian home for these children, a place where they could be safe, feel loved, attend school and receive medical attention when needed. He eventually wanted to open a Christian school for both the

residents of Agape and local students.

In addition to limited living space in Lugazi, nightclubs and bars became their next door neighbors. This environment was not conducive to studying or sleeping. William bought land in Mukono, and in 2011, the first SIFAT mission team arrived to begin working on facilities for the new childcare center, which would include an administration building, dormitories and a Christian secondary school.



The new school at Agape Total Childcare Center in Mukono, Uganda, opened in February. This secondary school provides private Christian education for the teenagers living at Agape, as well as for students in the surrounding community whose tuition will help support Agape.

Teams from Western Heights Baptist Church in LaGrange, Ga., and Scottsboro FUMC in Scottsboro, Ala., will travel to Agape this summer to

continue work on the school and dormitory. To make donations to this project, designate your gift *Agape*.



Helping Create 48: A Slum Experience

Becca Griffin
Campus Program Intern

For most of January, I was wrapped up in an event called *48: A Slum Experience*, held Jan. 14-16. This is one opportunity for experiential learning that Learn & Serve (L&S) offers. It is our biggest winter event, during which participants experience life in an urban slum for 48 hours.

During the retreat, 34 high school and college-age volunteers represented children, families, prostitutes, gang members, merchants and others living in an urban slum. This year's *48* was based on about one million people living in the Kibera slum in Nairobi, Kenya, with a population density 30 times that of New York City, but in 1.5 square miles. Much research went into learning about the people of Kibera, as well as statistics about HIV/AIDS, mass evictions, lack of sanitation, lack of clean water, violence, prostitution and more. A short film by Vanguard, called *The Kibera Slum*, was helpful in our research. The book, *Planet of Slums*, has been an invaluable resource on the reality for one billion people living in urban slums today.

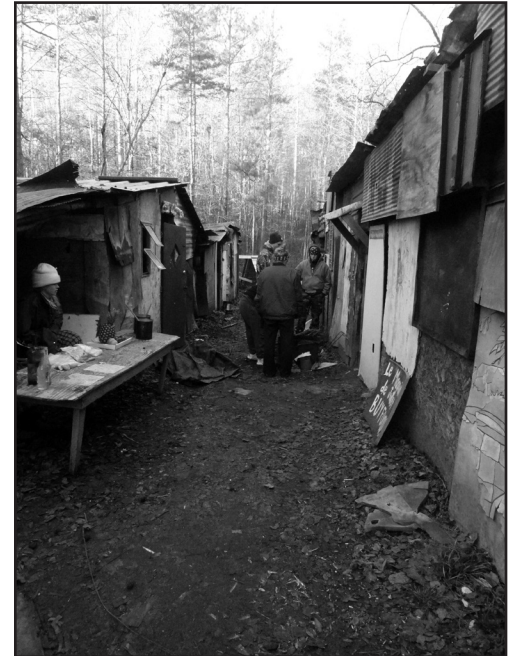
We wanted to accurately and respectfully represent the people of Kibera Slum. We spent days mapping out who would play whom, wrote character histories and descriptions, created a representation of how the people in the slum would interact, and gave the plans to our volunteers, who

began arriving a week to a few hours before the event began.

The staff stayed in the slum for three nights, so they were there before the participants arrived. The 80 participants began arriving around 11 a.m. Saturday. After preparation of adult leaders and students, as well as an invitation to experience life like someone else in the world, they began their trip to the slum.

Students are somewhat hesitant at first, but necessity takes over and they begin living life in the slum—working in order to buy food, clean water and shelter. They live, eat, drink and sleep there. It is beautiful to see them interact with the residents of the slum. They learn a lot and come in contact with people and struggles of which they may have otherwise remained ignorant.

My role of a documentary filmmaker was useful for documenting *48* and interviewing youth and adults about their time in the slum. There are interesting conversations that can come out of such an experience. Naturally curious, I had the freedom to question people about what they were thinking and how they were responding to this experience, which fascinated me. I am grateful for the opportunity that this experience provides for honesty through an extended time and intense experience with students. The most interesting conversations came at night around a campfire. Though it is hard to have a conversation with students



Students participating in 48: A Slum Experience lived in our simulated slum for 48 hours and were required to meet their basic human needs.

when they are around their friends, they are still thinking deeply about the experience with poverty that they are having.

One of the over-arching metaphors that this experience provides, in my opinion, is the reality that we got to leave that slum after two days and that we do not live our lives in an urban slum. We get to leave; the people of Kibera do not. After we leave, whether we wrestle with that reality or not is the most important part of this event. We asked participants to share responses to questions about poverty in their communities on SIFAT's Facebook page:

"I just went on the 48-hour Slum Experience and seeing first hand the uncertainty of where your next meal or drink of water will come from or where you're going to

Schedule your group today!

Contact Mary Corson to schedule your youth group to come to Learn & Serve summer camp or for a retreat. Mary will help you plan an event for any age group. E-mail her at learnandserve@sifat.org.

48: A Slum Experience —◆ (Continued from page 6)

sleep that night really makes you think. I have a different perspective on what poverty really is. We think of necessities as electricity and running water, but there are people who are denied basic human necessities of food, water and shelter. Through this experience, I gained a greater appreciation for how fortunate I really am. Things that used to be so important suddenly carry a lot less weight in my life. There are people living without what they need to live, so why should I complain that the water in my shower isn't hot enough. It feels silly to complain about anything in our lives; we have it so good. That's why it's up to us to do something about what's happening to people all over the world living in poverty. Our youth group is recommitting to raising money for H2O4K (water for Kenya) through the 410 Bridge. Our SIFAT experience has reminded us of our responsibility to care for those who are stuck in the continuous cycle of poverty." -- Elise Joyce, Student, Powder Springs, Ga.

Sometimes the knowledge of the need in our communities and around the world can be overwhelming. I think it is important to point to people who are doing something about seemingly unapproachable problems in the world, like SIFAT graduate Raphael Ogbole from Nigeria. He is teaching a simple technology in his own community—fuel-efficient cook stoves—that is making an impact on the fourth leading cause of death among women and children in developing countries, smoke inhalation caused by cooking over an open fire for every meal. Raphael works in his own community, teaching about a seemingly small thing. The size of our response is not the issue, but responding is. To say that you can do nothing is often

a denial of help for the suffering because of our own desire to not experience their pain even in sympathy. I think you just have to go to work at it and chip away at it bit by bit.

The campus program staff recently represented SIFAT at Meltdown, a youth conference in Panama City Beach, Fla. We led a tour-style slum experience there, which is something new for us. More than 700 students participated. Though it may seem weird to do a slum experience without our simulated slum, my fellow staff remind me of the reality that some students who are from the United States and living comfortably may never come in close contact with someone living in



Each note card represents a response about needs in the communities of youth and leaders at Meltdown in Panama City Beach, Fla.

poverty. We are making that happen, even if just by representation. I pray for this experience to lead to much more contact with those who are in poverty domestically and internationally. We always make sure the students and leaders know that they need to address poverty in their own communities, so we provided a wall for them to post poverty that they see in their community.



A student listens to a volunteer portraying a prostitute during 48: A Slum Experience. More than 30 people represented those living in Kibera slum in Nairobi, Kenya.

So, we have been busy traveling and busy at SIFAT doing our best to represent life in what seems like other worlds while SIFAT training graduates are actually living in the places we are representing. As a former youth pastor, I have seen the change that takes place when students leave SIFAT. I was a youth pastor in Mobile, Ala., before coming to SIFAT and never have I seen change happen in students as much as I have after having spent time at SIFAT. Students being able to really put themselves in the place of someone else is a rarity. SIFAT provides that opportunity, as well as provoking students to action and not simply promoting the emotional effect of such an experience. SIFAT's motto is "sharing God's love in practical ways," and students are encouraged to share that love in their own communities. The discipling that is being done through Learn & Serve programming is having a long-lasting impact on the lives of students and, in turn, the people in the lives of these students and leaders. There are too many stories to prove the impact. Like Jesus said of his disciples, "they will do even greater things than these." The students and leaders affected by L&S and experiences, like 48, are doing and are going to do greater things when they leave than we could ever imagine. This is how it is supposed to be.



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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

Good news from Zambia! Last August Letson Kachorongwa, a grassroots agriculture trainer from Zimbabwe, joined SIFAT to develop our 11-acre campus in Zambia using the agricultural model of Foundations for Farming. Letson works with Foundations for Farming, which teaches a simple farming method with management training that also helps people apply the Gospel to their lives. Their purpose is to transform individuals, communities and nations through faithful and productive use of the land. Pioneered by Brian Oldreive from Zimbabwe, this approach is now being used in many countries with success. SIFAT's gardener, John Carr, first heard Mr. Oldreive present his method at ECHO in Florida and has integrated these techniques into the SIFAT campus agricultural models.

When we last left Zambia, our field was bare, hard dirt. We needed help to turn it into a model that local farmers could evaluate and benefit from. We are thrilled with the recent update on what Letson has already done on the SIFAT Zambian Campus. There is beautiful dark green corn that is head high and lush soy beans growing in the once barren field. The corn is about twice as



Pastor John (left) and Letson (right) stand beside corn being grown at the SIFAT Zambian Campus using Foundations for Farming methods that combine agriculture and discipleship.

high as the local farmers' corn. We talked with missionaries living near our Zambian Center. They told us that not only had Letson reached the neighbors with his farming method, but he has reached them with Christ, also. The local farmers are excited about growing more food, but also about someone who cares about them and points them to Christ. The basis for Foundations for Farming is to use agriculture as discipleship, studying the Bible and farming together. Though we have not formally opened the center for training yet, the people around it are already learning and getting excited about possibilities for their lives from seeing Christ in Letson's life and work. We don't need a formal class to teach. Actions speak louder than words. We are very thankful for Foundations for Farming and for their partnership through Letson Kachorongwa...a great teacher indeed! Please join us in praying for him to get his Zambian visa, so that he can work with us long term.

What a joy it is to be able to reach out to the poor with physical and spiritual food! Thank you for supporting this work to impact the lives of people in Africa