

# SIFAT Journal



Sharing God's Love in Practical Ways

Summer/Fall 2015

## 2015 a Success! Learn & Serve Planning for 2016



*Becca Griffin, sharing during the Summer Experience in the photo above, led Learn & Serve 2015 while we were in transition between managers. Becca, thank you for your dedication and hard work!*

Jarrold Suits  
Campus Director

Fall is a wonderful time on the campus of SIFAT. The air becomes cooler, leaves sprinkle a vibrant array of colors throughout the property, and our staff celebrates many changes this time of year brings. As we transition into welcoming retreat groups to the campus, we are grateful for a wonderful summer. Hundreds of students and adults came to our campus for our 2015 Learn & Serve Summer Experience. Participants encountered a powerful program experience that challenged and empowered them to be agents of change for Christ in our world. We are now excited about preparing for 2016.

Our staff is working hard to make sure we make 2016 one of the best summers in the history of SIFAT. No matter the season, we continue to focus on teaching students and adults how they can *share God's love in practical ways!*

There are many things I want to share with you about this past summer. Our participants enjoyed worship time, group activities, playing in the creek, eating freshly prepared foods and volunteering in service to the local community. Students also experienced time in our Global Village and Slums. On our campus we have a large representation of dwellings similar to those people

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## Home for the Holidays!

We are almost done! Soon, a group of international Christian missionaries will share a meal with staff in a room lit up with volunteers' labor of love. Soon, a tired summer staff will have a big porch on which to rest and share devotions on a summer evening. Soon, our campus director's children will stare out of their bedroom windows at blooming blueberry bushes as the sun sets over another day on SIFAT's campus. Soon, Jarrod, Sarah, Henry and Olivia will be in their new home!

In the previous issue of the SIFAT Journal, we shared about the Campus Director's House that is being built on our campus. Major progress has been made: sheetrock is hung and painted, plumbing is installed and electrical is finished. However, we must install kitchen cabinets and counter tops, lay flooring and put in appliances. Your help is needed to reach our goal for the Suits family to celebrate the holidays in their new home!



*Help our campus director Jarrold and his family celebrate the holidays in a new SIFAT campus home!*

*Donate to the building fund by designating your gift Campus Director's House.*



# Summer/Fall 2015

## Farm-to-Table Interns Bring Ag Technologies to L&S Participants this Summer

Rachel Berube  
Farm-to-Table Intern

For 12 weeks this summer, a handful of Farm-to-Table Interns grew along with the plants we managed in the SIFAT gardens. At the beginning of May, we were planting small tomato and sweet potato plants, seeding corn and cowpeas, and watering bean sprouts while hoping the birds and insects would let our garden grow. When the first day of August rolled around, the garden had produced hundreds of tomatoes, buckets of beans, delicious okra and pink-eye purple-hull peas, buttery squash—almost more produce than we could handle. We had no clue how much the garden would grow during these three months, and likewise, we left at the end of the summer having grown deeper in our convictions and more confident in ourselves.

The eight Farm-to-Table Interns—Angela LeBlanc, Gann Wright, Grace McMullen, Kaitlyn Hampton, Lexi Moon, Manuel Bueso, Rachel Berube and Rebecca Sylvester—all came from different places and backgrounds. But as the summer went on, we grew close because of our common love for the good gifts the earth has to offer and all that can be learned from them.

Our day-to-day tasks varied depending on which plants were producing at the time, but we spent every day working with gardener John Carr in the gardens and with hospitality manager Hellen Hopkins in the cafeteria, where we created menus that incorporated the fresh produce picked daily. During the May Field Study, we attended several of the appropriate technology classes offered, so that we could learn skills to teach later in the summer during Learn & Serve sessions. In between classes, we continued working in the main SIFAT garden and the smaller Global Village gardens, as well as cooking meals for the participants. \

After the May Field Study, we began to prepare for the youth groups coming for the L&S, because the interns were in charge of Ag Day every Wednesday. We were assigned a partner, and each pair led a rotation on a particular aspect of food and agriculture. Lexi and Manuel led the rotation on Leaf for Life, where they discussed the purpose of leaf powder and how to



make it using solar dryers. Angela and Rebecca also focused on Leaf for Life, but taught how to use the leaf powder in recipes, such as pasta and smoothies. The pasta made by students in this rotation was eaten for dinner on Wednesday nights to show them the practicality of incorporating micronutrients into everyday foods. The other two rotations were focused on sustainable agriculture. Gann and Kaitlyn led the rotation on container gardens, where the students had the opportunity to make a sack garden and learn about the benefit of containers in urban areas. Grace and Rachel led the garden tour rotation, where they started with a discussion of the oppression existing in food systems and ended with a tour of the SIFAT main garden to show the students the importance of knowing where food is produced.

The interns interacted the most with the L&S participants on Ag Day, but we led blueberry picking, cooked and served each meal, cleaned the cafeteria, set up for the cookout on Thursdays, worked with L&S participants in the Global Village gardens to help them pick food for their meals, brought food to the slums and played characters in the Slum Experience. We also constantly picked tomatoes from the 500 plants in the garden, in addition to the normal garden tasks. It was a busy summer where we were able to be a part in the mystery God created of life from dust. From this mystery, we learned to enjoy life with one another, knowing that just like the plants in the garden, life is a vapor.

## Experience With Hunger Adds to May Field Study

Sarah Corson  
SIFAT Co-founder

“Have any of you had any personal experience with hunger?” Kathy Bryson, training director, asked the class on the first day of our May Field Study. Julia, a beautiful girl from Honduras, quietly told her story. Her mother was 14 when Julia was born. By the time her mother was 20, she had five children. Because there was never enough food, her mother gave six-year-old Julia to a nun. She was never hungry after that. Julia had a good home, an education and love. Doing well in high school, she received a scholarship to UNA, the national agricultural college of Honduras. And now, she was thrilled to be chosen for a scholarship to study at SIFAT.

“On the surface, my story should be one of great happiness,” Julia shared. “I came from being a hungry little girl to a well-cared for college student on my way to a career as an agricultural extension worker. I have a chance to use my life to help the poor in my country. It is a wonderful life when I stop to think about it, but in reality, it is often hard to eat because I keep remembering my four younger brothers. All my life, I have known that they were hungry, and I had no way to help them. They never had a chance to go to school and are illiterate. I know where two of them are now, and both have joined gangs because it was the only way they found to survive.”

“Hunger hurts. If your life is ever dominated by hunger, afterwards, even when you have plenty of food, you can’t forget the others who still are hungry. Your life is always haunted by hunger.”

Another student added her story. “My dad is from Asia. He grew up in a very poor family whose parents worked hard, but there was no way they could get enough food for the family. His little brother died of malnutrition. My dad survived and later got a scholarship to come to the United States to study. He married my Mom, an American, and now he is an American citizen. I have grown up with everything I need here in Alabama, like most of you. Except that we are often sad when my dad falls into depression, because he feels guilty that he survived, while his little brother died. My dad says he keeps wondering if he had eaten less, if his brother would have lived.”



*Larry Winiarski, creator of the rocket stove, rebuilds a fuel-efficient cook stove model.*

One of the American students responded, “This is the first time I have personally known anyone who has lived so close to hunger. Reading about it is different than becoming friends with someone who has lived with it.”

This May Field Study, called “World Hunger and Malnutrition—Practical

Skills to Make a Difference,” brings tremendous global resources together on Galilee Campus to offer a powerful, unique experience. Students from the University of Alabama at Birmingham, Troy University, Auburn University and the National Agricultural University of Honduras participated, with many receiving six credit hours for the session. Others from different countries joined them, including citizens of Nigeria, Haiti, Kenya, China, Philippines, Honduras, Guatemala, South Sudan and the United States. The teachers in the session came from different parts of the USA and from Bolivia, India, Ecuador and Haiti, in addition to our SIFAT staff teachers.

At graduation, each student took a paper dove made by SIFAT volunteer Ellen Harper and pinned it on a banner Ellen had made of a beautiful sky, while telling one way he or she felt empowered to work in changing the world. These students from a number of different cultures had become one community with the goal of learning how their lives could make a difference. It was a powerful moment as we sang together a song Ellen taught them:

“One man’s hands can’t break a wall down. Two men’s hands can’t break a wall down. But if 2 and 2 and 50 make a million, that day will come around.”

Thank you to those of you who helped make this May Field Training possible with your prayers and your resources. Together with our graduates, now in 91 countries, we are all being used of God in something much bigger than ourselves alone!



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## Responding to the Nepal Earthquake

By Sarah Corson  
SIFAT Co-founder

We have all felt the terrible tragedy of the earthquake in Nepal. When a catastrophic earthquake happened in Haiti a few years ago, SIFAT helped install appropriate technologies to provide clean drinking water for more than 100,000 people. We were able to coordinate keeping a clinic open for eight months after the earthquake by staffing it with volunteer doctors and nurses a week at a time. Because Regions Bank worked with us, flying down a volunteer medical team each week and bringing the last one back, volunteers could afford to keep helping. But when the earthquake hit Nepal, we were not prepared to help. We did not know the people, the culture or the infrastructure of their country.

How happy we were when Sunil, one of SIFAT's Global Trainers, e-mailed that he has graduates in Nepal from the training sessions he gave after returning from SIFAT to his home in India. We knew he was giving training sessions, but we did not know that church and community leaders from Nepal had come to study with him. Now, his Nepalese graduates—faced with great devastation—are asking him to come help plan how to start rebuilding their villages.

No, we on staff here in Alabama are not capable of helping Nepal rebuild. But one of our graduates is prepared! He has a dozen village leaders (his students) ready to work together with him there. SIFAT is encouraging Sunil, and that is something we can do!

This has been our dream since the beginning of SIFAT! Ken has always said, "It is not what we can do, but what we can empower our graduates to do that will have lasting consequences." We were overwhelmed with joy to see what God is doing in a place where we cannot go, but our graduate is there leading his graduates. He is not using the usual methods

of bringing in outside funds to rebuild. His method helps the villagers decide what they need to do first. The people who will be living with the results make the decisions of where to start and what to do with local resources. These self-help groups investigate how much it will cost. Sunil is in contact with a foundation that will lend them the seed money needed



*Sunil, a SIFAT Global Trainer, visits a model tin home that was provided to some of the families in the village where he is leading community development training following the recent earthquake in Nepal.*

to begin. They set the terms of how they will pay it back. Each family in the community participates in repayment. When the first project is completed and the loan repaid, the foundation lends the community funds for the next project. This is community development. This is self-help, empowering people to take ownership of their own needs and their own development. This is what SIFAT taught Sunil, and Sunil taught his students. Now is the time to implement our teaching!

The leaders in this area have chosen one village where they will begin. The other villages will join to help them and follow their example in their own communities. What these villages need most right now from us is prayer that will empower them to rebuild their communities themselves.

We have often said that it is not God's will for us to feed the world. God wants everyone to be able to feed themselves. But, we have a big job to do in sharing the things we have learned both from our own country and from many other countries where we worked in development. The goal is for every one of us to be able to develop his or her own talents to become all that God intended for us to be when He created us.

I thank God that I am still alive to see this plan being tried out — beyond our graduates to their graduates. If we look at our graduates as our children, then these community workers in Nepal are like our grandchildren. Would we call them our grandgraduates?!

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## Alumni Update: The Partors in Liberia

Sarah Corson  
SIFAT Co-founder

In early August, we welcomed SIFAT graduate Martha Partor for a brief visit while she was in the United States. She shared with our staff members about the ministry she and her husband have in Liberia, and we wanted to let you see how she and John, also a SIFAT graduate, are using the training they received to share God's love in practical ways.

Martha was able to visit us because U.S. Aid became aware of the great help she and John were bringing to the development of their war-torn country. They invited her to attend African Women Entrepreneurs, a group which led them on a tour through Chicago, Seattle, New York City and Washington, D.C., to learn how women with few resources were started their own microenterprises to pull themselves out of poverty.

### John and Martha's Story

Martha, John and their five children fled from Liberia during the civil war that destroyed much of their homeland. They barely made it across the border to a United Nations refugee camp. Their home was a tent, where a thousand people slept, each with only enough space to roll out a sleeping mat. They lived this way for two years, until the war stopped, and they could return home.

Their teenage daughter had diabetes, but they could not get insulin for her. She struggled to live, but made it through those two years. She died soon after they returned to Liberia. When Martha shared her story with us, there were tears in her eyes as she talked of her daughter,

but she smiled and said, "I just thank God so much for helping her live until we got home, so we did not have to bury her near the camp." Her testimony reminded me of I Thessalonians 5:18, "... in everything give thanks." Martha and John have lived out the Gospel even in the toughest of times. While in the refugee camp, they began teaching the people around them, using any resources they could find to make appropriate technologies John learned at SIFAT.



*SIFAT graduate Martha Partor visited us to share with our staff about the ministry she and her husband John, also a SIFAT graduate, have in Liberia with women and children. Executive director Tom Corson and administrator Terry Haynes showed Martha and former training director Annella Smith our new cookstove area.*

When the war ended, they returned to find their home had been destroyed. They had to divide their family up to stay in different church members' homes

until they could build a house. During this time, Martha finally received a visa to attend the SIFAT practicum. SIFAT sponsored a project to build them a home, office and guest house where temporarily homeless people could live while the Partors helped them find work.

During the war, electric plants were bombed, clean water systems polluted, buildings and houses burned, roads destroyed, and more than 350,000 citizens of Liberia killed, while many others were maimed for life. Then as the country struggled to rebuild from war, ebola struck. This was blow on top of blow, making the times really tough, Martha says. SIFAT donors supplied them with funds to buy needed supplies to help attend the sick with ebola and to prevent it from spreading.

### Current Ministry

Today, John and Martha continue their work with people who are still trying to recuperate from the ravages of war and ebola. Their latest project is to help a community restart its elementary school with a grant SIFAT donors' provided. They bring God's message of peace and forgiveness into this community of survivors still tormented with nightmares of the violence and fear they survived. Martha and John follow SIFAT's training to help people help themselves. Instead of continuing to give relief, they are leading a way to make this school self-supporting after the grant for one year is finished. They have 12 hectares, and the parents of the children in school are turning the land into a cassava farm. By

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## Remembering Nick Weldon

Peggy Walker  
International Team Coordinator

I sometimes forget just how invested our short-term mission team members are with the people and in the projects on which they so tirelessly work. They are not only happily digging foundation holes and pouring footers with concrete mixed by hand, but they are also building relationships with the men, women and children alongside whom they work in this joint effort to provide a better life and a future for the children in these poor communities outside Quito. The work is backbreaking, but our teams never lose sight of why they are there as they take a break to play with the children attending our incredible VBS programs or laugh with the women of the church who prepare lunch for us on SIFAT project sites.

We were recently reminded of this relationship when the family of Nick Weldon wanted to spread the ashes of their beloved son from the top of a building on which he had worked with SIFAT in Ecuador. Nick's family also included in this service the people of the community whom they had learned to love.

Nick was a wonderful 22-year-old young man who died tragically in April. Nick had been to Ecuador with SIFAT many times and was scheduled to go on this trip with Alexander City Methodist Church in July. He was studying at Auburn University at Montgomery to become a teacher and truly loved the Ecuadorian children he had been involved with since he was a teenager.

Nick's parents participated in this July trip and brought Nick's ashes to scatter from the roof of Mama Yoli's House, our daycare center in Atucucho. After this service, the team asked to return to Villaflora, where they had worked last year building interior walls for future classrooms. These classrooms will allow more than 300 additional children to become part of the after-school program sponsored by Compassion International to make sure these children are safe and off the streets when not in school.

Nick was on that trip to Villaflora in 2014, and the last thing the team did before they left was to sign their names on the concrete wall they had just erected. Returning this year, the walls had been plastered and painted over and all names had been covered up completely ... all except one. What a surprise when they saw the faint outline of the signature of Nick Weldon shining through the paint on their wall. To the Alex City team, it was a sign that Nick was still with us in Ecuador, and Pastor Rafael and Anita promised the wall would always remain the same to remember Nick at Villaflora.



*Nick Weldon was part of our SIFAT family; he participated in Learn & Serve, as well as going to Ecuador on mission trips with his church. When he unexpectedly died this spring, his parents took his ashes to spread in Ecuador. A wonderful surprise awaited them when they visited the project where he served last year.*

## Reflections from a First Trip to Ecuador

*The following article was originally written for a church newsletter by Bo McNally, who offered a reflection on her time in Quito, Ecuador, with the combined team from First UMC Pasadena and Clear Lake UMC. We are excited for 2016, when each of these churches will send a team of its own!*

When I decided to sign up for the trip to Ecuador, it was a chance to do another mission trip, but it also was a way to exorcise some demons I had. My life had been in turmoil for the last couple of years that culminated in a divorce. I figured this was a way to push the restart button on my life, as well as help those in need. As it turns out, I got so much more out of this trip than I expected.

When we arrived in Quito, the capital of Ecuador, I was struck by just how large the city is. It is set in the Andes Mountains, with an elevation of 9,300 feet above sea level. There were lots of homes built into the sides of the mountains, but many of them were unfinished. The inflation rate there is 30 percent, and many people just cannot afford to finish their houses. It is a beautiful city, and the people are also beautiful and friendly.



*Construction continues in Calderon! In 2016, construction teams will again work with Pastor Raul and Pastora Ruth's church on the addition for classrooms, a kitchen and cafeteria.*

When we started working on the site of a local church in Calderon, the members of the church literally welcomed us with open arms. They were so glad to see us and eager to try out what English they knew and to visit with us. Some of us visited one of the homes of the children who attends the program at that church. It was a house, but just barely by our standards. The roof was corrugated fiberglass with some wood, and it leaked. The walls were whatever they could find, and the furnishings were pieces we would have put on the curb long ago. But it was truly a home, not just a house. There was so much love, and the six children were truly happy, enjoying what they had. It seemed to me they just do not know what they do not have. The parents probably worry about how to feed their children, and how they will pay their bills, but they have a very strong faith that God will provide. They were very welcoming and, I feel, proud of what they had, otherwise I do not think they would have opened their home to us. Right before leaving, we prayed with them, holding hands, and they asked for their faith in God to be strengthened. What a testimony!

Faith in their circumstances is just what I needed to witness. It sure made my situation, worries and concerns look pretty minor in comparison.

Doing the construction part of the trip was the best choice for me. I like doing that type of work and found it exhilarating that I could help this small congregation in this way. Another group helped with a Vacation Bible School program. We all were encouraged to get to know a child better individually over the course of the week. I did not get to do that because of working mostly on the construction site, but the children I did encounter were eager to please and willing to hang out with us.

I so enjoyed all the activities of this trip. but especially getting to know the Ecuadorians we were helping. From shopping at the markets, visiting the equator, and exploring some of the city, the trip was complete. I encourage anyone who has an inkling of doing mission work to sign up next year for this one. You will not regret it! And you will get so much more out of it than you will foresee. My refresh button has been pushed. See you in Ecuador!



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## Quesimpuco Reaches Out

Ivan Roman  
Latin America Project Coordinator

*For those of you who have so generously supported SIFAT's work in Bolivia, we want to share this update on what has been accomplished by our short-term mission teams this year in partnership with CENATEC, our sister organization in Bolivia.*

*Four SIFAT teams traveled to the Quesimpuco area this year to share God's love in practical ways. Working alongside the Bolivian people, we are excited about what they are doing in the area around this remote Andean village of Quesimpuco. As daily life in Quesimpuco improves, the people who live there want to reach out into neighboring communities and have asked our teams to join in their efforts.*

*SIFAT and CENATEC's current five-year plan focuses on four areas: Public Health, Socioeconomic (Food Security and Tacana Micro-irrigation System), Missions and Evangelism, and Education and Training.*

### Public Health

In August 2015, Covenant Life Ministries from Alexandria, Ala., visited Quesimpuco. Dr. Ruth Mamani, optometrist Dr. Ernest Champion, and nurse Connie Brooks provided medical attention to more than 200 patients. For two and a half days, they worked with people from Quesimpuco and nearby communities. Our public health program has two main components: medical attention and preventive medicine. In remote places such as the Chaupirana Valley, teaching the general population how to identify diseases and their causes will give these communities a head start to fight back in situations where a doctor may not be available. Despite the government's attempts to supply for the population's medical needs, these remote places do not get the attention they need. That is why we rejoice and are thankful when we have medical teams visiting the area, thus complementing Dr Ruth Mamani's effort to provide proper attention and training against health misconceptions that keep the population practicing harmful "health" remedies not based on scientific information.

There is a great need for dental teams, and we pray for a dentist to soon be added to our efforts in the area. The population in Quesimpuco is growing, plus many children attend school from nearby villages. These young people have never seen a

dentist in their lives!

As part of her duties, Dr. Ruth Mamani designed a comprehensive curriculum to tackle the health challenges common in this area. Being a native of this part of the country and having a good command of the Quechuan language, she is the right person to bridge the gap between old ways and 21st Century medicine. Her leadership with medical teams makes it easier for visiting health workers to understand and provide a culturally sensitive approach to health.



*Dr. Ruth Mamani (right) returned to her village after graduating from medical school. She is heading up a public health program in this rural area where she is the only doctor.*

### Socioeconomic: Food Security

We have been working very hard with projects related to food security. Food security means that the community should be able to produce all the food it will need to assure everyone is well nourished. To achieve our goal, CENATEC is working on three fronts:

1. Greenhouse
2. Hydroponics
3. Micro-irrigation systems

This year, we harvested crops from the hydroponic beds we grew in our greenhouse. Some beds were worked by the

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church under SIFAT graduate Angel Roman's supervision; others were worked by the third grade class and the elderly. We have planted lettuce, chard and tomatoes. The third grade's greenhouse project was upgraded to a full micro-irrigation system for the school lands in favor of the students there.

For the elderly, we have started the Good Samaritan Project. We are having a monthly meal at our fellowship hall with the produce from our greenhouse ,and Dr. Ruth Mamani, SIFAT/CENATEC's Public Health Director, provides follow up on their medical needs.

For next year, we will work on a guinea pig farm to include animal protein in the local diet. The boarding home students will be in charge of the project. They will not only learn how to raise guinea pigs, but will also learn how to manage the farm and make it a profitable enterprise.

## Socioeconomic: Tacana Micro-irrigation System

Since we inaugurated our first micro-irrigation system in Llustacala a few years ago, we now have two additional systems: one for the school and one for the Tacana neighborhood. These systems were built by those who need them with help from SIFAT's teams. Once the teams are gone, community members keep working in the expectation that they will have abundant harvests in the near future just as they have seen happening in Llustacala. Pipes bring water from mountain springs two miles away to the water tank built last year. Part of the water flow will be relocated to the Tacana watershed with enough water left to not harm the Pajchantiri watershed.

This summer, SIFAT team members built a fence around the Tacana water tank and a safety wall to prevent accidents. In October, Mt. Bethel United Methodist Church men's team will come to help lay the pipes for the water distribution system for the plots and the pressure reducing valves and sprinklers, as well as to strategically plant trees in the fields to help prevent erosion. The distribution system was designed by Auburn University's chapter of Engineers Without Borders. This team has been coming to Bolivia for the past six years and their expertise and commitment have prompted development changes that are catching the people's attention as viable solutions to their needs.

## Missions and Evangelism

Quesimpuco Community Church has been very active this



*Team members work alongside residents of Quesimpuco and surrounding villages in the Chaupirana Valley to help them install micro-irrigation systems, so their fields can yield more than each year, giving the people a better chance of survival.*

year. We now serve in five communities in the Chaupirana Valley:

1. Chijmu, a 20-minute walk from Quesimpuco (QP)
2. Colataca, a 2-hour walk from QP
3. Ureka, a 4-hour walk from QP
4. Pata Cochi, a 1-day walk from QP
5. Quesimpuco

We are having Bible schools for young children. This age group has been neglected in the social and spiritual areas of their development. In the Andean society, children are often seen as labor. Since they are very young, they will help in the farm and shepherding goats or sheep when they are not in school, if they are in school at all.

With well established Bible schools in the communities mentioned above, these kids have found a new sense of worth because of their relationship with Jesus and the role they play in the church and community. They are bringing their parents to church. These parents are witnesses of their children's progress and their projects, thus seeing a whole new side of the Gospel.

Pastor Pedro Roman and church staff members, Angel Roman and Delfin Cahuaya, not only work with the young ones, but also have a continued and felt presence at all levels of the

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## Quesimpuco (Continued from page 9)

school system in Quesimpuco, as well as with students in the boarding home.

SIFAT and CENATEC's training workshops and development projects are major components in the church's outreach to the communities in and around the Chaupirana Valley.

### Education and Training

"And you will know the truth and the truth shall set you free". This verse is at the heart of all we do in Quesimpuco. Our first project was a high school, the first ever in the area. Fifteen years later, we are witnesses of the fruits this powerful tool has brought to Quesimpuco and the

Chaupirana Valley.

As a new generation grows, it reminds us that education is an ongoing endeavor that brings with it the challenge of accommodating our strategies to the felt needs of those at the forefront. We have engaged in quarterly workshops that have included the following subjects:

1. Values
2. Agriculture and Nutrition
3. Dental Hygiene

Our presence in the school system is as strong. With teachers and support staff, we are covering all age groups from elementary children to the elderly, males and females, local and surrounding villages and across tribal boundaries. As people become witnesses of our achievements and notice our technologies

we receive more requests for workshops and seminars that include the following subjects:

1. Vertical agriculture
2. Water purification
3. Solar stoves and ovens
4. Guinea Pig farms
5. Wind power systems ... and more

Indeed education and training in Quesimpuco are setting people free!

To support SIFAT's work in Quesimpuco and the surrounding Chaupirana Valley, designate your gift *Quesimpuco*.

## Volunteer Spotlight: Joyce Friddel

If you call SIFAT on Wednesday afternoon, it will most likely be answered by Joyce Friddel, a local volunteer. She began volunteering at SIFAT in the spring of 2010 and has become a staple in our office. Joyce not only answers the phone, but she regularly helps with filing, mail outs and anything else we ask her to do, such as pricing merchandise for the Village Store.

Joyce learned about SIFAT when she and a friend regularly picked up a staff member who needed a ride to church. This relationship led to an invitation to a training graduation. After the graduation, Joyce was even more interested in what SIFAT does, and her friends encouraged Joyce to begin volunteering.

One of her favorite SIFAT memories happened when she and her husband Tommy invited international students to their lake home for a cookout, to fish and worship. When asked why she continued volunteering after five years, Joyce said she likes knowing she is helping in a small way. She loves people and what SIFAT does to help others.



*Thank you, Joyce! Your dedication and willingness to serve encourages our staff each week. Thank you for being part of our SIFAT family!*

## Shop with SIFAT for the Holidays

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

### SIFAT Village Store

To schedule a time to shop or purchase a gift certificate for the Village Store, contact [villagestore@sifat.org](mailto:villagestore@sifat.org). You can buy limited items online: [www.sifat.org/village-store-christmas/](http://www.sifat.org/village-store-christmas/)

### Online Retailers

Popular retailers offer a percentage of your purchase as a donation to your favorite charity – SIFAT! Go to [goodshop.com](http://goodshop.com), [iGive.com](http://iGive.com) or [umcmarket.org](http://umcmarket.org) to find coupon codes and shop at your favorite stores (you will be automatically redirected to the retailers' sites).

Do you shop on Amazon? Sign up on [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com) for a portion of your purchase to benefit SIFAT.

### Commemorative Bricks

Honor a loved one by ordering a commemorative bricks for our new patio and fire pit. Order online at [www.brickrus.com/order/sifat](http://www.brickrus.com/order/sifat).

### In Honor / In Memory Gifts

Not sure what to give the person that has everything, or want to give a lasting gift? Send a donation in honor or memory of someone special to SIFAT with the name and address of whom you would like us to send an acknowledgment.

## Agape Students Seek Higher Education

Praise the Lord! These three words always appear in our correspondence from Agape Total Childcare Center in Mukono, Uganda. We have so many reasons to join Agape in praise! Since Agape was founded by SIFAT graduate William Nsubuga in 2008, we have seen God's hand in William's dream becoming a reality. Agape now includes the orphanage, a Christian high school for day and boarding students and a farm. Agape is on the way to becoming self-sustainable, and we are already seeing the positive impact a safe home, food, education and love is having on the orphans that call Agape home.



*Team leader and Agape sponsor Ashley Goad helped William Nsubuga move Jemima (left) and Annothiat (right) to their new school to pursue a nursing career.*

In December 2015, five of the children who grew up at Agape will graduate from higher education. Without the support of donors, this would have never been possible. These children came from adversity – such as losing a parent to HIV/AIDS or living on the streets – to now graduating with a trade school certificate or college degree! Currently, 11 Agape children are attending trade schools and universities.

Please pray for these students pursuing higher education, so that they may receive training to find jobs, allowing them to become productive adults in their community. They are studying nursing, catering and hotel management, education, public administration, auto mechanics and electrical engineering (electrician). These are careers these young people could never have dreamed of having before becoming part of the Agape family.

They still need your support to finish school! Although a few have received scholarships from Agape donors, room and board, school uniforms and mandatory supplies must still be funded. These 11 young adults are such an inspiration to the other high school and elementary students of Agape. The success of these 11 students will also benefit the positive reputation of the academics at Agape Christian Academy, which will encourage more boarding students to enroll.

**Help support the future of Agape!** Designate your donation *Agape Total Childcare*.



# Summer/Fall 2015

## From College Graduate to L&S Intern

Meghan Pattison  
Learn & Serve Intern

Working at SIFAT is truly a dream come true. I visited SIFAT for the first time during my sophomore year in college. Immediately, I knew I wanted to work at SIFAT some day. I simply had no idea that “some day” would be so soon. At that point in my life, I was discerning my passions and exploring the causes for which I wanted to commit. I was beyond thrilled when I found out that an organization existed that combined my love for international community development and empowering students in America. The internship program has allowed me to take on this adventure sooner than I ever thought possible.

Fast forward three years, and I was about to graduate nursing school. I was unsure of what my future was going to hold. My entire motivating factor for entering the field of nursing was to someday use it as a tool overseas. However, I quickly realized I still had a lot to learn before I was equipped to move to a developing country. Not only did I have nursing skills that I needed to hone, but I also needed to expand my understanding of community development. I was definitely surprised when God opened up this opportunity for me during a season of

uncertainty in my life; it has truly shown me His faithfulness and sovereignty. Working for my dream organization at such a young age was more than I could ever ask or imagine.

So here I am. A month and a half into my SIFAT internship, I can already see the growth in many different aspects of my life. My days are full of learning practical technology, researching

the most recent innovations, and reaching out to new groups and organizations that could benefit from SIFAT’s programming. Each of my days are unique and fulfilling. I would not trade them for anything. I am getting to learn from and interact with people from all over the world. I work with some of the most incredible people who have traveled the globe and have lived out how to love people in practical ways. The best part about the wisdom I am gaining here is that I get to share that knowledge and passion with students who come to participate in Learn & Serve programming. The highlight of my job is the opportunity I have to raise awareness for the issues and injustices around the world, and empower younger students to use their gifts and talents to

be a part of the solution. I cannot think of a better place for me to be during this year of my life!



*This fall, we welcomed interns Alicia Goffe and Meghan Pattison. Alicia came to us after finishing the Impact 360 gap year program and is taking university classes online. Meghan graduated in nursing recently and is working part time while she interns this year.*

### Learn & Serve Interns Needed for 2016

[www.sifat.org/learn-serve](http://www.sifat.org/learn-serve)

Are you a college-aged person looking for a place to serve for a semester or two? Internships with our Learn & Serve campus programs are available for Spring 2016 and Fall 2016. For more information, e-mail [learnandserve@sifat.org](mailto:learnandserve@sifat.org).

## From L&S Retreat to Ghana

Marie Lanier

Promotions and Marketing Coordinator

Recently, an email circulated among SIFAT staff, who were all excited to see a mission team's pictures from Ghana. This might seem odd, since we do not have an international project in this country, and this was not a team visiting one of our graduates. But, SIFAT was a major part of this team!

The Mississippi State University Wesley Foundation has been part of SIFAT for many years. Their members have participated in retreats, been Learn & Serve counselors and interns and even SIFAT staff. Since 2008, MSU Wesley has taken mission teams to the Methodist Rafiki Village, which is just outside of Winneba, Ghana. In May, a team of 10 went once again to be part of this orphanage that is home to 30 children. This time, they went with SIFAT training to share.

A few years ago, Rafiki's kitchen burned, causing them to have to cook outdoors on open-fire, concrete stoves. The director of the orphanage asked MSU Wesley if they knew about a more efficient cookstove. Because of their involvement with SIFAT, they quickly got in touch to set up a training for their team.

Ryan King, a member of the MSU Wesley team, shared about the trip while at L&S Summer Experience. He said, "SIFAT provided us with plenty of knowledge and resources for us to be able to teach once in Ghana." Ryan was excited to see the positive reaction to the training. Because it was something Rafiki requested, everyone wanted to learn.

The team taught all of the house mothers and the children how to build the stoves, and they help the team construct a brick stove. The team built a second brick stove and four bucket stoves to leave. MSU Wesley also encouraged Rafiki to use this appropriate technology as a ministry opportunity in the surrounding villages – as a way to provide for people's physical needs and also give them an opportunity to witness about Jesus.

"It was amazing to see how enthusiastic they were to learn the stoves," Ryan said. "It really surprised me to see how interested and attentive the kids were in learning it, because I was thinking the whole time that if it were kids back home, they would just be complaining the whole time."



### Next Level: Appropriate Technology Conference

Are you interested in learning more about appropriate technology? Learn & Serve is hosting an appropriate technology retreat Jan. 29-30, 2016.

The cost is \$85, which includes three meals, materials and programming. Contact Jarrod, [suitsj@sifat.org](mailto:suitsj@sifat.org), for more information!



# Summer 2015

## L&S 2015

*(Continued from page 1)*

in developing countries live. SIFAT's programming introduces participants to the joys and challenges that these people face. Our hope is that they will see the need so many people have, and go out to make a difference. This type of special and innovative program makes our summer program truly unique.

One of the new additions to this past summer was Ag Day. Each week, our participants had the opportunity to learn about ways SIFAT uses agriculture to reach people in need. Our Farm-to-Table interns showed students the value of agriculture, taught appropriate technologies, built container gardens and made homemade pasta out of Leaf for Life powder. This hands-on, interactive and valuable programming became the highlight for many of our participants. It is also a way our campus and its gardens continue to be a tremendous asset to the mission of SIFAT. *[Editor's note: Page 2 features an article about Ag Day written by one of our Farm-to-Table interns.]*

Many exciting changes are coming

next summer. New programming, restructured small group time and a focus on connecting students to Christ are coming. One thing we are excited to offer in 2016 is a more personalized experience for participants. We have a lot to offer and teach here at SIFAT. That is why we will have a variety of sessions highlighting a wide range of topics students will find engaging. For example, if someone wants to learn more about water purification, then he or she can attend a session with a SIFAT trainer demonstrating such techniques. Maybe a student is interested in crafts or art. That student can go to a session to learn how crafts are helping people around the globe escape poverty and prostitution. During that session, he or she will have the opportunity to make crafts from a variety of places around the world. No matter students' ages or interests, they will find something to excite them about the ministry of SIFAT!

Learn & Serve's Summer Experience gives SIFAT the opportunity to reach young people from different states and denominations. We understand that groups return home and may never visit a developing country. However, our focus is not to deepen their desire to travel, but

rather, their desire to serve.

Summer 2016 will be filled with excitement, challenges, friendships, worship and learning. We also pray that each participant walks away with a sense of calling and purpose for missions and ministry. Whether students go on to be teachers, doctors, plumbers or pastors, our goal is to see that they develop a lifestyle of sharing God's love through service, education, and personal involvement with a needy world.

Help us prepare a new generation of practical Christian leaders! Please encourage your church, your neighbor's church and anyone else you may know to sign up for Summer 2016. We are diligently working now to make sure our participants will have the opportunity of a lifetime next summer! That is why we need your help telling others about programs offered by SIFAT. Together we can reach young people and equip them to *share God's love in practical ways.*

*Registration for Summer 2016 is open!  
Both individuals and groups may attend. Find out more at [www.sifat.org/learn-serve](http://www.sifat.org/learn-serve). For questions, e-mail [learnandserve@sifat.org](mailto:learnandserve@sifat.org).*





## 2016 Construction/VBS Teams Needed!

We will have nine medical teams serve in Ecuador before the end of 2015, including a new one from Barbados in December. These teams will have provided medical care and medicines to more than 4,500 Ecuadorians who might otherwise have no access to a doctor. We are still falling short, however, on the 20 teams needed yearly for construction. The only way we will have sufficient funds to finish these buildings in our two-year commitment to each project is to have the \$2500 project fees from 20 teams each year.

In 2015, so much has been done by SIFAT teams working on the classroom extension “Jesus es el Camino” in Calderon. In September, a team from the Auburn University McWhorter School of Building Science was able to put the ceiling on the first floor, but we need funding to finish the building in 2016, so 200 more children will have a safe place to be fed, tutored and nurtured after school. We are at a disadvantage because

of the short summer season when most construction teams want to travel. We doubled up on several weeks this year because we only have an eight-week summer time frame when kids are out of school in the United States.

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**“A small amount makes such a difference in a child’s life in the slums of Ecuador.”**

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The week of July 9-16, 2016, is the only week still available for next summer. To meet SIFAT’s commitment to our projects in Ecuador, please help through your churches, schools/universities or civic groups to encourage a team to go in one of the off season months.

If you can not pull an entire team together, please get your church involved by raising funds for SIFAT construction projects in Ecuador. Mark your donations *Ecuador Projects*. A small amount makes such a difference in a child’s life in the slums of Ecuador. For team information, contact Peggy Walker at [internationalteams@sifat.org](mailto:internationalteams@sifat.org).

### Nepal

*(Continued from page 4)*

God has used your support for SIFAT – your resources, your time and your prayers – to empower us to keep training church and community leaders in Christian Community Development, so that now after 36 years, we have graduates in 91 countries multiplying our efforts as they reach into places we cannot go. Our sincere thanks for your being such an important part of the ministry of SIFAT!

**Stay Connected with SIFAT for our Latest News!**

Visit our blog ([sifat.org/blog](http://sifat.org/blog)) and find us on Facebook ([facebook.com/sifatbook](https://www.facebook.com/sifatbook)) for updates between newsletters!

Are you moving? Don’t forget to send us your updated contact information. E-mail [info@sifat.org](mailto:info@sifat.org) with your new mailing address, phone number and e-mail address.

### Partors

*(Continued from page 5)*

next year, they hope to have a crop to sell and microenterprises making seven products from cassava.

#### The Next Step

SIFAT could not have provided grants to the Partors without your support. One specific donor spearheaded raising funds for their project by finding new donors who were not already involved with SIFAT projects. If you want to become a partner with one of our smaller projects that needs fund raising help, please contact Tom Corson, [corsont@sifat.org](mailto:corsont@sifat.org).



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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

Forty years ago, our family embarked on a journey to the tropical jungles of Bolivia to work with some of the neediest people on our planet. For the next two years, we grew to know and love a dynamic leader of the region, first as an adversary and then as a colleague and brother in Christ. A descendant of the Incas, Benjo Paredes dedicated his life to serving Christ in one of the hardest places on earth. He spent last month here at SIFAT sharing his testimony and training Christian leaders from 11 countries during our Fall Practicum. Benjo has spent an amazing lifetime overcoming dangerous political situations, crisscrossing the stark, rugged terrain of the Andes Mountains, often going hungry and cold to reach the most needy with God's mercy and grace. He incorporated appropriate technology in his ministry as a means of helping people meet their own basic needs. We call it "Sharing God's Love in Practical Ways."

In 1979, Benjo helped start SIFAT with the goal of training leaders in the integrated Gospel of Christ. Thanks to the perseverance and leadership of SIFAT alumni here and in countries across the world, we now have graduates in 91 countries.

With your help this year, SIFAT has been able to continue numerous projects for food security, public health, evangelism and education in Bolivia and medical, construction and evangelism projects in Ecuador. We continue to grow the Agape orphanage, Christian school and farm in Uganda and to conduct workshops in fuel-efficient stoves and clean water in Nigeria, self-help classes for communities rebuilding after the earthquake in Nepal, Christian Community Development Training in Haiti and Honduras, and assist a Christian School in rural Pakistan. A fish project was completed to provide livelihood for new Christians of an unreached tribe in Uganda. SIFAT



gave project support for work against ebola and now is supporting a school where there was none in Liberia.

Benjo reminded us all of our roots at SIFAT. We remember God's leading through the past, and we trust Him for the challenges ahead. We do thank you for your prayers, financial support and commitment to being part of SIFAT! This month, we are facing some especially big hurdles and really are counting on your help more than ever. ***Please join us in prayer and in giving for these urgent financial needs to continue to be met.***