

SIFAT Journal



Sharing God's Love in Practical Ways

November 2007

We're not in Orlando anymore!

Travis and Lisa Riner joined SIFAT's staff as full-time volunteers in October.

Travis heard about SIFAT while volunteering at First United Methodist of Oviedo, Fla. He knew he wanted to come see what the ministry was, and as a new youth minister at Conway United Methodist Church, he brought his students to the last week of Learn & Serve (L&S) 2007.

Lisa attended L&S with the youth and within weeks of returning home, she and Travis were planning to move more than 560 miles to become volunteers.

"The experience of Learn & Serve changed the perspective of all the kids - that was amazing," Lisa said. Travis added that the impact of the program,

SIFAT's facilities and the nature here drew them to SIFAT. They left L&S knowing they had to get involved somehow.

By mid-September, their prayers became a reality as they made serious plans to quit their jobs and move. They turned in notices in the beginning of October and were at SIFAT on Oct. 15.

Although the student programming got Lisa and Travis interested, they both appreciate all aspects of SIFAT. They are planning on attending Practicum in 2008. Lisa says that Practicum will

prepare them for anything that comes up, because they will more suited to serve on a project, even in another country.

Travis has been called to ministry of some sort, and Lisa wants to continue exploring ways to serve and ministry support. She explains that "we're here to serve God, not just volunteer at SIFAT."

Travis grew up in Guyton, Ga., and was a founding member of the Christian rock band Showbread. He moved to Winter

Continued on page 5



Rachel Parsons, director of our boarding home in Ixiamas, crosses a river while taking our red truck from Santa Cruz to Ixiamas. Fairview United Methodist Church raised the funds to purchase this truck.

**SERVANTS
IN FAITH AND
TECHNOLOGY**

In this issue:

Blankets of Love	2
Sarah Trust Fund	3
CARES	3
Practicum	4-5
Desk of Tom	6

Blankets of Love

Last Christmas, Mt. Bethel United Methodist Church sent six fleece blankets to Ecuador with our Christmas team, which included Mt. Bethel members. Because these team members saw the joyful reception of those blankets and the need for many more, Mt. Bethel saw a way to partner their missions ministry with their children's ministry.

Each blanket is made with two pieces of outerwear fleece 1 and 2/3 yards long. The fleece is made into a blanket by cutting 5 inch fringe along each edge and knotting the two sides together.

While preparing the blanket, participants are encouraged to think of it as a gift of hope. One piece of fleece represents the child preparing the blanket and the other piece represents

the child receiving the blanket. With each knot that is tied, children are being brought together in the name of Jesus.

"With each knot that is tied, children are being brought together in the name of Jesus."

To help make it more convenient for members to participate, kits are available for purchase. Each kit contains simple instructions and needed materials for one blanket. The proceeds purchase materials to make more kits.

More than half of the blankets have been made, and some were delivered to the children in SIFAT's daycare centers during the summer. As Mt. Bethel continues to reach its goal of 1,200 blankets, their teams look for ways to serve after returning home from the mission field.

International Festival



Wilfred Tamfu, of Cameroon, directs the students in the finale, an arrangement of SIFAT's song *Change the World*.

Approximately 200 people attended SIFAT's International Festival on Oct. 19, 2007. Participants toured SIFAT's international campus, then went to the Lodge for an international sampling dinner. Native dishes from Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and South America were available to try, and American kabobs and hotdogs were on the grill outside for the less adventurous eaters.

After dinner and shopping at The Village Store, shuttles took everyone to the Quonset Hut for the main program. As the Practicum students entered the building, they carried their countries' flags and introduced themselves. The following program consisted of songs and dance from the students' homelands. The students' different languages and traditional clothing gave the audience a window of the various cultures.

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) for more information.

November 2007

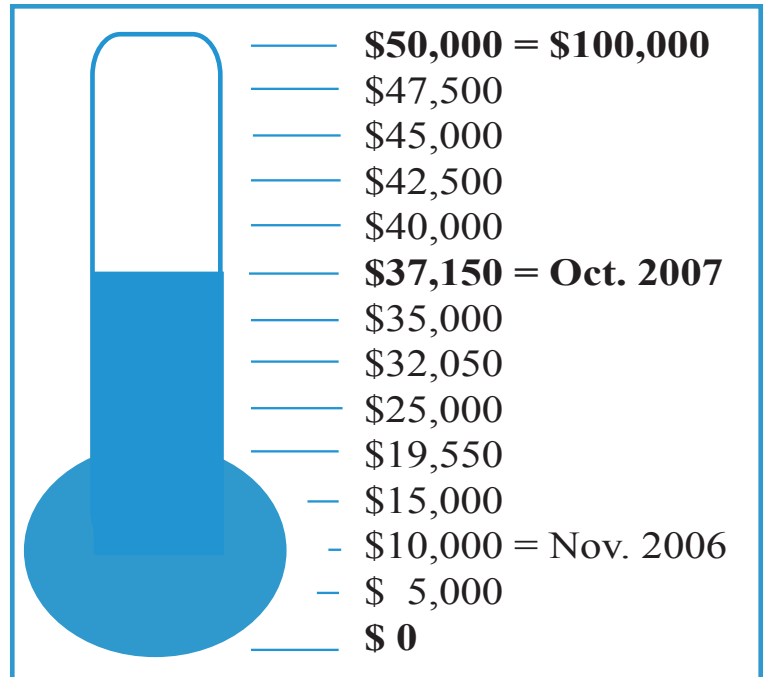


Sarah Trust Fund Update

The Sarah Trust Fund still needs your donations! We are \$12,850 short of making our \$50,000 matching funds goal! Once we receive \$50,000, matching funds will give us \$100,000. **Will you help us reach \$50,000 by Dec. 20, 2007?**

Double your money by giving to the Sarah Trust Fund!

Please consider a one-time gift to continue SIFAT in the next generation. The Sarah Trust Fund (Journal May 2007) lets your gift be doubled with matching funds up to \$50,000. Designate your gift "Sarah Trust Fund" and mail it today.



CARES Fall Report

CARES' fall season, which started Sept. 18, has kept our program staff busy. CARES offers three separate field trips for groups to participate in hands-on activities while learning about other cultures.

The Around the World (ATW) program takes visitors on a whirlwind world tour in a matter of hours, while the Appropriate Technology (AT) program gives participants the chance to investigate appropriate technologies used to help meet basic human needs. The Native American program looks at the way our own culture began with activities in our Native American Village.

During the popular ATW, students learn to make homemade corn tortillas in Guatemala, dance the

native tinikling dance of the Philippines and carry water on their heads in Uganda. They also meet and interact

with natives from different countries when possible.



Pam Dagwom, a Practicum student from Nigeria, helps these CARES participants find African countries on the map.

As of Oct. 31, 2007, 413 people from nine schools and groups have participated. The season ends Nov. 23, and we still have nine more groups with about 450 people planning to attend.

The spring season of CARES kicks off March 4, 2008, and lasts through May 9. Groups are already making plans to attend. CARES events are held on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays.

Are you interested in bringing a group to a CARES event? Contact Haley Lewis at lewish@sifat.org or (256) 396-2015 for more information.

Practicum graduates learn to share God's

Africa



William, a 1997 and 2007 graduate, helps prepare the well-drilling equipment

Wilfred Tamfu, of Cameroon, is a music minister and high school chaplain with the Baptist Church in Bamuka. He plans to open a training center to teach others what he learned at SIFAT. **Pastor Pam Dagwom**, of Nigeria, is the national coordinator of Calvary International Africa Incorporated. He is involved in outreach ministry to meet the basic human needs of the poor in rural areas. **Bola Lawal**, of Nigeria, is the program officer of Nigeria Fellowship of Evangelical Students (NIFES) HIV/AIDS Projects, where he works with more than 300 universities throughout the country in AIDS education and prevention among college students. **Esperance Ibuka** was born in Rwanda, but grew up in Kenya. She is an active peer educator, counselor and voluntary social worker participating in campaigns for the betterment of children and youth at risk. **William and Adela Nsubuga**, of Rwanda and Tanzania respectively,

will move from the US to Uganda with their son, Sean, in December to open an orphanage for children affected by HIV/AIDS. **Arnold Mukwindidza**, of Zimbabwe, works in microenterprise projects in a low-income rural area. He plans to help establish a regional job-skills training center with the United Methodist Church.

Asia

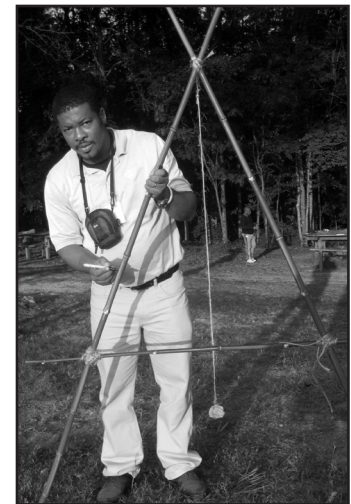


Jon (right) and Awon make pasta fortified with nutrients from plants. Leaf for Life founder David Kennedy (center) provides hands-on instruction.

Prasuna "Jon" Gajula, of southern India, works as a social worker in the slum communities of the twin cities Hyderabad and Secunderabad and works as a counselor for Grace and Truth Mission High School. She and her husband, a 2006 alumnus, care for 28 orphans. **Tamreiwon "Awon" Shanglai**, a native of northeast India and graduate of Samford University's Beeson Divinity School, plans to establish a community care center for the rural poor farmers and villagers

in Manipur. **Pastor Vincent Clarito** from the Philippines is a senior pastor of Hope of Glory Christian Church, Christian school administrator and vice president of Mountain Ministries International. **Vicky Planta**, a Filipino missionary to other Asian countries since 1997, will continue her missions work. **Gerry and Jane Aguilar**, of the Philippines, have been missionaries for five years in Bangkok, Thailand, where they coordinate with school authorities and community leaders. They teach English as a Second Language and have started a church.

Caribbean: Haiti



Leon uses an A-frame to determine contour lines on a slope, a part of SALT (Sloping Agricultural Land Technology) training.

Leòn Gerson works with the Children of Israel Orphanage and Training Center in Agricultural Development. **Lionel Legouté** is with the First Evangelical Lutheran Church of Les Cayes. He also works with the Children of Israel Foundation.

Latin America and South

love in practical ways

America

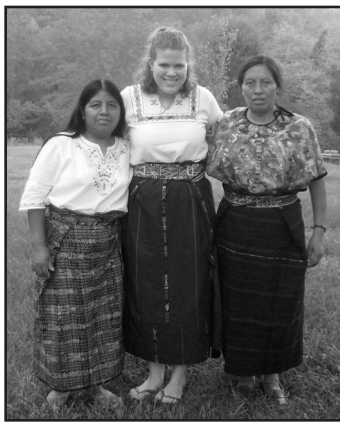


Regina practices using a microscope to identify parasites commonly found in goats.

Regina Cabrera, of Guatemala, has worked for many years in rural areas as midwife and health promoter. She is the president of a Mayan women's group. **Dolores Lopez**, also from Guatemala, is an active member of the Mam indigenous group in Chiquirichapa, Quetzaltenango. She works as a community educator and mobilizer for indigenous women to have basic human rights. **Claudio Valenzuela** is a local Guarani pastor with the Methodist church in Paraguay. He is preparing to establish an agricultural training center for poor rural farmers in his community.

Elfirio Villalba, of Paraguay, works with the local Methodist church. A skilled mechanic and mason, he will help Claudio establish the center. **Yurima Alvarez** from Venezuela is the president of the Integrated Community Center in Naranjales, where she has served for 14 years as a missionary in community development and children's ministry.

USA



Dolores and Regina dressed Sam (center) as a native Mam woman.

David Corson, grandson of SIFAT founders Ken and Sarah Corson, is preparing for his call in long-term missions. **Sam McCain**, of Indiana, feels a call to mission work, especially with children, in South America.



Angie Humphrey (left), a 2002 alumna, demonstrates card weaving to Dolores, Regina and Jane. The students learned different ways of weaving to use in microenterprise.

Lisa and Travis —————
(Continued from page one)

Springs, Fla., where he met Lisa in the eleventh grade. He has been a store manager at Starbucks and worked at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel. Most recently, Travis was serving as a youth pastor at Conway United Methodist Church.

Lisa grew up in Winter Springs, Fla., and received her bachelor's degree in English and political science at the University of Florida. Lisa attained a master's degree in public administration with a concentration in nonprofit management from the University of Central Florida. Before moving, Lisa was employed by the Seminole County Government as a senior procurement analyst. She was in charge of fifth and sixth grade programming at Conway UMC.

As volunteers, the Rinners are raising their own support. You can read their adventures by reading their blog, which is linked on our website's news page.

Office Housekeeping

Has your address changed?

Please update your profile by calling Mary Elarbee at (256) 396-2015 or e-mailing her at elarbeem@sifat.org.

Contribution statement options!

We mail monthly statements, but you can save SIFAT postage and paper by requesting year-end only statements. Call Scotty Turner at (256) 396-2015 or e-mail him at turners@sifat.org if you would like year-end only statements.



Nonprofit Org.
U.S. Postage
Paid
Bham, AL
Permit # 3029

2944 County Road 113
Lineville, AL 36266

Phone: (256) 396-2015
Fax: (256) 396-2501
E-mail: info@sifat.org

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

We have been blessed tremendously as we lived and worked for the past 10 weeks with the 22 students who came to us from 14 countries.

Dolores, a health promoter, left her mountainous village and flew on a plane alone for the first time. Upon arriving in Birmingham, no one from SIFAT was there and her suitcases had been lost. One suitcase was filled with handicrafts the women from her community sent, hoping to earn money for a clean water project. She was more worried about that suitcase than her own clothes. However, used to hardship, she spread her blanket to spend the night on the airport floor, but officials told her she could not do so. They translated and helped her bargain to get a taxi for \$200, half of the money an agency had given her to pay on her tuition at SIFAT.

After a hundred miles, the taxi driver found SIFAT and left Dolores at our guest house at about 2 a.m. Although the door was unlocked, she did not try it. She was afraid in a strange place, unsure this was the right place. She lay on the front porch and prayed that God would find her suitcases and that no wild animals would attack her in the night. Then trusting God, she slept till morning.

We were in Atlanta to receive her at the scheduled time. When she did not arrive, we called Guatemala and discovered that she had continued to Birmingham. Immediately, a SIFAT volunteer left to find her, but when he arrived she had already left. He saw her suitcases had arrived on another flight and brought them with him.

He set Dolores' suitcases on the front porch of the guest house without seeing her. When we found Dolores, she was praising God for answering her prayers. No wild animals had attacked her, and miraculously, there were her suitcases!

Among these 22 students were highly educated professionals and those who only had elementary education, but all were dedicated Christian workers. We became one family during Practicum and learned from each other's different perspectives. Dolores, who had only seen community soccer games, was amazed when given a ticket to the Auburn homecoming game. She said that it was interesting, but it must have been a bad team, because they kept falling down. She felt sorry, because they did not even have a round ball. We laughed with Dolores and explained football, but Dolores taught us many things, too. She is a widow whose husband was killed by rebels years ago, because he was a leading Christian in his community. Even his death did not deter her faith or keep her from working to help her community. We thank God for Dolores and the other students who brought the world to our campus this fall! We pray each of these SIFAT graduates will be strengthened as they return home to serve their people by sharing God's love in practical ways.