

# SIFAT Journal



Sharing God's Love in Practical Ways

Summer/Fall 2014

## 35 Years Training God's People for Service

Tom Corson  
Executive Director

Ephesians 4:11-13 tells us how God equips us to be apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers to prepare all God's people for the work of Christian service to build up the body of Christ. Preparing God's people for Christian service is what SIFAT is about.

Recently, I was visiting with Pastor Raphael and his wife Anita at a SIFAT construction site in Ecuador. He was excited to show us the progress our SIFAT teams had accomplished at the church facilities, allowing their church to accept another 200 impoverished children in an after-school program. As we walked, Raphael shared some recent exchanges with the new children that would be joining our program. When asked what they aspired to be when they grew up, one responded, "I want to join a gang." Another said, "I want to be a prostitute," while another wanted to be a drug dealer. The children's ideas are based on their current role models in the neighborhood where they live. What a stark contrast to the older children that have been part of this after-school program for several years. When asked what they wanted to be one said, "I want to study international business." Others wanted to be a teacher, social worker, engineer or a pastor. What a difference these 2,000 children in the after-school programs that SIFAT has made possible are going to make as they develop into positive members of their communities.

I have heard the testimonies of our SIFAT graduates from Honduras. Some were planning to leave their families and

homes out of desperation and immigrate to the United States. Now, with the confidence they gained through SIFAT training seminars in their villages, they have hope and are staying in their communities, working toward making them a place where children can grow up and develop into adults with the desire to be of service to God and others in their own hometowns.



*Back row: John Carr, Terry Haynes, Peggy Walker, Trey Reed, Diana Cline, Nancy Marg. Front Row: Marie Lanier, Tom Corson, Becca Griffin, Abbye Clevenger, William Nsubuga. Not pictured: David Beck, Kathy Bryson, Mary Corson, Tammie Knight, Donna Medforth, Kara Medforth, Ivan Roman and Justin Worthy*

I just came across a SIFAT article dated July 1993. The article tells a story of one of our graduates, Felipe Churata, a faithful pastor who served with us in Bolivia, whom many of you have supported and kept in your prayers. In a picture, Felipe's wife Rupertina is carrying their small daughter Rebecca in the traditional Aymaran blanket on her back. This year, with the help of SIFAT supporters, Felipe's baby girl Rebecca, now an adult, will graduate from dental school. She plans to work with us and Dr. Ruth Noemi, another SIFAT graduate, in Quesimpuco serving some of the neediest people of South America.

SIFAT Graduate William Nsubuga has started a home and a Christian School for 43 HIV/AIDS orphans and 120 boarding students in Uganda. These teenagers, many that literally came off the streets, now have hope and are making plans to be doctors, nurses, engineers, preachers and teachers. William and his dedicated staff are another example of SIFAT preparing God's people in Uganda for service. This Thanksgiving season as we at SIFAT celebrate our 35 years of "Sharing God's Love in Practical Ways," we are deeply thankful for those of you who have been part of our efforts to build up the body of Christ at home and around the world.



# Summer/Fall 2014

## SIFAT Beginnings...

Ken and Sarah Corson  
SIFAT Co-founders

How did SIFAT come to be?

The Corson family came home to Alabama on January 1, 1979, after two years of living among malnourished, suffering people in Bolivia. Hundreds of churches opened their pulpits to hear their story. Ken called a meeting for those who wanted to help change some of this poverty under which millions of people live. Sixty people from three states gathered at Wedowee First United Methodist Church on May 26 to share, think, pray, discuss and try to find a way to do something to help change the world. By the end of the day, all agreed that we should start an organization called SIFAT.

Sandy Holiday, a lawyer, wrote up the incorporation papers for a nonprofit Christian organization. On July 12, 1979, SIFAT was legally born under the official name of Southern Institute for Appropriate Technology. However, at one of the early board meetings, Owene Godsey suggested that the acronym SIFAT stand for two names. She suggested Servants in Faith and Technology. This became the name by which most people have known SIFAT during our 35 years.

This year, SIFAT begins developing another part of our organization, a part we envisioned from the beginning, but have only this year been able to start... the Basic Needs Institute (BNI). It will use the original name Southern Institute for Appropriate Technology and will be an integrated part of SIFAT. Servants in Faith and Technology will continue to provide opportunities for churches and the faith community to learn more about the needs of a hurting world and to become involved in putting their faith into action in practical ways to help others. Southern Institute for Appropriate Technology through BNI will focus on appropriate technologies in a community development context and will work with educational institutions and international development agencies, in addition to SIFAT church and community leader graduates around the world in 90 countries. Both Servants in Faith and Technology and Southern Institute for Appropriate Technology are integrated in SIFAT by carrying out its purposes in different contexts.

## Commemorative 35th Anniversary Brick Fund Raiser

Since 1979, SIFAT has shared God's love in practical ways with the poor in our world. Without our donors and supporters, this could not have been possible! To celebrate these 35 years, we are building a commemorative patio and fire pit alongside the beautiful Mad Indian Creek on our international campus in Lineville, Ala.

What better way to create lasting memories than by honoring or memorializing your friends and loved ones with an engraved brick that will become a part of this new patio. For the perfect college graduation or Christmas present, consider a gift that will make a difference ... a gift that will help SIFAT continue its ministry to improve the daily lives of the poor throughout the world.

Please order your commemorative brick today to help reach our goal of 1,800 bricks needed for SIFAT's new patio! Celebrate a special event in someone's life, honor a friend or family member and memorialize someone special.

Bricks cost \$75 or \$125, and all profits from this fund raiser will benefit SIFAT. You can purchase bricks online at [www.bricksrus.com/order/sifat](http://www.bricksrus.com/order/sifat).

For more information or help placing your order, contact Marie Lanier, [lanierm@sifat.org](mailto:lanierm@sifat.org), or 256.396.2015 ext. 222.

### SIFAT Celebrates 35 Years in 2014! Be a Part of our Future!

Become a SHAREholder of SIFAT by giving monthly. Visit [www.sifat.org](http://www.sifat.org) or contact Marie Lanier, [lanierm@sifat.org](mailto:lanierm@sifat.org), for more information.

Give to the Sarah Fund, an endowment used to help offset staff salaries, so that more of our resources go directly to international training and projects. Designate your donation *Sarah Fund*.

## Training with YWAM in Zambia

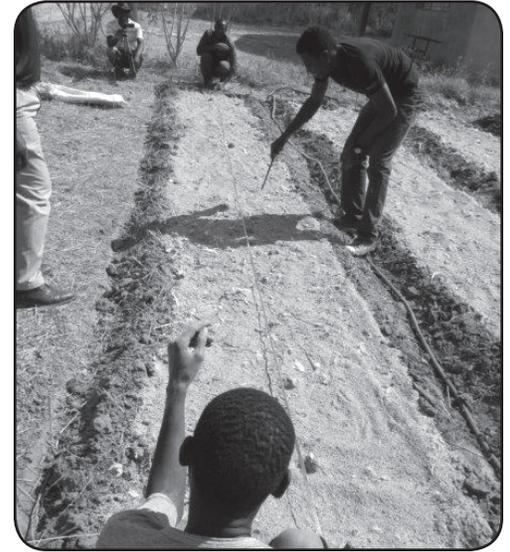
Letson Kachoronga  
Zambia Project Coordinator

We thank God for a successful four-day training seminar at YWAM training base in Lusaka West. I was encouraged when I met Kate Muammar (YWAM staff), and she proposed a training in conservation agriculture, as well as other appropriate technologies we teach at SIFAT.

It was so encouraging to see people participating both in class and in the hands-on sessions. Looking at the questions people asked during the training showed me that they were eager to learn, since it was their first time to learn about the rocket

stove and Foundations for Farming.

The most important thing that I am seeing now is that most people who attended the training have started to put what they learned into practice. I am continuing to visit the farms of some of the participants. The rocket stove is having an impact on the people who came for the training, especially with the level of deforestation here in Zambia. The participants were surprised with the small amount of wood needed when using a fuel-efficient cook stove. We received positive feedback from the participants and hope to continue this partnership in the future.



## Alumni Update: Sebastien and Liliane in DRC

Jacqui Pollock  
DRC Project Supporter

Sebastien, Liliane, Joya and Sahante did what most immigrants to the United States would find to be unthinkable. In August 2013, the Kiwele family returned to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) to live in a remote village in the southeastern corner of DRC to help the returning refugee community.

During the war in DRC, Sebastien was targeted for death because of his education and training in rural development. After

living in a refugee camp in Zambia, Sebastien and Liliane were granted amnesty in the USA in 2003 and later became citizens. Joya and Sahante were born here, but Sebastien and Liliane's hearts remained burdened to help those who would return from refugee camps to the jungle—a generation without training or education. The Kiweles are assisting more than 10,000 people, so that they, too, can have the basic necessities for life and have hope for a better tomorrow for their children.

Sebastien and Liliane are planning Fube's first Community Thanksgiving and Evangelistic Campaign. A meal will be shared, but the primary focus will be to give thanks and acknowledge God's continual protection and blessing on Fube, which the people are choosing to call New Jerusalem! Sebastien and Liliane want to refocus those in the community back on the goodness of God and to give thanks for all that He has done for those who lost

everything to war, but can have a future filled with hope.

**How can you help the Kiwele family plan and build this new village?** Many immediate needs have arisen. Two plans for self-sustainability have failed because of political and governmental roadblocks. A farm is their best option, especially because Joya has developed severe allergies to the local food. They will sell the surplus to support their family, but first must buy livestock, additional land and hire two laborers. Until the farm is producing, they must have meals for four months. Their current house is too small for a family, so they are adding a small addition. The main road—72 miles through the jungle to the nearest town in Zambia—was built by the villagers. However, with the rainy season approaching, they must make repairs to keep the one-lane road passable, so the community is not isolated for months. A total of \$3,400 will pay for these urgently needed projects. Designate *DRC* on gifts.





# Summer/Fall 2014

## Training on the Galilee Campus in Alabama

Sarah Corson  
SIFAT Co-founder

This year, SIFAT's training department has offered more sessions than ever before! In April, a new course was given for 14 professional Haitians who have started their own nonprofit to improve their country's public educational system. The class focused on educational strategies in community development. We worked with professional educators from the College of Education at Auburn University to expose our students to the latest in educational methods and psychology in a classroom setting. The director of the Alabama Cooperative Extension System and his key state assistants for training met with our students to share the value of helping communities develop through extension.

In May, SIFAT had an intensive training with the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) and the Agricultural University of Honduras (UNA). We incorporated our local Guatemalan community in several activities, which provided an additional dimension to the program. Not only did we meet our educational objectives for six hours of graduate school credit, but the students also bonded in a profound way. Going through the Learn & Serve Slum Experience together and giving the internationals an opportunity to share about their personal life experiences with hunger and poverty was an incredibly eye-opening experience for the American students. This context helped everyone understand the importance of appropriate technologies they were learning.

In August, a one-week course on Impacting Global Health and Poverty with Fuel-efficient Cookstoves was offered for academic credit to UAB students. They were joined by several international students. SIFAT's global trainer from Nigeria, Raphael, was the key technical instructor for making these fuel-efficient stoves.

Our Fall Training in September/October included Christian workers from Uganda, Nigeria, Haiti and both African and U.S. missionaries to Bangladesh. In October, we received a group of 51 students and professors from UNA. Half of them were with us for a week-long training, while the other half joined us for the last three days. In November, we hosted a group from UAB Sparkman Center for Global Health in a one-day intensive practicum. This year has been a year of growth as our training has extended to new groups of students and in new courses offered. We are excited to continue with this momentum in 2015!



*Above: SIFAT gardener John Carr, center, led an agricultural class in making a compost pile.*



*Left: Students make small models of a PVC water pump to take home with them.*



*Honduran students try the nutritious drink they learned to prepare from widely available and cost-efficient concentrated leaf protein. Designed to alleviate malnutrition in children, this class was taught by Therese and Dave Kennedy, directors of Leaf for Life.*

## Update on International Training

Sarah Corson  
SIFAT Co-founder

Dr. Byron Morales, SIFAT program director for Central America and the Caribbean, continues his ongoing international training sessions. One group of 50 community leaders has just graduated from a 3-year program in community development and appropriate technologies in Honduras. Three other groups are studying there now. In Haiti, a group of 30 will graduate in December.

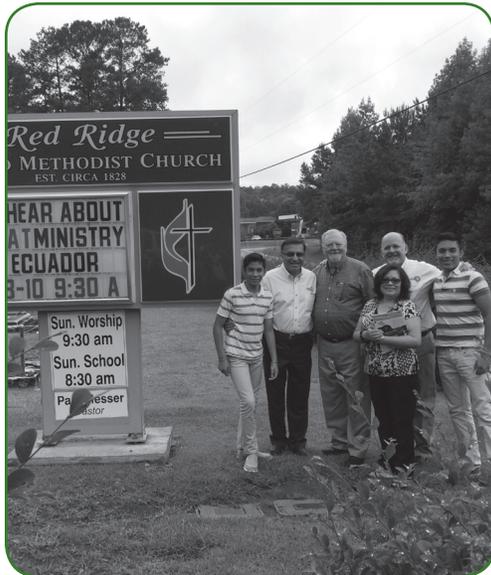
These programs involve leaders attending an intensive workshop quarterly, and then going back to their communities to

put it into action. They repeat the process until they finish three years of study with practice.

SIFAT also has a cadre of Global Trainers chosen from our graduates who have specialized expertise and are willing to share this with other SIFAT students in international trainings. This year, our Haitian graduates have led several community agricultural workshops, while our graduates in the Philippines have been conducting community trainings for years. We are thankful for God's leading so many wonderful committed leaders to study with us and then to reproduce this training in their own countries.



## International Directors Visit USA



*In August, Dr. Roberto Contreras, his wife Monica and their sons, Josue and Esteben, visited many churches to share SIFAT Ecuador's 2015 mission team opportunities in Calderon. They are pictured here with SIFAT executive director Tom Corson and Red Ridge UMC pastor Paul Messer.*



*William Nsubuga, founder of Agape Total Childcare Center in Uganda, spoke to groups in Louisiana, Alabama and Georgia during October and November to raise funds to build the boys' dormitory. Seniors at Whitesburg Christian Academy prayed over William and Agape after he spoke at their chapel service.*



*Isaac Paredes, director of CENATEC in Bolivia, is preparing teams for next year's projects in Quesimpuco. He has been at SIFAT for almost all of October and November speaking in churches to raise funds for these projects.*



# Summer/Fall 2014

## SIFAT Mission Teams: Then and Now

Sarah Corson  
SIFAT Co-founder

### Looking Back

SIFAT took our first team in 1980 to a remote, impoverished jungle area in Bolivia to work under our Bolivian co-worker Benjo. Twenty-five people went on the team and became part of the community during the two months they stayed. They joined in the church and community work in small projects. The teams we took when we first began in the '80's could not point to many specific projects they finished. Rather, the small things they did served to build bridges of understanding between the two cultures.

Our files record the following description of what was accomplished by this first team. "Special services were held in 10 of the 13 churches in the Alto Beni, which entailed hours of traveling over incredibly rough roads to reach them. A two-week Bible School was taught to more than 60 children, plus Bible classes to the Methodist women's annual District Retreat. Midweek services were held in homes, and those who were newly converted received more in-depth individualized Bible training. A tape ministry was initiated with appropriate technology tape recorders, which operated from a hand crank as electricity was not available. They were given to isolated churches in areas so remote that preachers only came in a few times a year for services. With each recorder, tapes of the New Testament and of native hymns were given in the language the specific tribe spoke. This project reached many who could not read or write or understand the local Spanish preacher who came occasionally.



*On a recent trip to Quesimpuco, SIFAT's Trey Reed showed local community members how to build a fuel-efficient cookstove. Many of the more remote villages surrounding Quesimpuco are now asking SIFAT teams to come into their communities.*

The team made no distinction between religious and social work. They shared the Love of God in practical ways in the integrated Gospel. The distinction between the sacred and the secular collapsed as all of life became sacred and every cup of the scarce potable water was given in the name of Christ.

The sick were visited. Nutrition classes were taught. Medicines were taken and given to the ill. Those who had no access to medical care were treated by two paramedics and two nurses on the team. When a mother became sick and was taken to the capital city to a hospital, team members cared for her children.

Sewing, crocheting and other handiwork were taught to women and girls in the village. A wood-burning pottery kiln was built for the homesteaders to make their own water pots, so they could boil the polluted water. The team members worked with our local hosts mixing clay, molding and firing bricks in a homemade kiln for a new church building.

Models of traps for wild animals were built, tested and proved effective for providing meat and for protecting their crops and chickens from destructive animals. A lot of time was spent clearing the jungle, experimenting with new seed to help in the malnutrition of the area. Five varieties of amaranth were tried, and four proved to be well-suited to the Alto Beni area. This grain has more protein than any other. Since our first team lasted two months, they participated in many smaller village projects and were not focused on any one main large project.

These team members felt they received so much more from becoming part of this community than they could ever give. One teenage team member said, "I'm afraid to go home. I have changed so much my friends won't understand me. The latest fads and fashions aren't important any more. I have been part of a people struggling to survive and things I used to live for are not relevant any more."

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# SIFAT Journal



## Mission Teams

(Continued from page 6)

Today

SIFAT calls the groups who go to help our graduates with their projects Short-Term Teams for Long-Term Development. SIFAT graduates go back to their homes to put into practice things they have learned to help their churches and communities develop. When they have done all they can do on their own, they can write a proposal to SIFAT to bring teams to help them. Our teams serve under our local graduates at their request and invitation. Our teams do not go to give handouts, but rather to be one part of the long-term development of the local people. And like our first teams, the teams today find they usually develop much more than anyone else.

Today, more than 2000 children in Ecuador who were unprotected and hungry on the streets of the slums until their mothers got home from work at night, now have day care. The local churches are able to provide loving care, a good meal, educational activities and Christian training. But they had no place to invite the children in, until SIFAT teams built the facilities.

In Uganda, our graduate William has established Agape Total Childcare Center

for 43 orphans and a Christian high school with dorms to teach many more who had no school near them. William could not have done it without teams from SIFAT.

In Bolivia, teams have provided water for irrigation for many families who want to develop their agriculture, but could not because of a previous lack of water. Both have something significant to contribute and to share with the other. Teams have worked together with Bolivian communities to develop education, health and church programs. Thousands of very poor people have been able to develop their lives, their churches and their communities to give them much healthier and happier lives because of SIFAT teams.

Today, teams usually stay a week to 10 days, but they are focused on a specific project. Each team builds on the work the last team did, all working under the local leader toward the same goal, until the project is finished. In this way, we can see the big difference teams can make. Today, hundreds of people can experience this type of cross-cultural mission in one summer, compared to just 25 who were able to be in mission with us the first summer.

Teams today may choose to go to remote places like the first team to Bolivia, or

they may choose to work in slum areas where they can return at night to sleep in a hotel or in a comfortable African thatched roof house with hot water. The point about missions is not how hard or how destitute the people we go to serve are. The point in mission is that anywhere there is a lost soul, a lonely heart, someone who feels left out, there is our mission field. The mission field may be among the poor and the hungry, or it may be among the rich whose walls of wealth isolate them from others. It may be in a thatched roof hut or in a mansion. It may be across the sea or in our own home.

Our mission is to share God's love in practical ways. It is a mutual sharing. We become one in Christ as all of us together share the integrated Gospel of Jesus Christ with each other. Truly, our teams today are Short-Term Teams for Long-Term Development.

**SIFAT Mission Teams**  
[www.sifat.org/international-missions](http://www.sifat.org/international-missions)

We are already scheduling teams for 2015! Don't miss opportunities to serve alongside SIFAT graduates in Bolivia, Ecuador, Uganda or Zambia! Contact Peggy Walker, [walkerp@sifat.org](mailto:walkerp@sifat.org), for details and to register your team.





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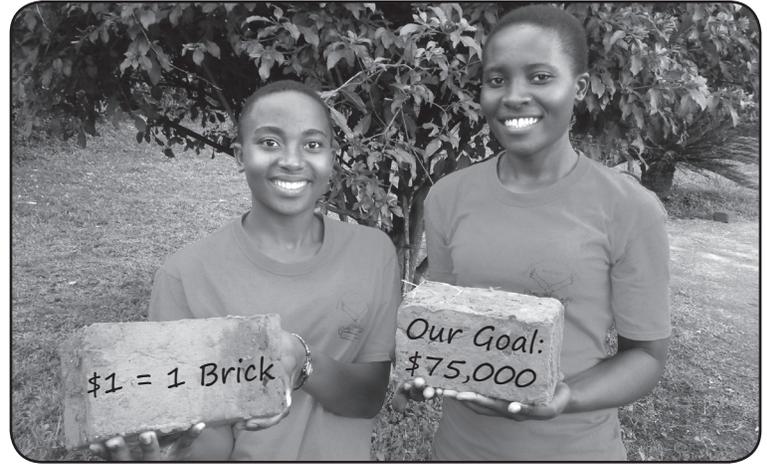
## Agape Needs a Boys' Dorm

Agape Total Childcare Center, which now includes an orphanage and school, in Mukono, Uganda, must build a boys' dormitory! To reach its goal of being self sustaining, Agape opened a Christian secondary school, where day and boarding students can attend. A boys' dorm will house not only Agape children, but also boarding students who pay tuition. The temporary housing for the boys is too small, which puts Agape's accreditation with the department of education in jeopardy.

**Be part of Agape!** The staff and students are already making adobe bricks as their contribution to the dormitory. Your monetary gift for the new dorm will pay for the other materials and labor required to complete this building in time for the 2015 school year, which begins in February!

**Matching Funds**—An anonymous donor will match donations up to \$10,000! You can double your contribution to help reach Agape's goal of \$75,000.

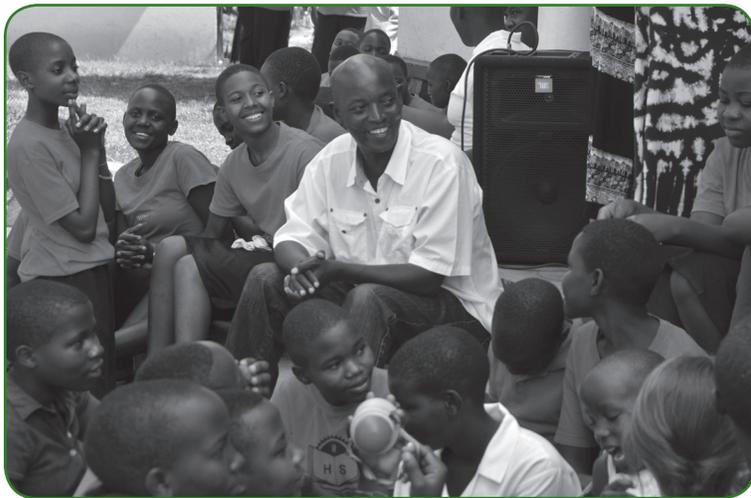
**\$1 supports 1 brick!** Get your Sunday School class, youth group or civic organization involved. For a \$1 donation, you can sponsor a brick. Think of the lasting impact it will have on the Agape children and Agape Christian Academy students! We are continuing to see youth come to Christ and having new hope for their futures.



*Felister and Reginah are holding 2 of the 10,000 bricks the Agape children have made. They are doing their part to build the boys' dorm. Please help them by donating to finish this much-needed building!*

**Sponsors Needed** — Make your Christmas giving special this year by sponsoring a child at Agape in honor of a friend or family member. For only \$60 per month, you will change a child's life! Contact Peggy Walker, [walkerp@sifat.org](mailto:walkerp@sifat.org), for info.

Mail donations to SIFAT, 2944 County Road 113, Lineville, AL 36266. Please designate *Agape—Dorm* on the memo line.



*William Nsubuga, founder of Agape Total Childcare Center, has been in the USA visiting churches and individuals to share about his ministry at Agape and raise money for the new boys' dorm. Agape Total Childcare Center now includes the orphanage, Christian secondary school and a farm. Agape has a goal to be self sustaining two years after the boys' dorm is completed.*



*Two teams are already planning their 2015 trips. In 2014, teams held a VBS-style day camp for the community, taught classes at ACA and worked on construction projects. Both teams were part of special baptism services for the children, including Muslim students, who made the decision to follow Christ!*

## Ecuador Projects Partner with Compassion

Peggy Walker  
International Mission Team Coordinator

SIFAT continued its partnership with Compassion International in Ecuador to build the facilities required to provide an after-school program for more than 2000 children. Working with Pastor Rafael and his wife, SIFAT graduate Anita, in the marginalized urban slums of Villaflores, our 2014 short-term mission teams were able to complete the third and fourth floors in what is slated to become the second largest Compassion project in Ecuador. An additional 100 children on the waiting list can be brought into the after-school program at Villaflores immediately, and another 100 will be added from their outreach ministries in Guamani and Machachi. All of these new children will be three to five years old, the most critical years for a child in the developing world, when children in these communities are most at risk.

Team members may not realize the impact they are making in the lives of these children unless they look beneath the surface of what they see when they are working in these areas. They see children with smiling faces, eager to jump in their arms for a morning hug, most dressed in a clean school uniform, well mannered, creative and seemingly in good health. The truth of their lives is often much harsher.

Angela, an adorable, yet sad-faced girl of four stood at the fringes of the park as all the children in our VBS that day played ball and jumped rope. Not knowing her circumstances, we asked why was not joining the others. She sat in my lap and through a tear-stained little face told me she was not part of the program. Joel, her four-year-old cousin, explained that she was an orphan, one of three who lived with him and his siblings in the two room hovel at the bottom of the hill with their 78-year-old grandmother. Angela's mother recently died of HIV/AIDS, but her father abandoned the family long ago. I assumed that Joel, because he was in a school uniform and was with us everyday,

was in the Compassion program. He was not, because until SIFAT teams finish the building, there was no room for any of these children. This used uniform was given to him because he had no other clothes.

We visited their home and the grandmother, Mercedes, explained that she sold plantains on a busy street near the church to support the family. Her other daughter, Joel's mother, lived across town, but provided what she could by selling newspapers on the busy streets of Quito, making 12 cents per paper. On a good day, she could sell 15. The house had no water, but there was a sewage ditch nearby they could use to wash clothes and bathe. They had to pay for rent and electricity. Mercedes proudly explained that she could feed the nine children if she could bring in four dollars each day. This is the norm. This is what many team members do not have the opportunity to see. This is the reality of life in these urban slums.



*A team member plays with Angela in the park near the Villaflores project in Ecuador. Angela, her two siblings and six cousins live with their grandmother on about \$4 per day.*

Compassion provides uniforms, so they can attend school. They have medical care for the children using medicines brought in by SIFAT medical teams, hot lunches cooked by the ladies in the church and classrooms to offer a safe place for these children to be nurtured and tutored when not in school—all in the facilities SIFAT short-term mission teams build. Our teams are not just building walls; we are helping to provide a future for these children, to make a difference in these communities, to enable our graduates to do the work God has called them to do.

Compassion has asked SIFAT to help with 12 other projects where buildings connected to the churches are badly needed. In keeping with SIFAT's guidelines to only work with our graduates, Dr. Roberto Contreras is planning to have an intensive three-week training in October 2015 in Ecuador. We will continue to need 20 construction teams every year to honor our commitment to the Compassion partnership. This does not include the six medical teams we need each year to give medical care to the

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## Fifteen Years of Serving Quesimpuco

Sharon Rooks, R.N.  
Short-term Mission Team Member

My first impressions of Quesimpuco, Bolivia, 15 years ago included a sense of how remote, how high, and how cold this region was. Many Christian believers have heard God's call to help the indigenous Quechua people. The people were starving. Infant and maternal deaths in childbirth were common. Yet God had a plan, according to Jeremiah 29:11, for these loved ones to have a bright hope and future. Many changes have been fulfilled.

After 13 hours, the last 3 hours of narrow dirty, dusty and rocky mountain trail, constant bouncing, shaking around hairpin curve switchbacks with steep drop-offs, our little caravan comes to a stop outside the closed medical clinic gate. As Huber hurries to open the gate, we climb out of the SUVs and take a deep breath. The night sky is dark and clear with the Milky Way, the moon, and many starry constellations shining like brilliant diamonds just above our heads. I almost feel like I can reach up and touch them. And there it is...the Southern Cross! So big in the night sky! God's stamp of approval, saying, "Yes, I brought you here to Quesimpuco safely, now show My love to all the people here in everything you do and say."

After a short but refreshing night's sleep, our team is headed down to the village for the official welcoming ceremony. Thinking back through years of coming to Quesimpuco, we have been met back up the road by the town's youth playing a few old, dented band instruments. The adults and children lined the road, and we were warmly greeted with fresh floral wreaths, hugs, handshakes and smiles. As we all joined ranks and walked into town together, the tune of "Onward Christian Soldiers" rang in our ears. Other years, the ceremony would occur just outside the medical clinic. But the music, the smiles, the hugs and the love for our group has always abounded.

This year, the welcome is taking place inside the church. A

special bond of unity is evident. Believers from two Christian congregations in Quesimpuco and from a neighboring village have come to join their hearts as one in the Lord. We can feel the strength and joy as we all unite.

The walk down to the village from the medical clinic is always one of my most favorite times. The morning view of the mountains rising above the dry river bed, the clear turquoise blue sky, the palate of colors visible in the stone, along with occasional patches of green vegetation on the mountains, an eagle soaring and peacefully floating, are majestic.

Being here and seeing this grandeur makes me feel so close to God. A song comes to mind, "We Are Standing on Holy Ground." What a privilege to get to come here.

Traffic along the road is picking up. Ahead, I see a young boy and girl driving their small herd of goats away from town in search of a spot of grassy pasture land for today. Next come a couple of young girls with a few sheep and baby lambs. An adult couple with two small girls carrying loads of wooden sticks on their backs meet us next. Very little wood can be found, but is needed for small cooking fires.

As we walk nearer to town, we see the adobe houses are built closer together. Several women are washing clothes in a large pot outside, and a man next door is butchering a goat. It is unusual to find meat being prepared to be eaten because the animals are kept for the use of their fur and to be sold for income. Recent teams of veterinary students bringing medications and vaccinations for the animals are helping villagers have healthier, larger herds.

Yes, many changes can be observed today from the remote little village of 15 years ago. Now, we have a strong church building and school with education available through 12th grade. Many houses have an outdoor sink with piped-in water. A few power lines can be seen with electricity available. We are told that soon, cellphone coverage will be here. Children who grew up in and around Quesimpuco, attending church and school here, are now



*Dr. Ruth Neomi Mamani and Sharon Rooks*

*Continued on page 11*

## Planning for the Future in Quesimpuco

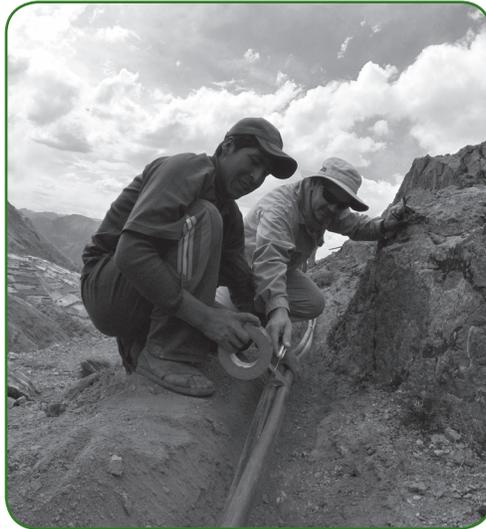
Peggy Walker

International Team Coordinator

As many of the young people who graduated from our John Wesley High School are returning home to this remote part of the Bolivian Andes as physicians, dentists, teachers and pastors, they will work with the communities and continue the vision SIFAT had for this area. The work and the dream SIFAT had so many years ago in Quesimpuco are becoming a reality!

Dr. Ruth Noemi, a shepherd girl from our first graduating class, is now a medical doctor who will provide services not offered by the government throughout the Quesimpuco Health District, especially for the elderly. Working with Dr. Rebecca Churata, a young dentist whose training was also paid for by SIFAT team members, Dr. Ruth Noemi will implement new public health training and hold medical clinics in remote villages throughout the District. With a lab kit donated by Auburn UMC, she is able to perform the first lab work ever in Quesimpuco.

Veterinarians and students from Auburn University have provided vet services for more than 4,000 animals in 4 communities.



*Short-term mission teams have been helping communities in the remote Andes with micro-irrigation systems, so that the people can grow crops throughout the year and have food security for their families and livestock.*

Training in appropriate technologies, such as solar showers, water purification and smokeless cook stoves, is being taught to students in the high school and to entire communities throughout the region by means of participating in and with our veterinarian, medical and engineering teams.

SIFAT/CENATEC is partnering with Covenant Life Ministries from

Alexandria, Ala., to provide pastoral care in Quesimpuco and the entire valley. The plan is to make the church a center for development by starting a Christian library, purchase a gas oven to make bread for the senior citizens' ministry and provide training for local pastors and leaders through our INTROPAL program, which teaches Bible studies and community development.

In this high Andes region of little rainfall and much food insecurity, SIFAT teams from Auburn University and Mt. Bethel UMC in Marietta have built micro-irrigation systems for several communities. These will allow for up to three crops instead of one annually. The villagers will have increased vitamin and protein content in not only their diets, but also more food for their animals.

This hauntingly beautiful village at the top of the Andes is changing. When SIFAT brought in the first teams 20 years ago, people there were still worshiping stone idols. Now, limited Internet access is available through a Bolivian satellite. SIFAT has made such an impact on the quality of life in Quesimpuco, but many challenges lie ahead. For mission teams wanting a truly unique experience, please join us in Bolivia in 2015.

### 15 Years in Quesimpuco

*(Continued from page 10)*

returning with professional degrees. A medical doctor, school teachers, a pastor and a dentist have returned to provide help to the people of Quesimpuco and surrounding mountain villages. The economy is still weak. The people need continued support through our prayers, education and financial assistance. The future of this region is at a crossroads, but the hope and faith God gives the Quechua people is strong. My petition is that we all ask God to show us how He wants us to participate.

### Ecuador Projects

*(Continued from page 9)*

2000 children we presently have in our programs.

Much more was accomplished than we could ever have predicted, thanks to the dedication and support of these team members, but we need your help in making sure all the churches of those in our SIFAT family have the information about 2015 opportunities in Ecuador and know just how much they can contribute in the lives of these wonderful people by their presence.



# Summer/Fall 2014

## Learn & Serve Memories

Elvis and Betty North  
SIFAT Volunteers

Learn & Serve actually began with teenage work teams who would spend most of the day working at chores around the SIFAT campus. Things like painting, food preparation with Miss Flossie Wood, gardening with John Muntz, housekeeping, mowing, etc. But in the summer of 1993, our work teams became Learn & Serve teams to indicate that the youngsters worked in the mornings and learned in the afternoons. Shade Tree sessions ran the gamut from book learning about practical technologies aimed at improving life in difficult poverty settings to hands-on experience, such as adobe brick-making; moving and purifying water; or producing, preparing and preserving food.

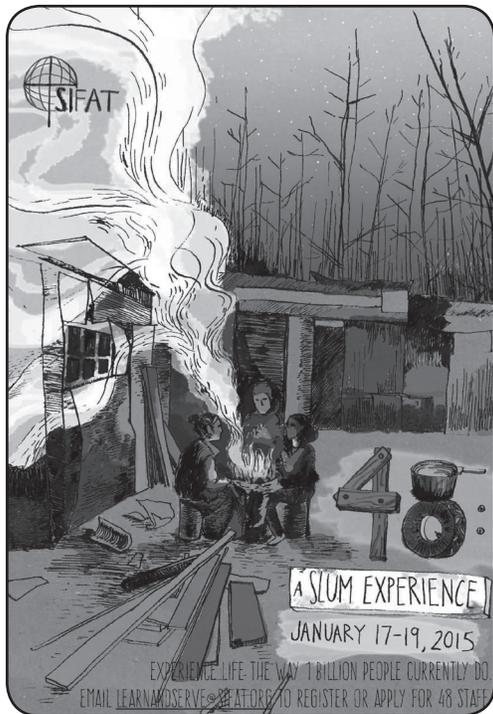
We will be forever indebted to those who brought knowledge and personal testimony to inform—but also inspire—response on the part of the participating teams. Sarah Corson, of course, filled the bill on both counts! Nick Holler from Auburn, Benjamin “Benjo” Paredes from Bolivia and so many others who happened to be at SIFAT at the right time brought blessings to us, as well as to the “summertime helpers” who were paid a very modest stipend.

Sleeping space for the teams was limited to a double-wide mobile

home, which housed about a dozen girls on one side and a dozen boys on the other. Following our tenure, the barn on the “back 40” was remodeled into a bunkhouse, then the Lodge was added, so that we can now accommodate hundreds of participants each summer.

Feeding the teams—plus SIFAT personnel—was both a chore and a source of growth as sisters and brothers in Jesus. Lots of folks added their helping hands to the task: Miss Flossie provided breakfast and lunch Monday and Tuesday, Mama Louisa and her crew from LaFayette fed us lunch on Wednesday, Phil Cornelison and the folks from Ashland on Thursday — with Betty Parris, Pat Muntz and Betty filling in the slots whenever needed. The teams cooked their own beans and rice on Wednesday night in the “Third World Village” (the old one) and ate the leftovers for Thursday breakfast (a visit to the Pizza Shack that night made up for the inexperienced chefs who cooked the beans!).

What do we remember most about those “good old days”? The lack of AC at the cafeteria (at that time) and the double-wide—which was more than compensated for at the Wednesday night campfire on Mad Indian Creek with Sarah and Benjo sharing stories of the mission activities in Bolivia.



**What?** Our 6th annual 48: *A Slum Experience* retreat

**When?** Martin Luther King, Jr. weekend - starting at 11 a.m. on Jan. 17, 2015

**Who?** A core group of youth, such as a leadership team, or students/leaders who have previously attended Learn & Serve events and are looking for a different, more challenging experience

**Why?** Spending a longer period of time in our slum simulation exposes students to the desperation felt because of hunger, thirst, overcrowding and corruption that results from such desperation. This 48 hour experience gives participants time to discuss topics like inequality, morality within poverty, responsibility of Christians in developed countries, suffering, justice, the love and sovereignty of God during disaster or hardship, disease, etc. These conversations happen naturally, and being able to listen to your students wrestle with these topics and wrestle with them yourself is an opportunity that may not often be afforded outside of such an event.

**How do I register my group?** To learn more about this retreat, go to [sifat.org/learn-serve/retreats/48-slum-experience](http://sifat.org/learn-serve/retreats/48-slum-experience). The cost for this retreat is \$65 per participant. E-mail or call [learnandserve@sifat.org](mailto:learnandserve@sifat.org) / 256.396.2015 for more information, to register an individual or group, or to apply for the 48 volunteer staff.

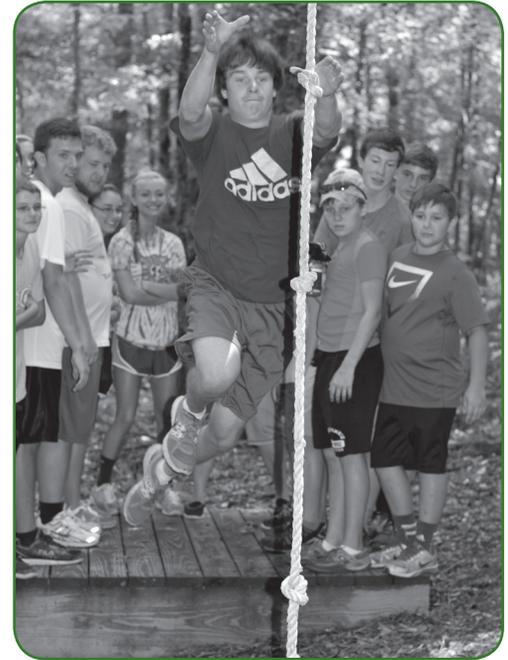
## Learn & Serve Summer Experience

R.G. Lyons

Pastor, Church Without Walls, Birmingham

For the last two summers, we've taken our senior high students to SIFAT, and it has been hands down the best missions experience I've ever been on. Too often, mission trips don't take us out of our comfort zone. They allow us to feel good about ourselves while helping those who are less fortunate. But far too often, they don't help put us in the shoes of those we are serving. They don't become a part of our lives. We spend one week, out of the summer serving, and then our lives are basically the same until we go back again next year.

Not so at SIFAT. At SIFAT, participants not only learn about poverty, but they feel it. Our students and adult leaders felt hunger and thirst. We felt what it was to not have decent housing – especially when it rained. And in feeling the experience that so many of our brothers and sisters across the world have on a daily basis, we learned that a week of service is not good enough. The prophet Micah asks, "What does the Lord require? To do justice, love kindness, and to walk humbly with God." SIFAT teaches us that mission is about far more than a week of service. It is about making common cause with the least of these. It is about doing justice, loving kindness and walking humbly with God.



*Youth have the opportunity to explore appropriate technologies, such as the sawdust cooker above. These technologies are the same ones our graduates use in their ministries throughout the world.*



*Staff and students enjoyed eating fresh produce from the SIFAT gardens.*



*Students cross our new bridge on their hike to the Global Village.*

**Don't Miss L&S Summer Experience 2015!  
Register Today!**

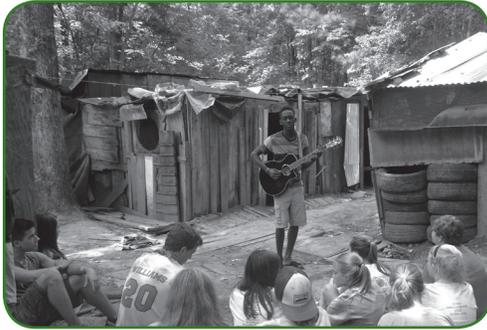
Both individuals and youth groups can register for the 2015 L&S Summer Experience! To see available dates and download registration forms, go to [www.sifat.org/learn-serve](http://www.sifat.org/learn-serve). Each session lasts from Sunday afternoon through Friday morning and costs \$299 per person.

Questions? E-mail [learnandserve@sifat.org](mailto:learnandserve@sifat.org),



# Summer/Fall 2014

## Lives Impacted After Returning Home



*Above: After the Urban Slum Simulation, students talked about the experience together. Marc Jean and Franciscot Auguste of Haiti were part of our summer staff, and their input helped us better depict realistic slums.*

*Below: Youth and their adult leaders participate in simulations of what daily life is like for those living in developing countries*



Alyssa Mills

L&S Participant, Living Hope Church,

In 2013, my church's youth group came to SIFAT for our summer mission trip. There is still not a time that I am not reminded of my experience. I took a lot away from “just a week at camp” — I look at things differently now, such as how much we take for granted and how lucky we are to have what we do.

The slums experience and the refugee camp were really impacting to me. I think I have always had a part of me wondering what life is really like for people who live in poverty every day, and that experience really helped put it into perspective. I remember honestly wanting to just leave and go back to the lodge during it. Then, it really hit me: there are so many people in the world that are going through what I was right then, but they could not just leave and go somewhere better. And they had been there a lot longer than I had. That made me stop and think. I really do not think I have looked at situations the same ever since then. It was almost like a movie scene or something

After I came home, I became very interested in Third World problems and poverty. Our church has touched on subjects like that: we support the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota and a few places in the world with people living in poverty. Until I came home from these life-changing experiences, I never gave these subjects much thought. Now, I have written several papers and did a presentation for my English class about poverty, developing countries and my experience at SIFAT. I have taken such an interest in this topic that I am now certain God meant for me to go on the trip last year, so that I can make a difference in the world and spread his love and hope to people who really need it. So it became very important to me to thank you for what SIFAT is doing. I know there has to be more people in the world like me who God is trying to reach and who knew I would be so influenced by a summer camp. But if I can be so impacted by this experience, there have to be other people, too. So, thank you for giving people this experience, and I know it is greatly appreciated by many people.

## Reverse Yard Sale!

Are you always talking about having a yard sale, but haven't gotten around to it? What if SIFAT asked for some of your yard sale items? Much easier and less hassle, right?

Our campus needs some of your gently used furniture and home furnishings! We need several dressers, chests, end tables, lamps and alarm clocks in our campus buildings, which are used by internationals participating in training; children, youth and college students

during Learn & Serve; and other facility rentals. Kitchens also need small appliances, such as toasters and coffee makers, cookware and cutlery. We also need a late-model car in good condition for speaking engagements and airport transportation.

We can provide an in-kind receipt that you can use for tax purposes. Please contact Marie Lanier, [lanierm@sifat.org](mailto:lanierm@sifat.org), or Peggy Walker, [walkerp@sifat.org](mailto:walkerp@sifat.org), if you have items to donate.

## Schedule Your Retreat Now! - [www.sifat.org/learn-serve](http://www.sifat.org/learn-serve)

Groups are scheduling winter and spring retreats! Learn & Serve (L&S) programming offers experiences for all age groups. Visit [www.sifat.org/learn-serve](http://www.sifat.org/learn-serve) for details. Questions? Contact [learnandserve@sifat.org](mailto:learnandserve@sifat.org) to reserve your dates and make plans for an l&S Retreat!

# SIFAT Journal



## Thank You, Volunteers!

Whether they help for a day, a week or more, volunteers have always been the backbone of SIFAT.



Currently, we have five volunteers who come out for one day each week. They help on the grounds, in the office and anywhere we ask. They are integral to our success at SIFAT. Thank you Bill Boozer, Joyce Fridell, Allen Yates and Lance and Cherry Ward. Nancy Marg volunteers at least three days a week in our short-term mission team department and in the SIFAT Village Store.



This fall, we hosted a work team from Pasadena FUMC (Pasadena, Texas), who helped finish the pole barn and stained the Village Store and other porches. Several Learn & Serve Retreats also had work projects as part of their programming.



## From the Desk of Tom Corson

SIFAT had its beginnings in the hearts and minds of Ken and Sarah Corson. Since 1958, they lived and worked among the poor, sharing everyday joys as well as everyday sufferings. From a rural village in Cuba to the slums of the capital city of Costa Rica, from an overcrowded urbanization in Puerto Rico to a poverty-stricken Haitian community, from sharecroppers of last generation in rural Alabama to remote jungle villages of Bolivia, as well as migrant camps in New Jersey, they sought to find solutions to debilitating poverty that runs counter to the Life-giving Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The primary motivation for beginning SIFAT was to activate a practical response to human need prompted by Christian faith and love...human need as felt in the spiritual, physical and material wellbeing of the poor in this country and perhaps even more urgently in the developing countries of our world. SIFAT strives to help meet human need in practical sustainable ways by teaching appropriate technologies and community development. SIFAT's motto is Sharing God's Love in Practical Ways. Our mission statement is to share God's love through service, education and personal involvement with a needy world.

This year, SIFAT celebrates 35 years as an organization with its international headquarters on a 176-acre campus on the banks of Mad Indian Creek in Randolph County, Ala. SIFAT has trained and equipped community leaders, college students and missionaries from 90 countries. Currently, we have ongoing projects in Alabama, Bolivia, Ecuador, Haiti, Honduras, Uganda and Zambia. We are also involved in helping our graduates with their projects in other countries, such as Nigeria, Pakistan and the Congo (DRC). Whether you have served on a mission team, as a volunteer, supported us financially or faithfully prayed for SIFAT, we thank you for being part of our efforts to build up the body of Christ at home and around the world. We invite you to continue to work with us to "Share God's Love in Practical Ways" as we begin the next 35 years.

The NOMADS, a group of UMC volunteers who bring their RVs and campers, came for three weeks. We can not begin to list all of the projects they completed. Several individuals and couples come each year, and they jump in to help wherever needed.



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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.

## #GivingTuesday is Back — Dec. 2, 2014!

Last year, SIFAT received \$108,080 in one day from donors during #GivingTuesday. Of that, \$34,050 was matching funds provided by the Global Ministries of United Methodist Church. Overall, Advance projects raised \$6.5 million on #GivingTuesday 2013! Thank you, thank you, thank you to all who participated last year!

This year, you have the opportunity to give again on Dec. 2, the Tuesday after Thanksgiving. The goal of #GivingTuesday is to give back to nonprofit organizations after all of the shopping that takes place on Black Friday and Cyber Monday. Because of matching funds, you can double your gift!

Here are this year's rules for UMC #GivingTuesday:

1. Go to [umcmmission.org/Give-to-Mission/Search-for-Projects/Projects/982812](http://umcmmission.org/Give-to-Mission/Search-for-Projects/Projects/982812), SIFAT's Advance page. (or go to

[umcmmission.org/give](http://umcmmission.org/give) and search for 982812) When donating online through the Advance, no processing fees will be taken from your gift!

2. Matching gifts begin at **12 a.m. Dec. 2 (EST)**. Double check your time zone. You may need to donate on the night of Dec. 1! Global Ministries is matching gifts up to the first \$1 million donated online. Last year, the matching gifts were used up within the first 30 minutes.

3. Individual gifts can receive a match of up to \$2,500, and SIFAT is eligible to receive up to \$25,000 in matching gifts.

4. Do you want us to send you a personal reminder, or do you have questions? E-mail Marie, [lanierm@sifat.org](mailto:lanierm@sifat.org), for more information.