

# SIFAT Journal



**Cecilia de Cobo**  
shares stories  
of hope from  
Atacucho  
during our  
team leader  
training.

Sharing God's Love in Practical Ways

February 2008

## Practicum Graduate Joins Ixiamas Staff



*Vicky taught children in our County Road 88 ministry about the Chinese New Year.*

Vicky, a 2007 Practicum graduate, will be joining our team in Ixiamas, Bolivia, for nine months. She leaves for the Philippines at the end of February and will arrive in Ixiamas at the end of March.

Vicky, a missionary for 10 years in Asia, originally planned to return to the Philippines and go on short-term trips to other Asian countries. Because her visa to come to the United States labeled her reason as Christian leadership training, Vicky will be limited in her ability to continue her work in Asia at the present time.

She sees the opportunity to serve in Bolivia as a good way to gain practical application of some of the things she learned during the Practicum.

"My challenge when speaking Spanish -- Chinese just comes out!" Vicky's main concern going to Ixiamas is the language barrier. She already speaks Tagalog (Filipino), English, Mandarin Chinese and a little Tibetan.

Her family worries about Bolivia's political situation, but Vicky responds that "I'm reading books on Bolivia, and political unrest is normal for the country, so I trust the Lord and am not worried."

## SIFAT Philippines Partners with National University in Training

*By Kathy Bryson*  
International Training Director

SIFAT Philippines is partnering with Don Mariano Marcos Memorial State University in La Union, Philippines, to offer SIFAT training in Christian community development and appropriate technologies to meet basic human needs. Now university students and faculty will be able to learn from pastors and community workers in the trenches about the realities of working and living with the poor.

This networking will also benefit community leaders by linking them with the latest in university research and training resources in agriculture, microenterprise, health and more. The university connection provides the science base; the community leaders provide the university students and faculty with crucial knowledge about the values and needs of the communities. SIFAT's role is to bridge the gap -- to make the latest in science accessible to the grassroots, so that people can help themselves out of poverty and to foster understanding in the university to make their training more relevant to the needs of the people.

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*Using spaghetti noodles and gummy bears, groups competed to build the tallest structure in a team-building activity. The winning team (above) included members from St. John's EPC, Christ Community Church and summer interns to Bolivia.*

## Team Leader Training

The 2008 Team Leader Training (TLT) for our short-term mission teams' leaders was held Feb. 15-17, 2008. Dr. Roberto Contreras, director of SIFAT Ecuador and Cecilia de Cobo, director of the day care project led sessions on projects in Ecuador. They shared the plans for 2008, as well as an overall look at the positive impact our teams are having in Atacucheo.

Read *From the Desk of Tom Corson* on page 4 for more about our TLT.

## Needed Items on "Wish List" Donated

*By Nate Paulk  
Campus Director*

This winter, three staff members, Nate Paulk, Jamie Waldhour and Holly Bolinger, traveled to St. Charles, Ill., a suburb of Chicago, to pick up donations from Riverwoods Christian Center. According to facility manager Dennie Loppnow, "Riverwoods is a ministry to an under resourced area, (primarily) children in the Kane County, Fox River Valley area. We partner with local churches and try to get the church and the children involved with each other. The most important part of the ministry is a life transforming relationship with Jesus."

Dennie contacted SIFAT about possible donations after seeing the "wish list" posted on our website. He visited the campus in 1998 with his wife and five daughters, so he is familiar

with our mission. Some of the donated items include 25 sets of metal bunk beds, a commercial range, ice machine and a set of conference room chairs.

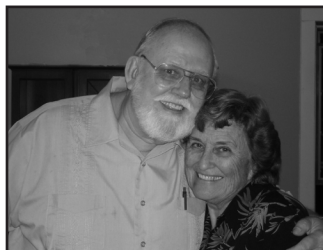
"It was such a blessing to meet Dennie and his family," Nate said. "He picked us up from the airport and went above and beyond to help us while we were there. They have an amazing ministry with the youth and children in the suburbs of Chicago!"

The "refurbished" bunk beds are now in the Lodge. The conference room chairs have improved the look of our conference room and the ice machine and range will be installed in the Cafeteria soon. Thank you to Riverwoods Christian Center for contacting us about these items! Please view out our wish list at [www.sifat.org/wish.html](http://www.sifat.org/wish.html) to find other items we need.

### 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](mailto:lanierm@sifat.org)) for more information or visit [www.sifat.org/share.html](http://www.sifat.org/share.html).

## 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!*

### Merging Faith and Technology

The book *Small is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered* by E.F. Schumaucher sparked an interest in me. It emphasized small technologies, which he called intermediate technologies. Later, those who followed Schumaucher changed the wording intermediate technology to appropriate technology.

At the time I was discovering a more practical theology, one that served human needs---physical as well as spiritual. Schmaucher's ideas, based on small scale and self-help rather than welfare, fit with my thinking. Thus before we left to work under the Bolivian Methodist Church, we went to Vermont for training in appropriate technology.

After two years of ministry in Bolivia, we returned to Alabama. Sharing stories of how we had used technology in the context of the church stimulated interest among Christians who heard us over several states. We called a meeting in our home church, Wedowee United Methodist, where we shared the great concern we felt for the hungry and suffering in our world. Those present responded by helping us create SIFAT as a Christian nonprofit corporation. The founding name was Southern Institute for Appropriate Technology. However, at the first board of directors' meeting, the founders agreed that we wanted the world to know that this was a work of faith, part of our living out our Christian commitment. So we adopted a second name also---Servants in Faith and Technology. The acronym for both names was SIFAT (See-fat). Not only did this name include faith, but also the aspect of servanthood which is a fundamental aspect of Christ's teaching.

### Vicky

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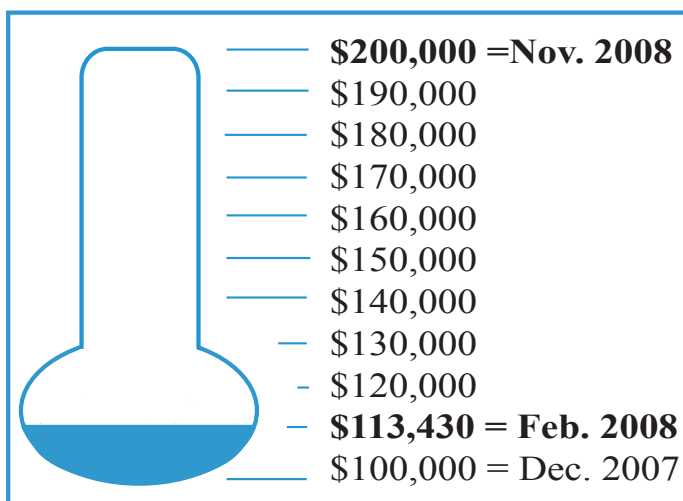
Before, when I went to China, it was the same thing. My family was worried then too, but it was OK."

"In Bolivia, I have the chance to do ministry openly – without the pressure and stress of getting caught or going to jail," Vicky shared. When she and Rachel, Ixiamas internado director, met in January, they began planning Vicky's responsibilities. She will help with spiritual formation and growth by leading devotions and Bible studies for the students.

When asked her goal while serving in Ixiamas, she replied, "I hope to be an encouragement for Christ to the children in Ixiamas."

If you 's would like to help support Vicky, please contact her at [plantav@sifat.org](mailto:plantav@sifat.org) or write Vicky in the memo of your gift to SIFAT.

### Sarah Trust Fund Update



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



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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

February 15 and 16 brought SIFAT team leaders from 30 churches to SIFAT for our annual team training event. The time was packed with fellowship, sharing and learning activities. Thirty teams with a total of 715 members have signed up to partner with SIFAT in projects in Ecuador and Bolivia this summer. Like a big family reunion, the 80 team leaders were eager to meet the other teams who are involved in the same projects.



*Cecilia (left) and Esperance take a photo to show the Sister to Sister ladies.*

Dr. Roberto Contreras and Cecilia de Cobo came from Ecuador to share the things they want to accomplish this summer through the teams. Cross-cultural communication classes helped those going on their first team to better understand the brothers and sisters in Ecuador with whom we will be working. Dr. Roberto, director of SIFAT Ecuador, assured the group that they also would be holding classes for the Ecuadorians' project leaders to help them better understand the Americans. Speaking on small things team members can do that would make big differences for Christ in his country, he made everyone feel eager to go. All agreed that the priority goal of the summer was relationships...Christians from North America and from South America meeting as one in Christ...working together, worshiping together, learning to understand and to love each other.

Cecilia de Cobo, a 1996 Practicum graduate, is director of the day care project where more than 1000 children from slum areas receive love, food and spiritual and mental training. Cecilia shared that many of the mothers of these children have become Christians. They have formed a group called Sister to Sister in which they pray for each other, study the Bible together, encourage each other in their struggle to survive and work together in small handicraft projects to raise money for their livelihood and for the day care centers. Over her regular shirt, Cecilia wore a beautiful, hand-painted blouse made by the mothers in this group. When she finished speaking, Cecilia invited Esperance, a SIFAT intern from Kenya, to come forward. Putting the blouse on Esperance, Cecilia asked her to wear it in Kenya. She wanted to tell the mothers in Ecuador that their handwork would be worn by an African sister in Kenya. "Just as this blouse will go far across the world," Cecilia told us, "so does everything we do for Christ. God amplifies our small acts of service and uses us to extend His Kingdom around the world!"