

# SIFAT Journal



Sharing God's Love in Practical Ways

Spring 2017

## Welcome Angie

Angie Stryker  
Campus Director

Hello 2017! Here we are with another summer ahead of us. That means another year to share all that God loves to teach through the Galilee Campus of SIFAT. I have been bringing my college ministry to SIFAT for two years now, and we always leave changed and empowered to change the world in which we live with love and service.

It is for that reason that I felt compelled to join the staff as Campus Director. As you well know, this campus is such an amazing place! I have been in love with it since I started coming in 2015. My family and I will move in fully in May, just in time for the Summer Experience. My family (pictured below) consists of Matt — my fellow adventurer and husband of 20 years — and my children Jack (11) and Valerie (9), both of whom were born while we were missionaries



in Puebla, Mexico. And I can't forget Apollo, our squirrel-chasing dog (4)!

I know you know personally the power of SIFAT's story and training as portrayed through our various programs from the Slum Experience and the Global Feast to living in the Global Village. All of these experiences are designed to open our eyes to the needs of the world, so that we walk in the shoes of those in need.

This year, we are working hard on making all the programming even better thanks to our great staff who loves and serves the Galilee Campus.

I would like to personally extend an invitation to you to come to our campus with your group or as an individual.

**Register Now:** Our Learn & Serve Summer Experience sessions are filling up. It's only \$299 per participant! You have to admit, the price of the week is astounding when compared to other camps, especially when you see what students learn at SIFAT. Visit [www.sifat.org/learn-serve/summer-17](http://www.sifat.org/learn-serve/summer-17) for more information and to register.

We are also booking weekend retreats and other Learn & Serve opportunities throughout the year. Do you have feedback on how we can make your experience better? Please feel free to email me at [strykera@sifat.org](mailto:strykera@sifat.org).



**REGISTER FOR L&S 2017 NOW!**

Session One: June 4 - 9

Session Two: June 11 - 16

Session Three: June 18 - 23

Session Four: June 25 - 30

Session Five: July 9 - 14

Session Six: July 16 - 21

Session Seven: July 23 - 28

Visit [www.sifat.org/learn-serve](http://www.sifat.org/learn-serve) for more information and to register your group or individual now.





# Spring 2017

## Remembering David Bryson

Sarah Corson  
SIFAT Co-founder

We at SIFAT suffered a great loss when David Bryson passed away unexpectedly on March 10th with a sudden stroke. However, his memory will always be near in our hearts.

A native of Tuscumbia, Ala., David was a graduate of the University of North Alabama and Emory University, where he received his Master's of Divinity. He was ordained in the North Alabama Conference of the United Methodist Church where he served as pastor for 15 years. Subsequently, he worked with SIFAT as international director and with mission initiatives in Bolivia, Ecuador, Venezuela and with the Methodist Church in Mexico. His life's work of service and ministry has touched the lives of people in countries throughout Africa, Asia, Latin American and the Caribbean. He has worked to help provide housing for places devastated by earthquakes or war, both in Haiti and in African countries.

Even when he was working for other missions, he continued to volunteer countless hours for SIFAT. He had boundless energy and was always ready to jump into action to help in whatever need arose day or night—helping set up logistics, teaching

classes for training sessions, fixing computers, taking a sick student to the doctor, arranging field trips, speaking in churches to promote SIFAT, and much more.

David was my son-in-law, but ever since he came on a mission trip to help us in the jungles of Bolivia when he was a teenager, he has been like a son to me. I have often said that if I could have chosen a husband for my daughter



Kathy, I could never have found anyone else as good as David. He was a wonderful husband and a loving father to their four daughters. David was a caring person day in and day out, not only to his family, but also to everyone he met. He was a link to bring people together—those with resources

with those in need of those talents and resources. A former photojournalist, David thrived in the center of action, but always managed to keep level-headed despite unpredictable developing world contexts. I have never known anyone more patient or more helpful to everyone than he. His sudden death has been a great blow to SIFAT, as well as to his family and to all of us. Kathy, his wife, has helped us all face a future without his daily physical presence, by her words, "We just thank God for the blessing of the 29 wonderful years we had with David!"

## Upcoming Training Events

Learn Practical Skills to Impact Hunger and Poverty at SIFAT International Training Sessions:

May 21- June 3, 2017  
August 13 - 19, 2017

Training will be in English, Spanish and French. Learn from fellow international participants highly motivated to help their communities. University credit available through the Sparkman Center for Global Health at the University of Alabama in Birmingham.



### Buy a Brick for SIFAT's Commemorative Garden

Plans are being made to install our commemorative garden, but bricks are still available! Two sizes are available and can be personalized in honor or memory of your favorite people. Don't miss having your brick in our first phase! You can order online at [www.brickrus.com/order/sifat](http://www.brickrus.com/order/sifat) or contact Marie by email, [lanierm@sifat.org](mailto:lanierm@sifat.org).

## Isaiah Chot: Making a Difference in the DRC

Sarah Corson  
SIFAT Co-founder

Isaiah Chot, a SIFAT graduate from the Democratic Republic of Congo, has worked for years with former child soldiers, who had been kidnapped from their families and forced to fight in the rebels' war. Most of their families died in the war and their communities usually will not take these young men back, because they have been brainwashed and forced to kill since they were small children. Isaiah founded Kanyaka Training Center, a school for rehabilitation, not only for the child soldiers, but also for orphans whose parents were victims of HIV/AIDS, war and other life-threatening circumstances. The school teaches them vocational and life skills, so they can make their own way when they grow up. A new building is being constructed for the school, because it has grown so much in the last 11 years that they need additional space. SIFAT is working with Isaiah to help finish the building.

Isaiah's Child Action Initiative, a SIFAT-approved project that is also an Advance of the United Methodist Church, has grown from its beginning in 2006 of providing rehabilitation, education and clothing for the children around Kasungami to a wonderful community development program in 2017. Isaiah, a graduate of African University with a degree in sociology, is well prepared to lead his people in this endeavor. His wife Yvette is a great partner as she leads the women of the town in development programs at the Women's and Children's Center. The community now has wells for clean drinking water and a clinic for expectant mothers, sick community members and vaccines for the children. They have a new church building, built with 10,000 mud bricks made by the congregation. They have an agricultural extension program and have learned to raise better quality food in larger quantities for their families, as well as several microenterprises to help these families become self-sustaining. The whole town is now a development-conscious population with the attitude of "We can change things!" instead of the hopeless impoverished people who were there before Isaiah and Yvette came to live with them.

Isaiah is only one of the SIFAT graduates working in different countries across our world. In May, we will be receiving a new group of students at our Alabama Campus to learn world-changing skills and attitudes taught by Christ. Please continue to pray for the work of SIFAT!

We are thankful for the prayer and financial support that you send us. And we want you to know how your support enables us to train people like Isaiah to return home to teach and inspire entire towns and villages to follow Christ and to develop their own communities. We can change the world by training one community leader at a time who will then lead one village at a time to grow and develop spiritually, physically, mentally and economically. This is the integrated Gospel, the Life More Abundant that Jesus came to teach us all! Thank you for your partnership with SIFAT. Together and through our graduates, we can continue to do so much with so little to create a more Christ-like world.



*SIFAT graduate Isaiah Chot and his wife Yvette work with former child soldiers and orphans whose parents were victims of HIV/AIDS, war and other life-threatening circumstances. Their new building will allow even more people to receive training, such as the sewing classes pictured above, that will help families become self-sustaining.*



## Reflections from Ecuador Team Members

*Editor's Note: The following excerpts are from our Fall 2016 Auburn University Building Science team's reflections. We wish we could share the almost 50 pages they compiled about their personal experiences.*

I have done a lot of traveling and service work, but I have never combined the two. This was a great opportunity to help people that needed it and gain some knowledge along the way. This experience has shown me that I really love helping people and getting to experience other cultures in the process. Furthermore, this trip will shape my future choices, for when opportunities are available to serve abroad I will fervently pursue them. I do not believe I would choose it as a full-time career; however, I believe it is one of the best ways I could spend my vacation time, because after returning (and catching up on a little sleep), I felt spiritually and emotionally revitalized. After every experience of being immersed in other cultures, I return with an evolved perspective and appreciation of life on Earth. The primary takeaway I have from this trip is perseverance. The children that are beneficiaries of the daycare we were helping build come from some of the most difficult circumstances imaginable, and though all their difficulties some of them endure to become positive impacts on their society. One of the tutors/interns at the daycare was a kid that grew up in very difficult circumstances and was a part of this daycare as a student. He is now a college student and is working at the daycare to give back to the community and help the kids that were once in his position. This guy is a great example of what this place can do for the children it reaches, and these kids are great examples of perseverance in Christ. As it says Romans 5:1-4: "Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we

know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope." — Mark Walsh

Even with all that I learned on the construction site, I believe that our personal connections with the people with whom we worked were just as valuable. If our team had just worked the entire trip and not taken the time to build any relationships with the children around us or the families at the church, then the entire experience would have been much different. The people in Ecuador were so loving and kind, and would do everything they could to make sure our team had what we needed. The



ladies of the church provided lunch for our team, which allowed time for us to feel comfortable in getting to know more about them and their families. We had so much fun being able to play soccer with the children and getting to know some of their families and stories. They work very hard for what they have, and although they may not have much, they are very proud of what they have achieved. They seemed so deserving of the things they owned, because of the time and hard work they had put into their jobs. Their lives made me realize that I have so many conveniences in my life. In the United States, we may gain much of our efficiency from technology, but I now realize that efficiency of work and life can be achieved on many

different levels. — Erin Allee

Lastly, the church and community service project. Being able to attend a church service in a language that you do not fully understand can be an unbelievable experience. Although there is a distinct language barrier, seeing brothers and sisters lifting up the name of Jesus is a touching experience. Religion is a universal language. No matter what the language, we worship the same God, study the same Bible, and at the end of our lives, will spend eternity in the same heaven. Our faith gives us all something we can connect on and it draws us together as human

*Continued on page 5*



## Agape Students Excel

Time flies! We use this phrase frequently when we realize it is almost the middle of the year and our “busy” season at SIFAT has arrived – Learn & Serve summer experience, Worship On the Water (WOW), mission teams traveling internationally, and Field Study trainings. However, time flies at Agape in Uganda, too! The orphans and street children that were young adolescents are now graduating high school and pursuing careers through vocational schools and university degree programs.

We are encouraged to see the excitement in these children’s lives as they realize the hopeful future ahead of them. So far, five Agape students have graduated university, three will finish by the end of this year, and three more will graduate in 2018. The new group starting their higher education paths this year are:

Mukono Christian University

Douglas – Agriculture      Phiona – Economics and management  
Hassan – Education      Jane – Mass communications

African Village

Benjamin Hassan – Christian music

Kitende Christian Boarding School

Elvis – Business and accounting

Elvis obtained First Grade results on the national senior four exams, which makes him one of the best students in Uganda! The school he is attending in Kitende is the best national Christian school in academic distinction. Agape believes he will receive scholarships for university after his next two years at Kitende.



*Agape students are graduating with high grades and continuing their education at vocational schools and universities. To support these students, designate Agape scholarship on your gift.*

### Ecuador

*(Continued from page 4)*

beings. The service project, although exhausting, was so much fun. The opportunity to learn how they construct buildings and their methods behind doing so was awesome. From tying rebar by hand, to mixing concrete with shovels on the slab, to slinging stucco on to walls and learning the finishing process was a unique experience. The maestro (foreman) was probably frustrated at our slow learning curve, but once we got the hang of things, I felt like we were able to get a ton accomplished. It really helped understanding the purpose behind the work that we were doing. The building we were helping with will

help foster children in the Compassion project through meals, schooling and mentorship. It was great knowing that our work will aid in the development of children for years to come. — Trey Phillips

It has been almost a month since I have returned from Ecuador, and I have come back with eyes wide open. As beautiful as the country of Ecuador is, Quito did not reflect that. The failing economy is to blame for this. The hurtful truth was that although the people are extremely hardworking, there are not enough well-paying jobs to sustain their families.

That was one of the first realizations I received from this trip—that they do not have as many opportunities that we Americans have. The work that SIFAT is doing all over the world is astonishing. What I have grasped from their work in Quito is that it is not a temporary fix, but instead they build relationships. Building relationships leads to establishing a system that is self-sustaining. Before this trip, I never perceived that helping does not work if you are just supplying a need without a system in place; you are either disrupting a current system or only temporarily stopping the problem. — Cameron Waddle

## Plans in Ixiamas

Ivan Roman  
Latin America Project Coordinator

In April, SIFAT-Bolivia met at our facilities in Ixiamas, Bolivia, to start coordinating activities and trainings with local pastors and other homesteaders. Angel Roman, SIFAT-Bolivia's president, met with Steve Troyer and the Miller family who are in charge of our campus there. In the past year, they have worked hard on our buildings to have them ready for the training events after this fall's harvest. Most of the pastors from Ixiamas and the surrounding communities met with us seeking empowerment to serve their communities in practical ways. Safe drinking water is the main concern of those who live far out in the jungle. A few years back, SIFAT-Bolivia worked in villages around Ixiamas digging wells. Using a simple and inexpensive technology, Bolivar Sanga, a SIFAT graduate from Ecuador, was able to provide wells for many schools and families. As more people move to the area, the provision of safe drinking water for the new colonies has become a more pressing issue. This pastors' association will meet again in June to organize themselves as agents of change with a clear first objective: safe drinking water. Keep SIFAT-Bolivia, our leaders and the pastors' association in Ixiamas in your prayers. We are excited to see what comes from these meetings. I know you will be thrilled to be a part of this effort for His Glory!



*(Left to right) Thomas Miller, Steve Troyer, Angel Roman and Eduardo Bustillos are planning SIFAT-Bolivia training in Ixiamas for this fall.*

## A Picture is Worth 1,000 Words



*Sofia Karen Calle Picachuri, a teacher in Chijmu, Bolivia, has chosen to make this remote village her new home. Her story is featured on the back cover of this issue in From the Desk of Tom Corson.*



*Our executive director, Tom Corson, was recently in the Quesimpuco area. During this visit, he visited some of the local families and saw their harvests from fields receiving water from microirrigation systems installed by SIFAT teams.*

## Training Opportunities in Quesimpuco Emerge

Bill Brawner

SIFAT Board of Directors Member

During the past 20 years, we have struggled to help the Bolivian communities of our graduates pull out of extreme poverty and develop the spiritual, physical, mental and social aspects of their lives. Now, we feel that we have reached the top of the first big hill, because the children we have worked all these years to help are now adults and putting into practice the things they learned from SIFAT as children.

When Benjo first took us to his home village of Quesimpuco, one of the poorest places in Bolivia, few people could read. There was no school in the surrounding villages, and the school system in Quesimpuco ended with the third grade. During the last few years, we have helped many of the youth who graduated from the high school SIFAT teams built to continue their education at universities. Today, a number of them have returned to this remote region, serving in their own communities as a medical doctor, a dentist, school teachers, farm extension workers, city councilmen and mayors, eagerly working to help their own people. That is what development is all about! It is not what we can do to continue to help impoverished people in Bolivia, but rather what God will enable the people to do for themselves, when they begin to understand the example SIFAT gives of sharing God's love in practical ways. We are so thankful for this vision that God gave our founders 38 years ago, and we are thankful for each one of you who has given of your resources, your time and your prayers to enable SIFAT to carry out this vision.

There have been failures, and we have learned from them. But we see the successes in the last couple of years beginning to multiply, and it amazes us all over again with what God can do. Twenty-one years ago, when we asked for help from some of the larger relief and development agencies working in Bolivia, they told us they had "red-lined" the area around Quesimpuco, meaning they considered the area hopeless. They said it would take millions of dollars to begin to make a difference there, because the villages were so backward and destitute, and these agencies preferred using their money in places with a better chance of helping people develop. Today, this red-lined region is rapidly developing, and it did not take millions of dollars to make that change. It did take millions of hours of time and



*In January, board member Bill Brawner, international training director Kathy Bryson and executive director Tom Corson shared a glass of fresh carrot juice with Dr. Ruth Noemi Mamani between meetings with government officials about SIFAT training plans.*

millions of prayers, given by thousands of people who joined together in SIFAT's ministry. It involved believing in people and giving them a chance to learn. SIFAT is not based on giving handouts. SIFAT is a training institution that teaches people to help themselves and then help others.

The problem in Quesimpuco was so immense when we began that we felt like little ants with a mountain like Mt. Everest to climb. But people began to hear our vision and join us, and today we see many results from our working together! No matter how high the mountain or the problem, when God calls us to do something about it, if we respond, He multiplies our efforts. This is Kingdom work. It is His Kingdom! He is leading! But God does not do it for us. He chooses to use those who love Him and empowers us to do His work. Thank you so much for being part of that work with us. None of us can do it alone. God's Spirit pulls us all together in the Body of Christ and allows us the great privilege of working together with Him.

In late January, SIFAT staff met with the Department of Health of the region around Quesimpuco to discuss how we could work together to help the 25 villages connected to Quesimpuco only by foot trails. We signed a memorandum of understanding to begin regular health and community development training sessions for adults in that area. Please continue to pray for the people of Bolivia and SIFAT's work there.





# Spring 2017

## My Spring Break at SIFAT

Lisa Prasse

Youth Director, Trinity UMC (Tallahassee, Fla.)

My youth and I had the distinct pleasure of experiencing SIFAT over our spring break in March. This visit was to serve as a preparatory mission trip for our team as we aim to go international next year. SIFAT absolutely did not disappoint.

On arriving, we were invited to settle in ... then our journey began. It was unseasonably cold for us thin blooded Floridians, and it was raining. The long hike to the Global Village was not only treacherous for some, but uncomfortable for all! Through it all though, I felt completely confident and safe thanks to the SIFAT interns—Kyle, Will, Sam and Andrew. It was very evident that these “kids” knew exactly what they were doing.

Our entrance to the village was extremely intimidating and gave us tremendous perspective on the lives we live. Our night in the village was miserable—rainy and very cold. We got little to no sleep that night. But the next morning, the team went right to work—girls cooking breakfast and boys working on bricks for buildings. Again, we were tired and hungry, but continued to work as a team. Great perspective for us...

Our Slum Experience was also impacting. The interns were fantastically in character. It was interesting to watch our youth take to the task at hand (obtain food, water and shelter) and

once completed ... they were ready to go. It was difficult for them to just “sit in that” for a long time. They were hungry, cold, tired and frustrated. Later when we debriefed, we discussed how difficult it must be for people actually living in those conditions to experience those emotions for days on end. Our Slum Experience was life altering.



Then, of course there was the time spent working on other jobs, being challenged with team building experiences; learning to live well on so very little and to make the very most of it; playing with the CR88 kids (a local migrant community) and one another, laughing, dancing, worshipping; and growing together through it all.

Our SIFAT experience was more than I could have imagined. I am grateful DAILY for the life I've been blessed to live, and I

pray MORE and harder for those less fortunate than me every single day.

The other part of SIFAT that I must be sure to include was getting to know the interns that week. Those are some of the finest young men that could have led us on all our adventures, and we could not be more grateful for our time there with them and the relationships that were begun. We each look forward to maintaining these friendships with one another and SIFAT.

*(Editor's Note: Meet the interns on page 10)*

## 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://facebook.com/sifatbook)) for updates between newsletters! Sign up for our e-newsletter on our website ([www.sifat.org](http://www.sifat.org)).

**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.

## Summer 2017's Theme: body + soul

As Christians, we are all called to live in mission. But what does that mean? For some it means evangelizing, appealing to the soul and offering someone salvation for their spiritual self. This is what we are called to do as Christians, and it is good and valuable. Additionally, as SIFAT co-founder Sarah Corson said, "Those who feed the hungry are feeding Him; those who give water to the thirsty or care for the sick and imprisoned are doing it for him." At SIFAT, we believe in what Sarah calls the integrated gospel, the saving of not only the spiritual, but the physical self as well. That is our complete mission, and this summer we are going to be exploring that in our theme of body + soul.



SIFAT's Learn & Serve summer experience is a weeklong experience that aims to change the perspective of the youth of America, educate them about global missions and bring them closer to Christ. At SIFAT we think the best way to learn and to grow is to get out of your comfort zone and get hands on. During this week, students will spend around 24 hours each in simulated rural and urban environments (Global Village and Urban Slum). These environments are representative of lower income regions of the developing world where SIFAT works. Students will have the opportunity to live as these people do and walk in their shoes. This experience has been shown to greatly alter people's worldview and help them better understand their mission as Christians. Also within this week, students will have the opportunity to learn about all the amazing things SIFAT teaches and will get a crash course in things like smokeless cookstoves, sustainable agriculture and water purification. Throughout the week, we will have worship and devotions for spiritual development, as well. Finally, we participate in a day of community outreach where staff and students go to be of service to our local community. It is a wonderful experience, and we hope you join us this summer!

## Tube Steel House for SIFAT's Campus

Marie Lanier  
Promotions & Marketing Coordinator

A new appropriate technology house is being built on our campus! Auburn University master's students Trent Huffines and Matt Bell are continuing to combine their building science education with an opportunity to help SIFAT. In early June, they will build a Tube Steel House as part of their capstone. Trent will be focusing on the structure, drawing on his experience in metal fabrication, while Matt will take over the walls, experimenting with recycled materials in a less intensive, but more explorative project.

Trent first became aware of SIFAT during a class last fall when he learned about Building Science's SIFAT team to Ecuador. The combination of service with education interested him, and he thought there was even greater value with a partnership



*A new building is being built by Auburn University's Building Science masters' students Trent Huffines (far left) and Matt Bell (far right), pictured above with Tom Corson and professor Scott Kramer.*

*Continued on page 11*



# Spring 2017

## Meet the Spring Interns

If you visited SIFAT's campus in Alabama this spring, you met our Learn & Serve (L&S) interns. During the transition between campus directors, these four college-aged guys have been essential to provide programming for retreat groups, host tours and help wherever needed. We thought you might like to learn about their journey to becoming an intern.

### Will Atkins

I attended SIFAT the same way many students did, not knowing what to expect and with high hopes. I had only heard stories about how amazing SIFAT was, but when I arrived it was everything I heard and more. From the slum experience to worship in the Quonset Hut, I was taken aback by how different a place this was. It made me see a different perspective of what truly goes on in the world. And after falling in love with the mission and the atmosphere of SIFAT, I decided to apply to work somewhere with meaning.

### Sam Hight

I am 18 and from Crestview, Fla., and I came to Learn & Serve with my church's youth group for the last two years. From my first encounter, I was immediately drawn in by the seclusion, realism and overall truth that was revealed to me. It seemed like day after day, I was being pulled into SIFAT's purpose and mission through experiences such as the slums, Global Village, and especially the impact and simplicity of the appropriate technology. Before, my life did not have much purpose or direction. But with SIFAT, I begin to realize I can be the purpose and direction for other



*(L to R) SIFAT interns Will Atkins, Andrew Robin, Kyle Jackson and Sam Hight are leading groups at SIFAT this spring.*

people who are hurting, in need, or are unreached. So after my time here as a high school student, I knew I was going to dedicate a portion of my life to help impact other people—hopefully as much as my life was when I first came to SIFAT.

### Kyle Jackson

I am 21 years old and a junior at Auburn University. I first came to SIFAT in the summer 2009 as a freshman in high school. I experienced discomfort in a way I never had. This opened my eyes to the plight of people around the world and to how others experienced life. That experience and the three additional summers I attended L&S have shaped me into the person I am today. I was already a Christian when I attended SIFAT; however, I feel that SIFAT helped me to solidify my faith and gave me direction and purpose. When I was first saved, I felt as if I had this new understanding and energy, but nowhere to direct it. After attending L&S, I learned that faith demands action and that there are tangible ways that you can affect positive change in this world. In 2016, I was a summer L&S counselor and experienced an immense amount of growth spiritually and otherwise. I also

really enjoyed my time and interactions with the students. Because of this, I felt that my work with SIFAT was not done, and I wanted to learn as much as I could and continue the work SIFAT does.

### Andrew Robin

I first came to SIFAT as a freshman in high school, little did I know the impact it would have on my life and how it would change the way I think forever. I attended the summer L&S program two more years as a student, and in the summer of 2015, I worked as the L&S media coordinator. I am excited to have this opportunity to work once again at SIFAT as I hope to broaden my reach in ministry and leadership, while seeing where God leads me next.

### Learn & Serve Interns Needed for 2017 - 2018

Are you a college-aged person wanting to serve on our campus? Internships with our Learn & Serve campus programs are available!

Questions? Go to [www.sifat.org/learn-serve](http://www.sifat.org/learn-serve) for information or email Angie, [strykera@sifat.org](mailto:strykera@sifat.org)



## Work Team Celebrates 10 Years at SIFAT

Marie Lanier  
Promotions & Marketing Coordinator

This spring, our campus was once again blessed by hardworking volunteers from Clear Lake UMC in Texas. For the past 10 years, Clear Lake's team has served SIFAT by helping with projects both financially and physically. From building a fire exit with deck on the back of the Lodge and roofing the pole barn to helping price items in the SIFAT Village Store and painting all kinds of things, these men and women return each year ready to lend a hand.

This year's major project was erecting the appropriate technology pavilion that was recently moved across campus. However, two weeks before they arrived, a storm damaged the Village Store and one of our entrance gates. The team pitched in and went to work repairing the damage, in addition to their original plans. They also made curtains for the guest house, merchandised store items and helped with routine campus maintenance.

Without work teams, SIFAT could not have a wonderful campus to welcome visitors from across the United States and throughout the world. If you are interested in bringing a work team to SIFAT, contact campus director Angie Stryker, [strykera@sifat.org](mailto:strykera@sifat.org).



### Tube Steel House

*(Continued from page 9)*

with SIFAT – a faith-based organization. This experience drew him into wanting to do his research this spring and summer with SIFAT.

“This project gives people in developing communities a reliable, sturdy and sustainable structure,” Trent said. “The house can be customized later by the people with the construction and design of the interior space as needed for their family.”

In a remote area of Panama, Auburn UMC mission teams have constructed about 20 Tube Steel Houses and plans to continue their work in the future with another 30 houses. Auburn University's McWhorter School of Building Science capstone projects are making improvements on the original design and implementation of building a Tube Steel House that could be

used in different countries. These homes are being designed for a kit build; mission teams have a crate of parts and instructions that they can easily put together if one person has construction skills and a labor pool of volunteers and/or local community members. Tube steel gives these new homes a much greater longevity than using traditional building materials that do not last because of harsh environments.

The house will be approximately 400 square feet, and the majority of the structure is designed to be built in one week, though finishing the walls and interior will take longer. Although the structure is not designed with modern amenities, such as a kitchen and indoor plumbing, a rain collection system could be added in the future.



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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.

## From the Desk of Tom Corson

I recently returned from a mission beyond Quesimpuco, Bolivia, with a team from Mt. Bethel UMC in Atlanta. Their church had given SIFAT a grant to build a much-needed health care center in a small, isolated village called Chijmu, high in the Andes Mountains. We were inspired by all the people there, most of whom are Christians because of former contact with SIFAT teams. But, I want to tell you about just one of them. Sofia Karen Calle Picachuri leads in the struggle to help the people of Chijmu develop and pull out of poverty.

As a young teacher, her first assignment was to teach a year in Chijmu for her required practice year. Most teachers do not want to work so far away from any town, but after her practice year, Sofia did not want to leave. She has dedicated her life to the people of Chijmu and plans to stay. "I loved the children so much, I could not bear to leave them," Sofia said. "I felt like they were my own children, so I became one of the people there. Now, Chijmu is my home."

Single-handedly, she advocated for a new school building so forcefully that finally the government helped the community with materials to build it. When the children graduate from the elementary grades, they go to nearby Quesimpuco and stay in SIFAT's dormitory during the week to go to high school. During this time, Patricio, a native of Chijmu and one of the first Bolivian SIFAT graduates, became a pastor and has led

virtually everyone in the village to Christ.

Three of the most important things SIFAT is concerned with are health, education, and spiritual formation—the integrated Gospel of body, mind and soul. Along with the church and the school, Teacher Sofia and Pastor Patricio led in promoting health care. Dr. Ruth Noemi, a SIFAT graduate, is now a doctor in Quesimpuco. She made day trips to teach sanitation and health to the villagers of Chijmu, but there was no place for her to spend the night to work more than one day at a time. Sofia and Patricio encouraged the community to write a proposal to SIFAT for a health care center. When Mt. Bethel agreed to fund the building, the third important aspect of integrated development became possible—health care.

One woman's love and determination to help the children of Chijmu has changed the entire village. Others, inspired by her vision, began to help, and now the people of Chijmu, where many people died each year of hunger when SIFAT first met them, are working hard to bring *Abundant Life* to all in their village. They have irrigation now, so they have enough food. They have a school with a passionate teacher and a live church with a dedicated pastor. The people of the community are putting on the roof of the health care center we worked on together. You are part of this success! Stay with us and help us change the brokenness of our world, one village at a time!