

SIFAT Journal



Sharing God's Love in Practical Ways

Fall 2013

Little Tears of Hope in Ecuador

In 2014 and 2015, SIFAT short-term mission teams to Ecuador will serve in Aida Leon, a poor community located on a hillside with one of the most beautiful views of the surrounding mountains in all Quito. Teams will work with SIFAT graduate Pastor Wilson Bastidas on the project known as Gotitas de Esperanza (Little Tears of Hope). We will begin building a two-story structure that will house a much needed kitchen and cafeteria on the first floor and classrooms for more than 200 children on the second.

Through the efforts of Pastor Wilson's church, Esperanza Eterna (Eternal Hope), these children are tutored in their school subjects, encouraged in their spiritual development, fed a hot lunch and, most importantly, have a place to be safe and off the streets while their parents work, usually far away from home. Each construction team will also have a VBS component branching out into five different marginalized areas of Quito teaching very poor children about the love of Jesus. SIFAT Ecuador has asked for at least 20 teams each year to meet their construction goals.

Medical and dental teams are needed to continue providing medical care to the women and children in each of the communities that we serve in Quito.

We invite you to partner with us in these projects that will make a difference in the lives of so many of Ecuador's children by joining or leading a SIFAT mission team. Visit www.sifat.org/international-missions/ecuador for more information or contact international team coordinator Peggy Walker, walkerp@sifat.org.

**Please keep our SIFAT Ecuador staff and this project in your prayers. Pastor Wilson had all permits to build, but may be stopped by a governmental decision to possibly claim this land for its own use by "eminent domain". If we lose the appeal, we will move our project to Villaflora to work again with Pastor Rafael and Anita.*



Here in Aida Leon, 20 construction teams are needed in 2014 and in 2015 to build an addition for the children of Aida Leon. Medical teams are also needed for other project sites both years.

Summer Interns Needed in Ecuador!

Spanish speaking interns are needed for summer 2014 to work with our construction/VBS and medical teams serving with SIFAT in Ecuador. Internships are available from one to three months. Contact Peggy Walker, walkerp@sifat.org, for more information.



Fall 2013

Fuel-efficient Cookstove Training in Nigeria

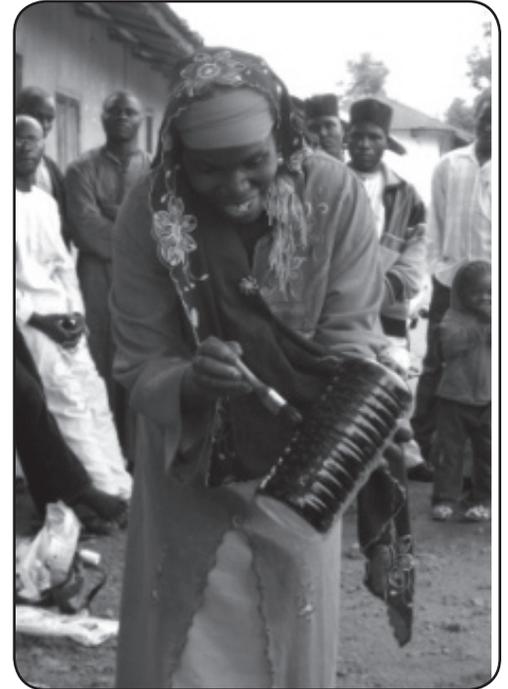
Pastor Ogbatabo is a pseudonym for one of our SIFAT graduates and trainers in Nigeria. Because of his work in a violent area, we want to protect his identity for his safety. Pastor Ogbatabo submitted a proposal to SIFAT, which was approved as an international project. He will be holding six trainings during the next year to teach about 360 people to make fuel-efficient cookstoves. These stoves not only help the environment by using less firewood, but also improve air quality in the kitchen. Smoke in the kitchen is the fourth leading cause of death among women and children in the developing world. Young girls are often not able to attend school because they must spend most of the day walking to gather wood and keep the fire going at home. Pastor Ogbatabo is providing follow up with participants in his training, who have agreed to return to their communities to train others.

We had our very first training on Sept.20 -21, 2013. The participants were drawn from four communities: Kwarakwara, Tamvia, Tamnya and Yambam. Sixty people participated, 25 women and 35 men from various religious backgrounds.

The first day started with community dialogue for village heads, youth leaders, women, headmasters and representative of the public health center. Our aim was to sensitize and mobilize leaders to create awareness on the use of fuel-efficient cookstoves. The following day was dedicated to demonstration and hands-on practice, which was a lot of fun for for all of us. Participants also had an opportunity to make solar disinfection for water filtration from used plastic bottles that would have been otherwise discarded.

Some of the challenges expressed by the participants included:

1. The size of the stove not being enough to support large family cooking.
2. Lack of smoke in the kitchen will make room for burgs to eat up the rafters.
3. Smoke is another method of drying crops.
4. The fear that the new stove might not provide enough heat to warm the rooms during cold season.



SIFAT Graduate Pastor Ogbatabo held a two-day training for 60 people from four communities. He and his wife taught fuel-efficient cookstoves and how to use an empty plastic bottle to make clean water.



We were able to fully address all of these challenges. Participants expressed their gratitude for the opportunity to attend the training. We remain very thankful to SIFAT and our friends in the States for helping us to make this first training a success! Sixty participants have been equipped to help their communities with a simple technology that will make a lasting impact. Although my wife and I were in a wreck when the driver lost control on a bridge, we are thankful to God for protecting us when the vehicle flipped into the creek. We can never thank you all enough for your prayers, moral and financial supports for our project.

Youth in this summer's Learn & Serve sessions met Pastor Ogbatabo and learned about his work. Some returned to their churches pledging to help raise the \$12,000 he needs for this project. We are already seeing their donations come in! If you would like to financially support Pastor Ogbatabo's ministry, please designate your gift Nigeria - Pastor Ogbatabo.

Agricultural Training in Zambia

Letson Kachoronga is already leading training sessions at the United Methodist Conference Center/SIFAT Training Center in Lusaka, Zambia. Letson participated in last May's Field Study at SIFAT and also taught some of the agricultural classes.

Letson uses Foundations for Farming techniques to teach sustainable agriculture that produces significantly more than traditional farming methods, as well as uses Biblical principles and discipleship. Although the center is not completed, Letson is already training local community members.

We had a wonderful three-day training at SIFAT's Zambia Training Center from Thursday, Sept. 26th to Saturday, Sept. 28th. We had 20 participants from two churches, Matero and Kanyama UMCs. I was really encouraged by the level of willingness of learning that was shown by the participants. We discussed health, leadership skills, community development and agricultural techniques. Pastor Kenneth Kalichi, the new pastor of the Abundant Life UMC that is located on the Center's property, talked about community development; Patricia and Mavis from Matero, who are part of the Lusaka District leadership taught on health matters and leadership skills respectively; and I spoke about agriculture.



Part of the training included classroom time before the 20 participants moved to hands-on outdoor demonstrations. SIFAT needs support for our Zambia training center project, so we can offer these training sessions to more people from throughout Africa!

After the training, Patricia shared, "I'm very happy to go through this training session. I have learned a lot that I didn't know in agriculture. I used to spend a lot of money plowing my fields and wasting my energy in making very big mounds when planting sweet potatoes. I am going to change my way of farming, and I need to teach my fellow Christians and my neighbors."

A number of these participants said the training was too short, and they are looking forward to attending more trainings! They believe we have a lot of information that will help them improve their lives. Most of the people who attended the training have promised to implement the techniques, and they asked me to visit them to help establish their fields.

Short-term teams for 2015 are needed to help with construction of the Zambia Training Center. We have many people in Africa that want to come from other countries to receive training, but cannot until the facilities are completed. To lead a short-term mission team, contact international team coordinator Peggy Walker, walkerp@sifat.org. To financially support the Center and its training, please designate your donation Zambia.



Letson (far right) will visit the participants' land to help them begin implementing what they are learning. He is excited about the high level of interest that continues to grow in the local community. Those who have participated in previous training are seeing a huge increase in the productivity of their crops!

Take a SHARE in SIFAT - Commit to Donate Monthly

Become a SHAREholder of SIFAT by giving monthly. Visit the donate page on www.sifat.org or contact Marie (lanierm@sifat.org) for more information.



Fall 2013

Agua de Vida UMC Celebrates Four Years!



Dr. Bill Etheridge, Dr. Roberto Contreras and Pastor Ramiro Balseca led Agua de Vida UMC's anniversary celebration!

This summer, Agua de Vida UMC celebrated four years of church services! Agua de Vida, which is connected to Mama Yoli's House, in Atucucho, Ecuador, was built by SIFAT team members. Dr. Bill Etheridge, pastor of Aldersgate UMC in Huntsville, Ala., and a member of the SIFAT board of directors, had the privilege of preaching this celebration service. The church is growing, and we are seeing lives being changed!

Dr. Roberto and Monica Contreras, our directors in Ecuador, shared the story of Jorgito, a 19-year-old member of the church. When Jorgito was 15, he began attending Agua de Vida. At this time, he was also facing pressure to become involved with neighborhood gangs. Because of the church's influence on his life, Jorgito resisted becoming involved with the prevalent gang violence and drug trafficking in Atucucho. He now has a job as a security guard and is a youth leader at Agua de Vida!

Jorgito's story is only one of the many from Atucucho. Because of your support and love, a lasting impact is being seen in this community. Approximately 150 children and teenagers are now involved in the church. A children's program provides meals, tutoring and Bible studies three afternoons each week, and youth Bible studies are held each Saturday. About 50 adults are actively participating in weekly Bible studies and services.

Agape Needs Land for Boys' Dormitory

Agape Christian Academy (ACA) in Mukono, Uganda, is growing! Founder William Nsubuga had a vision of a Christian high school that accepted day students and boarding students as a way to provide the best education to the children of Agape and to help Agape Total Childcare Center become self sustainable. His vision is now a reality! But he still needs our support to complete the facilities.

The boys need a dormitory! All 28 are now living in a classroom next to the science lab, a concern to prospective students' parents. This room is too small to accommodate the expected numbers of new students. William is in the process of getting ACA accredited with the Ugandan Ministry of Education, and so construction on a permanent dormitory needs to be started immediately.

Good news! An acre of land adjoining the Agape property is available for \$40,000. Materials and construction are estimated to cost an additional \$60,000. This new dormitory can house 120 boys, the number we think will make the school self sustainable.

Your support is needed now to help purchase the land and build the dormitory. Please designate Uganda-ACA dorm on your donation. We pray the land can be purchased in time for our 2014 teams to break ground on the dormitory. Consider joining one of our 2014 teams to Uganda. You will have a wonderful experience getting to know the children whose lives are being so changed because they now have a "family" and are receiving love and a good education at Agape. For more information about joining a team, contact Peggy Walker, walkerp@sifat.org.



Agape Christian Academy needs a boys' dormitory!

The land and dorm will cost approximately \$100,000. With your support, Agape will be one step closer to self sustainability!

Sharing My Mission Experience With My Son

Brian Cain
Mt. Bethel UMC Mission Team

As rewarding as my previous SIFAT trips to Quesimpuco had been, I knew this trip would be special because my son Ben was joining me. For four years, Ben listened to me talk about the challenging 15-hour drive from La Paz through the mountains to Quesimpuco, the incredible vistas seen from the village, the rewarding interactions with the villagers and the return trip to La Paz (with much-anticipated hot showers, restaurants and shopping awaiting our arrival). He knew the “Bolivia Mission Trip” was renowned for its adventure and male-bonding experiences, but there were also stories about the adversities and difficulties often encountered along the way. I felt that Ben (who had turned 16 the day before we left) was old enough to take on these challenges. And I was excited to share this incredible experience with him!

No matter to whom you talk, there seem to be common experiences shared by the participants on international mission trips. First, missionaries who return from these trips always say that they received much more from the people they went to help than they were able to give to these people. Folks usually come home from mission trips with a spring in their step and a true “attitude adjustment.” I think that’s how God’s love works; the more you give (or try to give), the more you receive in return. Second, getting out of one’s comfort zone makes you grow—spiritually, emotionally, intellectually, etc. Going from the land of plenty (e.g., the suburbs of Atlanta) to a remote, economically impoverished place like Quesimpuco opens your eyes to how other people eat, play, pray, survive and, yes, even thrive. We happily return

home to our comfortable beds, favorite restaurants, etc., but it is hard to forget the simpler, spiritually-focused lives we left behind (devoid of television, iPhones and computers). Finally, the camaraderie that develops between fellow missionaries is inescapable. It is like a sports team—if you go through a physically (or emotionally) demanding time with others, you inevitably are going to be close to one another. Lifelong friendships are built from these experiences.



Ben and I clearly experienced all of these things on our trip to Bolivia. We had a terrific time playing basketball with the teenagers, worshipping with young and old, and even hosting a meal at the bunkhouse for 20 of the local leaders. We watched people who have very few material belongings go through life with a smile on their faces and the Holy Spirit in their hearts. They made us both grateful for the material blessings we have at home, but also envious of the spiritual blessings they have. And yes, mixing and pouring concrete by hand at the work site made it easy for camaraderie to develop among all of us (especially working at an elevation of almost 13,000 feet)!

Returning to La Paz in our 4x4 SUVs brought new, unexpected challenges. We drove on a dirt/rock road barely wider than our SUV, where we could have gone off a 14,000-ft. cliff! While Ben (amazingly) slept, Tom Corson navigated our vehicle over the snow and ice-covered mountains. I quietly prayed that Tom learned his ice-driving skills somewhere other than Lineville, Ala.

When we finally reached La Paz, Ben and I found we had one more challenge to endure. When I sent my wife a text, I discovered that a tornado had just come through our neighborhood, dropping a tree on our roof and another one across two of our vehicles parked in the driveway. Fortunately (and most importantly), my wife and daughter were safe. Unfortunately, my truck that I had just fixed up for Ben was likely a total loss. Ben had been proudly showing pictures of the red truck with the new lift kit, wheels and tires to the men on the trip during the week, so everyone understood that this bad news. But as our pastor, Carey Akin, so skillfully stated: “The Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away.”

We are getting back to normal. Ben has a replacement vehicle which he loves, and it looks like the insurance company has finally agreed to replace our roof. It is funny how I thought about materialism a great deal while in Bolivia—how much we have; how little others have—how privileged our kids are; how underprivileged most kids in the world are in comparison. The tornado was a reminder that material things are temporal; we should always be searching for things that are more lasting. That is why Ben and I both will be returning to Bolivia!

My Path to Two Mission Trips to Uganda

By Mandy Daniel
Western Heights Baptist Church
Short-term Mission Team Member

I love these people. I love these children. They are my children, but truthfully, they are yours, too. Most importantly, they are God's children.

Uganda began to become a part of my heart when I met William Nsubuga for the first time. He spoke to our Sunday School class, sharing his testimony and his heart, and I was moved. My husband and I left church that day, and his comment was, "Well, do we sponsor one or two?" We knew we wanted to support William and Agape Total Childcare, but we took no immediate action. A year later, some of our dearest friends had made the first trip to Agape. They came, again, to our Sunday School class to share, and my heart was heavy. We began to sponsor a girl in the orphanage, and with a second trip brewing, I was burdened to go.

Jason and I have four children. He works as a UPS man and has an hour commute each way. I stay at home with our children and homeschool them. They range in age from 7 to 13. We are active in our homeschool community and our church community. I am also a home-based photographer. We have no free time! We have enough money to meet our needs and some special occasions. How could I ask Jason to leave for 12 days to go across the world on a trip costing thousands of dollars?

The Lord does not start something He does not intend to finish. As I wrestled with the drive to go and the pressure to stay, it became harder and harder to manage emotionally. One night as I was irritable and moody (the product of the wrestling), Jason asked what was wrong.

"I want to go to Africa!" I blurted. He answered, "Okay," as if why haven't you said something sooner? We began the process of praying for the answers to all the questions that come for a mother of a young family to take an expensive trip.



Winifred, Mandy and Milly have formed lifelong bonds with one another. This year, Mandy took her 12-year-old daughter to Uganda on her first mission trip!

Jason was able to swap his vacation time from work to stay with our kids. Check. Money? We had not planned on this expense. I knew the money would have to be all God, and I would go down whatever path He pointed me. The deposit was due the next Sunday. I had a business opportunity on Saturday, and I thought that would answer whether I went or not. I was praying to make for the exact amount of the deposit. However, we were at a social with friends Friday night, some of whom were considering making the trip. They told us that they were not going to go because they felt the timing was not right for their family. I was very disappointed. I was looking forward to sharing this experience with them. They proceeded to tell Jason and me that since they were not going, they wanted to sponsor my trip!

The tears flowed – after the gasp – and I stood in amazement as the Lord decided to pour the blessing of His resources out on me at one time. I was praying in faith for a deposit, and He paid the entire bill before it was due. The open and generous hearts of His children made it possible. That is the way He works, you know, through His children. Yes, sometimes it is a miraculous, fall-from-the-sky, never-could-have-happened, kind of working, but most of the time He allows us the blessing of being a part of His work if we are willing and watching.

This is the beginning of my story with Uganda and Agape. There are several more chapters, and I hope many more to come. I wanted to share this part to encourage those who have a desire to be involved in a personal kind of way, but may not know how it will happen.

I will tell you that this year's trip did not happen the same way. We worked for it, saved for it, and some was sponsored – but that was for my daughter's trip. My 12-year-old went with me this year on my second trip, her first. That was indeed a blessing, and to pay for 2 trips on a single income was definitely an order of the Lord. On this trip, though, we met an amazing woman who told us her strong belief that whoever orders, pays. When the Lord places an order, He, through all different kinds of means, will pay the bill!

Do you want to join or lead a SIFAT mission team?

Visit www.sifat.org/international-missions for dates and project sites.
Contact Peggy Walker, walkerp@sifat.org, for more info!

Milly and Elvis Attend Lafayette Christian School in Exchange Program

Katie Firth
Western Heights Baptist Church
Team Member

This year, Agape Christian Academy partnered with LaFayette Christian School in LaGrange, Ga., in the first exchange program between the two schools. Agape sent two students from Uganda to attend LCS for one year. The students have shocked us with their seamless transition and their academic achievements. LCS is a SACS and ACSI accredited school offering college prep, honors and AP courses to its upper school students.

Agape Christian Academy is in its first year and is in the process of being accredited. The mission teams traveling to Uganda have been very encouraged by the children's hard work and determination. Amazingly, the Agape students have fit

right in socially and have a large circle of friends. They are involved in fine arts, athletics and other extra-curricular activities. You would never guess they were new to the school and certainly would not imagine that they came from an entirely different culture and economic situation. They were well prepared socially, emotionally and spiritually to make such a huge transition.



With only the first semester under our belts, we have been all the more impressed with the education and work ethic that the children are receiving. Milly, Elvis and Lillian (an Agape student who was recently adopted) have all three made all A's with two high B's (one 89 and one 87) on their report cards.

Lillian has a 98 in Honors Statistics and has been praised by her teacher as overworking. Ms. Camp, the statistics teacher, commented that when assigning homework, most students would take a page of notes, but Lillian would have five pages. "I finally had to tell her she may be overdoing it a tad." Ms. Camp shared. The rave reviews from LCS only solidifies the quality job that William Nsubuga and the staff at Agape Christian Academy are doing in the lives of these children.

Team Builds Teachers' Quarters

This year's Uganda team from Western Heights Baptist Church in LaGrange, Ga., helped construct new teachers' living quarters for Agape Christian Academy (ACA).

The school's teachers currently use more than half of their salaries commuting to and from work. By providing housing, ACA will be able to hire and keep quality teachers, providing a better education to both the orphans of Agape Total Childcare Center and the boarding and day school students attending ACA.

Additionally, the team held VBS sessions, taught several classes as visiting instructors and spent time mentoring the students and staff of Agape.

Team members enjoyed seeing their "children" while worshipping and working together after a year apart. For this annual team, returning to Agape is like visiting their extended family!





Fall 2013

Connecting Youth with Agriculture

Hillary Tully

Learn & Serve Agriculture Coordinator

Hillary Tully, a Florida State University graduate and returning Learn & Serve staff member, spent this summer connecting Learn & Serve students to the produce and agriculture on SIFAT's campus as a way to incorporate appropriate technology and lifelong learning into our programs.

During the Learn & Serve (L&S) summer experience, any mention of the word blueberries resulted in a roar of enthusiastic cheering. Each week, participants picked gallons of blueberries from the bushes on SIFAT's campus and enjoyed them in their meals in the cafeteria. Some students had never eaten blueberries before, while others did not know they grew on a bush. For many, it was exciting to harvest and eat their own food.

While the students were in the Global Village, I helped them pick peppers, squash, herbs, spinach and tomatoes, which they cooked over their fires and ate for dinner. This connected the students to rural people around the world who do the same for their meals.

In the cafeteria, every meal featured at least one item grown at SIFAT. While students enjoyed the squash casserole, blueberry muffins, cucumber salad and more, we tried to emphasize the importance of eating food grown here, picked by people we know were paid fair wages.

The vegetables and other plants grown at SIFAT were also connected to our curriculum. Every Monday, we taught appropriate technologies that SIFAT teaches its international students. Two



Hillary Tully (far right) spent the summer helping youth connect appropriate technologies and agriculture into meaningful, tangible experiences. Hillary also helped SIFAT gardener John Carr take care of the campus gardens and pick vegetables.

of the classes focused on agriculture. In one class, students learned how to use potato sacks to make a small, mobile and highly productive food garden. In another class, we taught students Leaf for Life, a way for people with insecure access to nutritious food to maintain their health by growing and eating certain plants' leaves, like the sweet potato, cowpea, malabar spinach and others. Through these lessons, students came to understand that intimidating issues like world hunger have simple solutions that they can learn and even teach!

I loved seeing our students interact with the land, getting their hands dirty building sack gardens and eating green beans I helped grow and pick. L&S's integration of agriculture has been a beautiful image of the ways that God so faithfully provides for us in our own cafeteria, in slums and villages across the world, and in the simple mystery of good and beautiful things coming out of the dirt.



Schedule Your Retreat Now!

www.sifat.org/learn-serve

Groups are already scheduling winter and spring retreats! Learn & Serve (L&S) programming offers experiences for all age groups. Visit the SIFAT website for retreat options and pricing.

Questions? Contact Mary Corson, learnandserve@sifat.org, for available dates and more information.



Global Village Grows — India and Nigeria Houses Built by SIFAT Graduates and Volunteers

Our Global Village is growing! This summer, two new houses were completed in our village. The Nigeria house complements a previous house representing the area by showing other building materials used in the country, while the India house adds a third country to our Asia region. Both houses were designed by graduates of the Practicum, our annual international training program, and were built by a combination of work teams, volunteers and Learn & Serve Summer 2013 and retreat participants. We are excited to begin using them in upcoming programming!



Learn & Serve intern Abbye Clevenger prepares the new India house in our Global Village for a Learn & Serve retreat. The India house makes the third country represented in the Asia portion of the Village.



L&S youth participants help SIFAT summer staff put the roof on the Nigeria house. We now have two houses representing Nigeria in the Global Village!

Holiday Gift Ideas!

As you start shopping this holiday season, please remember SIFAT!

Dec. 3 - #GivingTuesday

Have you heard about #GivingTuesday? After Black Friday and Cyber Monday, this day of giving is aimed at supporting nonprofits. The UMC has 200 percent matching funds available for Advance Specials on this day only. Donate on our Advance page (#982812) to double your gift!

www.umcmission.org/Give-to-Mission/Search-for-Projects/Projects/982812

Matching funds begin at 12 a.m. Dec. 3 EST (that's 11 p.m. Dec. 2 for CST), and we encourage you to donate early because only \$500,000 total is available for all Advance Specials combined.

Goodshop.com and iGive.com

Retailers offer a percentage of your purchase as a donation to your favorite charity - SIFAT! Go to goodshop.com or iGive.com to find coupon codes and shop from your favorite stores (you'll be automatically redirected to the retailers' sites).

Gifts in Honor or Memory

Not sure what to get the person who has everything? Give a gift to SIFAT in honor or memory of your family and friends. When you send your donation, include a name and address for an acknowledgment card. You can donate to the SIFAT General Fund or to a specific project in which this person is interested or with which this person has a connection.

Understanding Missions through Experience

Adelaide Dunn
Learn & Serve Participant

Learn & Serve (L&S), one of the most brilliant ideas of which I have ever heard, works under the premise that once you know and respect the life of another, you can more compassionately and productively benefit his or her life. The SIFAT staff creates an authentic experience that mimics the struggles of those living in Two-thirds World countries and refugee camps. Once we have gone through the experience, we are better equipped to serve those living in these situations every day.

While at SIFAT, I learned that the key to helping these people is the use of appropriate technology, or using tools that can be easily found to relieve a need as opposed to using a technology that would be unhelpful to the people in that community. For example, Addison Shock,



L&S students learned to build fuel-efficient stoves and sack gardens in their appropriate technology training this summer.

L&S program director, explained that while we could send iPads to Ecuador, this would not help grow vegetables that could feed a family and save money for purchasing other market goods. An iPad would not be appropriate, but a sack garden would. We spent a day learning different appropriate technologies.

My favorite was the fuel-efficient stove. One of SIFAT's international trainers came to speak to us on these "miracle" stoves and the benefits they have for women and children in developing countries. Young girls were missing school to help their mothers gather firewood for the traditional stove, and the mother would spend all day cooking a meal and breathing in smoke. Mothers would have time for nothing else, and many would die from smoke inhalation and related diseases, the fourth leading cause of death for women and children in these countries. Fuel-efficient stoves keep in both heat and smoke, ridding the need for so much firewood, bringing the girls back to school. Food cooks much faster, allowing mothers more time for other chores. It also keeps the smoke out of their lungs, saving their lives. Hearing that surprised me!

SIFAT gave me a glimpse at understanding the lives of the poor around the world by living in an impoverished house, cooking on a traditional stove, living in a refugee camp and relocating to a slum. I experienced firsthand what people go through daily. After cooking on a traditional stove, I got the chance to see the difference a fuel-efficient stove makes when we were taken from our temporary home to a refugee camp in the middle of the night, like millions of others living in countries of political unrest. We slept through the night

and woke to find the day wet and rainy. A few families banded together, deciding to build one fire to cook all of our meals. We quickly realized we had the chance to use our newly acquired stove technology. We found adobe bricks lying around, built our stove and started cooking. I immediately noticed the difference! Though the stove had no mortar, our fire lit and held. We did not have to use nearly as much firewood as we did with the traditional stove. Best of all, I did not feel as though my lungs were drowning in smoke.

The second half of the week was devoted to the "serve" portion of L&S. My church group and I got to visit County Road 88, a Hispanic community that SIFAT has been serving for the past seven years. While playing games, coloring and jumping on the trampoline with a little girl calling herself Dora, I contemplated how simply being with someone was serving them. To me, serving someone involved providing a tangible service or the technology to provide that service for themselves. It took most of the day and a conversation with my team to realize that serving others, or "missions", is simply giving up yourself for the betterment of another.

L&S gives each person a chance to both learn and serve; all while presenting information on how to keep serving and learning once we return home. Since coming home, I have found that not only can I explain appropriate technologies, I also feel prepared to serve others in tangible and intangible ways. Addison told us not to feel guilty for having the life we have, but to feel responsible for those that do not. Responsibility is a heavy feeling, but when equipped with the right tools, I feel ready to serve anyone.

My Year as a Learn & Serve Intern

Hamp Price
2012-2013 Intern

I thought I knew what I was getting myself into when I committed to being an intern for SIFAT's Learn & Serve (L&S) program for an entire year. I was wrong.

From being involved with L&S previously, I understood the programming. I had a knowledge of SIFAT, and I knew the people under whom I would be working. As it turns out, that is not much.

This experience has been one of the most challenging, growth-inspiring, frustrating, exciting and rewarding experiences of my life. Let's visit the reasons for this:

I love nature. I love the outdoors. I love rural areas. This does not mean I was prepared to move from a major university to the bustling metropolis of Wedowee, Ala. Having grown up in a small town and heroically moved away, I was both at-home and out-of-place. Soon, I learned to love the things sleepy towns have to offer—except on Sundays, when most things are closed.

I love people. I love meeting new friends. This does not mean that it was easy to pare down my work and civilian relationships to a very small number of folks. I am incredibly thankful that our team was composed of people from all walks of life: an artist who challenged the status quo, a worship leader who was definitely the life of the party, an engineer who always wanted to play and myself. Sure, we may have gotten along better if we



Learn & Serve program director Addison Shock (center) depended on four interns this past year to host fall and spring retreats, as well as the summer experience. We love our interns! Left to right: Hamp Price, Beth Rhodes, Michael Martin and Faniel Pradel

were all alike, but would we have grown as much and learned to appreciate each other? Probably not. I learned more about encouragement, selflessness and grace from the other interns than they probably know. The office I am sitting in while writing this is too quiet without them.

I love youth. I love college students. I love teaching them valuable lessons about the world. This does not mean it was always easy to wake up at 5 a.m. to cook breakfast in our Global Village with a group of seventh graders. L&S programs, such as our Global Village Experience, Urban Slum Experience and Refugee Camp Experience, are amazing opportunities for young (and old!) people to learn about the world around them. These experiences are just as challenging on staff members, and we facilitate multiple groups a week. I learned that the Lord requires us to put forth our whole effort for Him, whether it is our first retreat of the season or the final session of our summer program. I also learned that no matter how many times you have done something, if you commit to doing it to the best of your ability you will still learn and grow. But that still does not mean it is always fun.

I could probably go on forever listing examples of times when all my expectations and walls came crumbling (often comically) down. Would I encourage every young person to intern with L&S? Probably not. But if you are willing to learn, willing to be challenged both professionally and personally and willing to be very vulnerable, then there is no doubt in my mind that the L&S Internship will teach you everything you wanted to learn—and more.

Learn & Serve Program Interns Needed!

Are you interested in being a part of Learn & Serve's ministry here in the United States? Are you graduating from college and looking for a meaningful learning experience?

L&S is accepting applications for interns. Information and applications can be found at www.sifat.org/learn-serve.



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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

Have you ever thought about what the world would be like without bridges? At SIFAT, we know by experience, since we lost our bridge some 18 months ago. The Mad Indian Creek divides our campus, making it very difficult to get from our dormitories and program areas to our classrooms and cafeteria. We are truly fortunate to have friends and supporters that came together to help SIFAT reconnect our campus. Today, we thank God for our new bridge, and we thank every one of you who helped us build it!

Some of you also helped SIFAT build one of the longest suspended pedestrian bridge of this type in the world. It connects 25 communities—more than 10,000 people in the Andes of Bolivia—to a church, a school, outside markets to sell their goods and medical care for the first time in history. When the bridge was completed, the joy of those isolated villagers was beyond my words to describe, and all of us who

participated in building this bridge shared their joy.

In our world, there are many different kinds of bridges. There are rivers of need that divide and isolate the people of our world...physical need, spiritual need, emotional need, economic need, social need. Those rivers are deep and treacherous, bringing much pain and isolation. God has called His people to be the bridges to connect us with each other and with Him.

SIFAT aims to be a bridge to connect those who are lost with a Savior...those who are lonely with someone who cares... those in need with those who can help... those who are longing for purpose and meaning with God. Thank you for your part in helping SIFAT build

the new bridge on Galilee Campus. May we also count on you in our efforts to build other bridges, bridges that will allow people all over the world to meet their basic human needs?

