

Celebrating 40 Years — From a Kitchen Table to a Ministry

Ken Corson
SIFAT Co-founder

While our family of six was living in a hut at subsistence level to do the mission God called us to do in Bolivia, friends and churches were building a modern home for us on Sarah's parents' farm. This home provided a base of operations to establish SIFAT. The home became our capital and a resource from which we could develop new forms of ministry using faith and technology.

Our dining room table was our office. We cleared it at mealtimes to serve as the cafeteria for our family and the volunteers who lived with us. This home served as a dorm for two to 12 volunteers at a time and a guest house for the many visitors who began to come. I remember one day in 1979, people from seven different countries passing through Alabama dropped by without prior notice to find out about SIFAT. They all ended up being there at noon. We talked about our vision of sharing God's love in practical ways over lunch, which miraculously stretched to feed everyone. Even though our home was in a pine forest, the world seemed to find its way to our door. Such spontaneous interest in SIFAT confirmed to us that the SIFAT vision was worth pursuing, whatever the cost.

Our yard became a workshop for experimenting with appropriate technologies. For us, appropriate technology meant taking the resources at hand for our basic needs. Our experiences had taught us that welfare is not a good way truly to help people. Appropriate technology could promote self help instead of handouts for needy people.

In a large way, the goodwill of the people who built this house for us furnished the working capital for SIFAT and the seeds of what SIFAT accomplished for 40 years. The idea of building the house came from Benny and Hilda Camp and Tony and Geneva Messer. Many friends and churches joined them. When we came back from our Bolivian mission on January 1, 1979, the house was ready for us to move in.

They not only built a house. They furnished the foundation of a ministry that has trained church and community leaders in more than 90 countries, founded churches and schools which have called and equipped numerous Christian workers, started the first hospital and the first high school in a remote area of the Andes, encouraged self-help microenterprises, trained health promoters, and built daycare centers that care for approximately 3000 preschool children living in the slums of Ecuador. Boarding schools have made it possible for children to attend school that otherwise would not have been able to learn to read.

(continued on page 6)



Ken and Sarah Corson founded SIFAT in May 1979, and even after retiring, they are still involved today.

A Day in the Life at the May Field Study

Sarah Corson
SIFAT Co-founder

In SIFAT's practicums, field studies or workshops, we always learn from our students and instructors. Our students come from different countries and cultures, and each has something to offer. This year in the May Field Study, a leader from the relatively isolated Maasai tribe in Kenya joined us.

One night, a student remarked that learning about so much need in the world made him want to give up. "What little good I can do in the face of world hunger and poverty wouldn't even count!" he declared. Responding to his desperation, training director Kathy Bryson picked up a children's book she had recently purchased.

One of the Maasai received a scholarship to study in New York and was there on 9/11. He witnessed the devastation, the thousands of people dying and being buried alive, when the buildings fell. When he returned to his village, everyone came out to welcome him home. "Did you bring us a story?" the villagers asked. They always expected a gift of a story when one traveled out into the world.

"Yes," he said, "I brought you a sad story that has burned a hole in my heart." The village people sat around him and listened as he told them about buildings so high they could touch the sky, fires so hot they could melt iron, smoke and dust so thick they blocked the sun, and how more than 3,000 people died. The people had no words to respond; some were crying quietly. Finally, a community leader spoke, "Three thousand people killed in one day? We must do something to help those poor people! What can we do for America?"

Kathy continued the story: "The people decided to send them the most valuable things they own—cows. The Maasai did not think their gifts were too small to help."

Cows are the livelihood for the Maasai. To the Maasai, the cow is life, both food and bank account. Holding the book up, Kathy asked Fred if he had seen the book about his people, and if the story were true. Fred responded, "Yes, I know that

story well. I was part of this village, but I did not know they wrote a book about us."

"Do you want to read the story to us?" Kathy asked Fred. "It is your story. We can be like your village and gather around you while you read it to us." Fred felt honored to do so. The class gathered around him, sitting on the floor as he sat in the center and read the short book to them. Tears were in their eyes as they listened to him read about his village, which had no electricity, or modern conveniences, only cows. The village wrote the U.S. Ambassador to invite him to their village. When he came, he was surprised because they had 14 cows, which represented a big portion of their village's wealth. "Please, will you take our cows and give them to the people who are suffering in New York?" they asked him.

The ambassador took the cows and made a special place for them in a memorial center open to the public to help the needy and promote peace among nations. Their gift inspired many people to give to help others in need.

Kimeli Naiyomah is the man who saw the tragedy in New York on 9/11 and brought the story to his village. He wrote in the book, "The Maasai

wish is that every time Americans hear this simple story of 14 cows, they will find a measure of comfort and peace, because there is no nation so powerful it cannot be wounded, nor a people so small they cannot offer comfort." Hearing the story from Fred, a Maasai, the student who felt he could not help the poor at the beginning of the class was changed and eagerly finished the field study classes.

SIFAT held two field trainings this year, one in May and one in August. Each time our students gather for a SIFAT training from different countries and cultures, they arrive as strangers, but usually we become a community as one people seeking how each of us can help those who are hungry for food, for belonging and for their basic human needs. By the end of our trainings, we all have learned from each other and made friendships that will last the rest of our lives. There are many wonderful moments like the one in May this year

(continued on page 6)



During the Field Study trainings, international guests often share their personal stories. Fred, a member of the Maasai of Kenya, led one of the evening sessions to share his experiences in development work.

Impacting Lives in Central America

Kathy Bryson
International Training Director

I want to share with you the unique opportunity that God has given SIFAT to impact the lives of many in Central America.

The infamous Dry Corridor runs throughout much of Central America, where life for thousands of subsistent rural farm families depends on whether it rains and the crops produce. In recent years, erratic weather patterns of drought and then too much rain have destroyed 50 percent of the maize crops and 80 percent of the bean crops, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization and the World Food Programme. This lack of production of the staple foods is having severe consequences on families struggling for survival.

Malnutrition in the most vulnerable children has increased. Many are forced to sell their farm tools and seeds for food. Some give up trying to produce food after yet another season of failed crops. Too often, they give up on the family farm and immigrate to neighboring countries seeking work for survival. (60 percent who come to the U.S. border seeking admittance are from this region).

At SIFAT, we have a unique opportunity to share proven solutions that target root causes of food insecurity and migration. When families have hope that they can provide for their children and have a decent life, they usually choose to stay in their own familiar community and country. SIFAT has

found throughout the past 40 years that some of the best solutions are also found at home—near the community—using what is at hand and what can be sustained by local people.

Sometimes, it takes someone from a different country or region to come and share what has worked for them in similar situations to offer new ideas and appropriate technologies. This is what we are fostering in Costa Rica for Central America and beyond—creating



A local farmer inspects organic fertilizers and pesticides during a recent training at our training center in Costa Rica.

a network of experts from regional agriculture universities, nonprofit agencies, missions, churches and individuals who have proven solutions to problems of poverty and lack of food, water and basic human needs. Then, we glean the best practices and appropriate technologies and set up demonstration models in one place, so people can come to see appropriate technology models in action, participate in trainings and return to their communities to replicate and train others.

We invited ECHO, a nonprofit in Ft. Myers, Fla., to partner with us to host the first regional networking conference of a select group of people

from seven Latin American countries at SIFAT's new training center at the Methodist Retreat Center in Costa Rica. For three days, we shared ideas with each other that have been successful in our work attacking root causes of poverty and hunger. Thanks to ECHO's Latin American coordinator, we are now linked together via internet to continue to share ideas and promote community trainings.

Participants discussed literacy training, water catchment system designs, drought resistant plants, recycling grey water for irrigation, small highly productive kitchen gardens, fortifying foods with green leaf powder to combat malnutrition, preserving seeds and promoting microenterprise. Everyone left inspired with new ideas of things to implement in communities throughout Honduras, Nicaragua, Guatemala, El Salvador, Costa Rica

and beyond. SIFAT plans to continue networking throughout Latin America to promote positive changes that impact root causes of hunger and poverty.

Our new SIFAT Latin American Training Center will allow us to reach more people with practical, life-saving skills in a local context and language. The climate allows us to have year-round demonstration gardens with tropical plants. Internationals can more readily obtain visas for Costa Rica. Our training in Lineville, Ala., will continue for people from the USA and for those from other countries who receive visas.

Our First Training in Costa Rica

Marie Lanier
Promotions and Marketing Coordinator

On April 7, 2019, a bus traveling for almost 30 hours from Honduras arrived at the Rural Methodist Camp in Ciudad Quesada, Costa Rica, for our first international training event there. This bus held 45 students from the national agricultural university (UNA), professors and SIFAT training alumni from UNA (AHESUNA). During the following week, they broke into small groups to install appropriate technology demonstrations and put their university classes into practice. Dave and Therese Kennedy of Leaf for Life also trained everyone in ways to process, store and use nutrient-rich green plants throughout the year, not just when they are in season. Omar Romagnoli with Water Watch assisted with training, as well. Other participants included a refugee family from Venezuela and visits from local UMC pastors to learn more about SIFAT's training by seeing it firsthand.



Our first training in Costa Rica was a success! Eight countries were represented during this weeklong event. Friday morning began with training director Kathy Bryson welcoming UMC pastors and a district superintendent, professors from a nearby university and SIFAT staff and guests from the USA. Each team from UNA presented its project and explained the process of installing it and the benefits of the design. That evening, a graduation ceremony was held to present certificates from SIFAT and Leaf for Life. AHESUNA shared what they have been doing with their training in their local communities and encouraged these new training graduates to join their organization and to stay involved by continuing to serve others and to keep learning more appropriate technology with SIFAT training retreats.

Thank you to everyone who is making our training center in Costa Rica possible. We are excited about the possibilities and the upcoming events planned. We cannot do this without your support and commitment to SIFAT.



SIFAT staff and guests invited the AHESUNA attendees to share about their careers and ways they have been implementing SIFAT training. While two are still taking university classes, the other four took vacation time to attend the training in Costa Rica and mentor current UNA students. David Rojas and Cecilia Guerra are AHESUNA members in Costa Rica preparing for trainings and helping establish SIFAT demonstrations.



Making progress: It was exciting for our SIFAT staff and guests to visit the camp and see how much progress the students were making. Although they often worked late into the evening to meet their goal of having the projects finished by Friday morning, these students gladly paused to explain their plans and what they were currently doing.

My New Friend Pilar

Kathy Bryson
International Training Director

I ran into town to pick up supplies for our next training session. There she was on the street at the entrance of the store, a tiny elderly white-haired lady, less than 5 feet tall, for sure. Her brown face was leathered, deeply creased by wrinkles acquired by an undoubtedly hard life. She stretched out her hand asking for coins from passersby. A businessman plunked a coin in her cup as he raced by, not stopping to look. Another well dressed lady added a coin as she hurried on.

I went past her into the store. I do not usually give money to people on the street. But I could not get her out of my mind. As I selected the poster paper for my nutrition class, I contemplated my options. As I left the store, there she was looking up at me with her toothless grin, hopeful, because I had looked into her face, acknowledged her humanity.

“What is your name?” I asked her. “Pilar,” she answered. I shook her hand, “I’m Kathy. Glad to meet you.” “God bless you,” she said, smiling sweetly. “What do you need?” I inquired. “Food,” she said without hesitation. “You don’t have any food?” I asked.

“No, I get a small pension—enough to have a room here in town, but there is no money left for food. My husband died. I am a widow,” she said. “Me too,” I replied. She looked surprised, as I was much younger than she. She was 84, the same age as my mother.

“I’ll come back,” I said. She patted my hand, not sure what to think. I had to go several blocks to find some tortillas, beans and canned tuna for her. How could I teach a class on nutrition tomorrow, but not help this hungry elderly woman today?

It was getting late in the day. When I returned to look for her, she was getting ready to leave, collecting her garments, her little coin cup and her cane. She looked surprised to see me. Then, her dark eyes shining, she extended her coin cup and invited me for a cup of coffee. I paused; I had so much work to do. But then, how could I not? When I accepted, her face lit up like an angel.

As we dodged traffic, and I walked slowly with her limping with her cane across the street to an open air café, it occurred to me how similar we were. Yes, our life’s journeys had taken different turns. But, ultimately, we love, we grieve, we hope, we weep, we laugh, we breathe...and we like to be able to have something to share.

I sat down with Pilar, and we talked. That black cup of Costa Rican coffee, despite having a couple of tear drops added, was the smoothest, most delicious coffee I ever had. She told me about her life and her family. “My husband died years ago. We had to leave the land he was farming, as we did not own it. Our two children died young. My other daughter ran away with a Nicaraguan man at 14, and we never saw her again. But, life goes on....”

“You must be a Christian,” she said to me suddenly. “Yes,” I said. “How did you know?” “I could just tell,” she said. “Will you pray for me?” We prayed together. Then, I shared with her about how in her little corner room she could have a sack garden with fresh vegetables—a technique SIFAT teaches. She got excited about it.

It was getting late. As I gave her the bag with the tortillas, beans and tuna, I thanked her for the coffee and her friendship. She hugged me, and as I waited for my bus, I watched her hobble down the street into the sunset.



Two of our Honduran interns, Angie and Diana, show Kathy the research/demonstration plots for amaranth, an under utilized highly nutritious, drought resistant plant, at our training center in Costa Rica.

Would you support SIFAT's work in Costa Rica? We still need to make improvements to the existing camp where our Latin American Training Center is located and fund training seminars. Designate your donation Costa Rica Training.

Remembering Isaac

In early June, we received devastating news from our CENATEC family in Bolivia. Isaac Paredes, age 48, was killed in a single vehicle wreck in rural Bolivia. Although we do not know many details, we understand that tires blew out, causing the vehicle to flip several times. Isaac and a passenger died, while one other person survived.

As you can imagine, this sudden loss took everyone by surprise. For those who did not know Isaac, he was Benjo's son and led CENATEC's work in Bolivia for the past several years. Our SIFAT mission teams to Bolivia know Isaac well and were looking forward to seeing him in August. Tom Corson, our executive director, traveled to La Paz in late June to visit the Paredes family and help CENATEC make plans for the future.

Please keep Isaac's wife Judith and their two children in your thoughts and prayers, as well as Benjo, Basilia and the rest of the extended Paredes family.

Isaac had recently taken a second job as a driver to pay for medical bills from his children's recent surgeries for on-going medical conditions. If you would like to make a donation to help his family finish paying these bills and cover the children's school fees, please designate your gift

Isaac Paredes Family.



Celebrating 40 Years

(Continued from Page 1)

Many have come to know Christ for the first time and have established churches where none existed before.

Those who built the house for us in 1979 could not have envisioned what this act of love would become. Through their generosity, they have touched the lives of tens of thousands of people. Their faith has gone around the world and our God of Love has been, and is being, proclaimed in both Word and Deed. We stand in awe at what God has done!

Through 40 years now, others have continued to be part of SIFAT with their volunteer time, their talents and their resources. God has used thousands of people working together for four decades to make SIFAT. Will you join us and share your time, your talent and your resources with the needy of the world through SIFAT? We need you! You can help bring the world closer to God!

Field Study

(Continued from Page 2)

when the students were touched by our brother Fred from the Maasai of Kenya.

The poverty in which more than half the world's people live is shocking. Some do not want to hear of so much suffering, not knowing what they can do to help. But the purpose of SIFAT is to teach ways and methods that ordinary people can use to help others out of their suffering and poverty. That is what our practicums, our seminars and our field studies are about. We believe that anything, however small, that one does to help, can be multiplied to reach many more. Yes, we believe with our Maasai brothers and sisters that no person or country is so great that they cannot be hurt, and none of us so small or have so little that we cannot offer comfort.

Changes in Ecuador

Peggy Walker
International Team Coordinator

At the end of 2020, we look forward to celebrating the completion of a long awaited addition to the church in Aida Leon, built by SIFAT teams to provide a safe shelter for the children in this marginalized community. The name of the church, Esperanza Eterna or Eternal Hope, seemed more appropriate each year as the community waited and prayed for their dream to become a reality.

After a 10-year delay because the church was unable to get a permit for the building, SIFAT short-term mission teams finally broke ground in February 2018. The construction site is on a small plot of land on an impossibly steep hillside, where even seasoned builders wondered how this could be done by inexperienced volunteer labor. They did not know our SIFAT teams!

Team members from 16 to 83 years of age jumped right in and never asked how. They worked tirelessly alongside the people in the community to do whatever task was given them. As they got to know and love the children whose lives would be forever changed by having the use of this facility, their only frustration was not having the time to do more.

In 2020, SIFAT teams and our supporters will play an even more important role in what happens to these children in the future. SIFAT has been working together with Compassion

International for the past 11 years in Ecuador. It was a partnership that ensured Compassion would step in once we completed the buildings and provide funds for tutoring, hot meals, help with school uniforms and some medical care for the children in each of our projects. Each location was at a church whose pastor or pastor's wife is a SIFAT graduate and was named Compassion International project site. Compassion has now changed its focus in Ecuador and is leaving most places in the urban areas to concentrate its efforts in rural villages.



SIFAT will not abandon these children, but we need your help to make sure this dream, so hoped and prayed for by the church in Aida Leon, will be completed next year. Dr. Roberto Contreras, SIFAT Ecuador director, is exploring a partnership with other organizations that offer programs similar to those of Compassion International. Until that happens, however, SIFAT teams will be providing most of the medical care for the children in all eight of our projects in Ecuador and will be helping those churches to meet their commitment to serve the children.

We need several more medical, dental and construction/VBS teams for 2020. If you will consider leading a team and need help with recruiting team members, please get in touch with Peggy at walkerp@sifat.org. We especially need teams in April, early May and in August. I promise, working with these children in Ecuador will change your lives forever.

Shop the Village Store this Christmas!



Are you looking for unique Christmas gifts for your friends and family this season? We can set up shopping appointments for you or a group to visit the SIFAT Village Store, or if you are too far away, we can be your personal shoppers, even sending your present directly to the recipient!

Some of our inventory is available online (sifatvillagestore.ecwid.com). Call SIFAT or e-mail villagestore@sifat.org for more options!



Thank You to Our 2019 Mission Teams to Bolivia and Ecuador

Auburn University Engineers Without Borders • Auburn University McWhorter School of Building Science (two teams) • Auburn University School of Nursing* • Centra College • University of West Georgia's Department of Communication Sciences and Professional Counseling in the College of Education • South Carolina UVM • Tallassee FUMC • Duncan Memorial UMC (Alexander City, Ala.) • St. Luke UMC (Pensacola, Fla.)* • Clear Lake UMC (Clear Lake, Texas) • Alexander City Methodist Church • Guntersville FUMC* • Chapelwood UMC (Athens, Ga.)* • Gulf Shores UMC

* medical team

Progress in Aida Leon



Our Ecuador mission teams finished year two at Iglesia Esperanza Eterna in Aida Leon!

You can see the progress of the ground floor exterior walls and the beginning of the first floor's walls. A basement storage room was added to the plans, too.

Off-season Teams Needed for Ecuador

Peggy Walker
International Training Coordinator

SIFAT short-term mission teams have done incredible work the last two years building a three-story facility to serve as a safe shelter for children in Aida Leon. We are praying this project can be finished in 2020, but we need additional teams to meet this goal.

It has become harder every year to schedule enough teams to serve with us in Ecuador, because most teams want to travel only in June or July when school is out. The weather in Ecuador is beautiful all year, so wouldn't it be wonderful during the dog days of August here in the USA to plan a trip to help SIFAT complete this building in a beautiful city where the temperature is 70 degrees?

Please talk to your churches and friends about taking a construction or medical team with a VBS component during an off season month in 2020 to serve with us in Ecuador. The children are eagerly awaiting the completion of this much needed new building as they have no place to go until those doors are open. The church is named Esperanza Eterna, Eternal Hope. With your help, we can finish the facility next year, and their hopeful prayers for a place to be loved, nurtured, and in as safe place can, at last, become a reality.



If you want to lead a new team or join an existing team to Ecuador, please contact Peggy, walkerp@sifat.org.

Ecuador Teams Step Up

Peggy Walker
International Team Coordinator

All children in Ecuador must have regulation uniforms to enter public school each year, including two pair of shoes. An entire uniform costs almost \$150! As you can imagine, in the poor areas where we serve, it is almost impossible for parents to pay this amount every year without some financial help. Their children are not allowed to attend school without complete uniforms.

In the past, our church projects received a large percentage of funds from Compassion International for these uniforms. But in Ecuador, Compassion has now changed its focus and is no longer going to sponsor most projects in urban areas, concentrating instead on rural sites.

Our short-term mission teams saw the helplessness the pastors in our SIFAT projects felt because their churches could not afford to buy the necessary shoes. Chapelwood UMC, Clear Lake

UMC, and Guntersville FUMC all raised funds to buy shoes for the children in our Aida Leon, Calderon and Villaflora projects. One dedicated couple created a GoFundMe fund raiser, so their network of friends outside of Clear Lake would have the opportunity to give! Together, more than \$5,300 bought much needed school shoes.



Dr. Roberto Contreras and Pastor Wilson with some of the shoes our teams provided.

This is going to be an ongoing problem for these children, and it is heartbreaking, because they have no

chance of breaking out of this cycle of poverty without a good education. SIFAT and the Ecuadorian pastors in each of the churches where we have built facilities for the children are looking for other funding, but no one know when this might come.

SIFAT is honored to work with our teams. They see a need and always try to find a solution, so these at-risk children will not fall through the cracks. Our teams have worked with these kids before they were old enough for school, love them and care about their future. Until a solution is found, our teams might be asked to help again, and I have no doubt they will generously do so.

Each child needs a pair of black school shoes and a pair of white sneakers. Shoes are heavy and difficult to transport to Ecuador, but if you, your church or organization would like to have a shoe drive for the children, or even better, raise funds to purchase the shoes, please contact Peggy or Marie at SIFAT for more information.

Worship on the Water

Marie Lanier
Promotions & Marketing Coordinator



Our largest crowd attended the last service of the summer, when almost 292 people came on 24 boats and seven golf carts!

Each summer, SIFAT sponsors Worship on the Water (WOW), a nondenominational, casual worship service held at Lakeside Marina in Wedowee at 9 a.m. on Sunday mornings from Memorial Day Weekend through Labor Day Weekend. We invite local ministers and musical groups to lead the service, which is one way for SIFAT to give back to our local community and let weekend visitors and residents know about SIFAT's mission and programs.

Although WOW is in its 11th year, we met many new attendees this year. One family drove from Anniston and invited family friends each week. They start their morning with WOW before spending the rest of the day on the lake. Two musical groups came from churches that send mission teams to Ecuador with SIFAT.

Inspiring International Graduate Projects

Marie Lanier
Promotions & Marketing Coordinator

To help victims of hunger and lack of basic needs overcome the tremendous forces that impoverish them, SIFAT trains church and community leaders to address the needs of the whole person — body, mind and soul.

Training is the beginning, but not the end! Those who graduate from SIFAT's training often need the seed and tools to get projects for their ministries off the ground. That is where our International Graduate Projects fills the gap. **SIFAT serves as the bridge between people in need and people who want to help, and we offer you an opportunity to work alongside our graduates and their communities.**

In 2016, a committee from the SIFAT Board of Directors led by Art Stephenson reorganized the process of accepting and fund raising for our International Graduate Projects. Since this reorganization, SIFAT supporters have sponsored 30 projects totaling \$222,861.98! We also have three current projects with a combined total goal of \$29,022. You can read project summaries on our website to learn more about the ways SIFAT graduates are helping their communities because of the encouragement and funding of our supporters!

In 2019, eight projects have been approved so far, compared to seven projects in 2018, 16 in 2017 and two in 2016. Matching funds from a generous donor have helped fund projects in 2018 and 2019.

By the Numbers: (as of Aug. 2019):

- Number of projects approved since October 2016: 33
- Number of projects approved and fully funded since Oct. 2016: 30
- Funds raised for Graduate Projects since 2016: \$222,862



Above: We recently received sad news that Mr. Mathias, one of the beneficiaries of SIFAT graduate Raphael's farm project in Nigeria passed away. What a blessing for his wife and seven children to have the corn field and source of income!

Below: SIFAT graduate Samuel is working with women in his community in Haiti to teach agricultural skills, so they can grow food for their families with excess to sell. The women are even providing fresh produce for their local school.



[www.sifat.org/international-missions/
international-projects](http://www.sifat.org/international-missions/international-projects)

Irrigation for Iputi

Tom Corson
Executive Director

Farmers work hard the world over. In Bolivia, farmers work really hard. They cannot control rainfall, and when rains are inconsistent, they cannot count on growing food. Almost 40 percent of Bolivians live in poverty, one of the highest rates in South America. Most of the rural households depend on agriculture and eat only what they can grow themselves. Nearly two-thirds of households in Bolivia do not earn enough money to afford sufficient amounts of food, making it a country with the highest level of undernourishment in South America.

For the past two years, SIFAT has been working with Auburn University's Engineers Without Borders to design an irrigation system that will provide water for 21 families in the village of Iputi, just down the hill from Quesimpuco. These families have

tried to farm this fertile land for years with mixed success relying on seasonal rainfall to water their crops. The microclimate in this valley could be an oasis and has grown peaches, citrus and



all kinds of vegetables in the past, but the dead fruit trees give testimony to what lack of water will do, even if you have good soil.

In September, for the first time in history, our team of dedicated students and professors were able to celebrate with these 21 Bolivian families their now having access to water all year long. This will allow families like our own graduates, Dr. Ruth Naomi and her husband Pastor William, to live and serve in this impoverished community, not just hoping they can grow one crop a year, but knowing they can grow three or maybe four. We can now celebrate with our brothers and sisters of Iputi, food security, increased yields and increased income from selling extra crops.

Plans are being made to begin in another village in 2020, which will be the fourth village to receive an irrigation system from SIFAT teams.

Meet Our Campus Staff

Marie Lanier
Promotions & Marketing Coordinator

This spring, we welcomed two new people to our full time staff, Sam Gochey and Collin Campbell. However, they are not new to SIFAT. Both were participants in our Summer Experience with their youth groups during high school and later became Learn & Serve counselors while they were in college.

Sam grew up in Mobile, Ala., and recently received a bachelor's degree in history from the University of South Alabama. Before coming to SIFAT, Sam worked in both children's and student ministry at Christ United Methodist Church in Mobile, Ala. After more

than a decade of being a Learn & Serve participant, summer counselor and frequent volunteer, Sam has joined our staff as campus director. He, his wife, Alissa, and their dog, Susie, are waiting to meet you on your next visit.

Collin is a native of central Florida and recently received a bachelor's degree in outdoor ministry from Montreat College in North Carolina. After serving as assistant director at the Tennessee Tech Wesley Foundation, Collin joined our staff as the campus program manager. Collin is passionate about SIFAT's ministry and looks forward to seeing you during campus programming.



Learn & Serve Summer Experience

Collin Campbell
Campus Program Manager

In June and July, youth from throughout the United States come to SIFAT to learn about the world and gain the tools to serve their local communities. Students are challenged to live in our Global Village and learn firsthand the problems faced in the developing world. They are equipped with simple solutions to these struggles and given an opportunity to respond to what they have experienced by serving our local community.

This summer, we were blessed to learn from SIFAT graduate Isaiah Chot, from the Democratic Republic of Congo. Our friend Isaiah said, "SIFAT's Summer Experience is a place to learn, share cultural experiences, interact with communities from different backgrounds and develop people's minds to serve the world for God."

This program has impacted the lives of hundreds of young people over the years. Our current intern Zach shared, "In 2009, I first visited SIFAT with my youth group. Every summer since then, I have returned. Last year, I was a Learn & Serve counselor and am currently a full-time intern working and living at SIFAT year round. When I came to SIFAT 10 years ago, something happened while I was here. The connection I felt with God was unprecedented. Every time I came to SIFAT as a camper I felt that same connection. I

believe God has blessed this place, Learn & Serve, and blesses everyone who steps foot on SIFAT's beautiful campus. We are always challenged to wrestle with difficult questions related to hunger, injustice and poverty. Learn & Serve is such an eye-opening experience for middle and high school students."

This summer, our theme is *Enough*. Every day, approximately half of the 7.7 billion people on earth struggle with hunger. And yet, every day, the world produces the calories to feed 10 billion people. There is Enough. Those who come to Learn & Serve will understand this powerful message of the Gospel: that God has provided enough for everyone, God's love is Enough for everyone, and it is our opportunity to share it with the whole wide world. Call or e-mail learnandserve@sifat.org to sign up today!

Week One:	June 7 - 11, 2020
Week Two:	June 14 - 18, 2020
Week Three:	June 21 - 25, 2020
Week Four:	July 5 - 9, 2020
Week Five:	July 12 - 16, 2020
Week Six:	July 19 - 23, 2020
Week Seven:	July 26 - 30, 2020

Register before Dec. 31 for \$275
Price increases to \$299 on Jan. 1, 2020.
Individuals and groups welcome!

Take a SHARE in SIFAT

Be part of SIFAT all year! Our monthly commitments — the SHARE program — help us budget throughout the year. Sign up at www.sifat.org/donate or contact Marie Lanier, lanierm@sifat.org, for more information.

Planning for SIFAT's Future

Did you know that you can donate stocks or leave provisions for SIFAT in your will? Contact executive director Tom Corson, corsont@sifat.org, for more information.

Give Online

www.sifat.org/donate

Shop for a Cause

Everyday online purchases can also raise money for SIFAT! As you shop this holiday season, remember to shop with purpose!

Use the Goodshop or iGive links below, and thousands of retailers will donate a percentage of your purchase to SIFAT.

www.goodshop.com/nonprofit/servants-in-faith-and-technology-sifat

www.igive.com/sifat

AmazonSmile donates .5% of each purchase made on Amazon to SIFAT

www.smile.amazon.com/ch/63-0776048 - Android users can now download an AmazonSmile app.

Learn & Serve Helps Local Community



Collin Campbell
Campus Program Manager

This summer, during our Learn & Serve Summer Experience students from all over the United States had an opportunity *think globally and act locally*. After learning about the needs of people across the world, middle and high school students were challenged to respond through service in our local community.

Continuing a partnership with Les Robinson at the Clay County Street

Department, we had a great time cleaning up the town. Les created a fun environment for SIFAT students as they worked hard to clean up the park, flower beds and local schools. During the summer, SIFAT provided more than 600 hours of service to the local community!

We also realized that though SIFAT was providing a service to the community, the community was also serving us. There is a beautiful and symbiotic relationship that forms when we *think globally and act locally*.

Two New Books Published by SIFAT

We convinced two men who had been very active in SIFAT to write their autobiographies for SIFAT to publish. On September 20, 2019, these authors gave their testimonies, and we held a book signing as part of our 40th anniversary celebrations. The two are as different as two people can be. But, they both are a tremendous example of what God can do with anyone's life if we give ourselves to Christ.

Art Stephenson, former Director of NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville, Ala., worked in the space industry for 50 years. He shares his life story from childhood to working on America's space programs while balancing family time and finding time to serve others through his church. Now retired, he spends hundreds of hours working with SIFAT, helping our graduates develop their projects for their impoverished communities. Art is a member of our board of directors and leads campus work teams and SIFAT mission teams to Ecuador.

Benjo (pronounced Ben-ho) Paredes has overcome obstacles most of us will never face. A descendant of the Incas in South America, Benjo used his fourth-grade education plus night school to become a businessman. He led people to Christ and started churches where there were none. He led 80 communities in Bolivia to get clean water systems. He was key in the formation of what became SIFAT.

Two authors from very different backgrounds and cultures are brought together in the ministry of SIFAT. They show that God loves and uses us all no matter how rich or poor, how educated formally or not, or from which country or

culture we come. With God, there are no favorites. He wants to use us all!

You will be inspired by reading these two autobiographies—one written in Houston, Texas, on a computer with the latest electronic equipment, the other written in a humble jungle home in Sapecho, Bolivia, with a pencil and arthritic fingers. Both books make us want to do more for Christ!



Order Online: sifatvillagestore.ecwid.com

Celebrating our Graduates' Work

Ken Corson
SIFAT Co-founder

Forty years ago the world changed. But to say that the world changed, I do not refer to the transition from the second millennium to the third, nor the change from the 20th Century to the 21st. The change I refer to is the creation of a small Christian nonprofit founded in the basement of the Wedowee First United Methodist Church with the odd acronym SIFAT.

We do not simply celebrate 40 years of existence. We are celebrating 40 years that have changed the lives of thousands of people. There are people alive today who would not be here if there was no SIFAT. There are people who now walk who would have been crippled if there was no SIFAT. There are people who see who would be blind if there was no SIFAT. There are villages and towns with clean water, better nutrition and people with skills that have equipped them to make a living. There are people who can read, who have become leaders in serving humanity, who without SIFAT may not have risen above subsistence. There are people who now follow Jesus Christ and His Gospel of Love instead of the violence and greed in which they grew up. What we celebrate today is 40 years of changed lives!

Lofty questions of theology must touch people where they live, or they become meaningless. Our faith must make a difference in how people live or it loses its validity.

The mandate that all Christians have is to share God's love. Some people ask the question "How do we share God's love?" SIFAT is one attempt to answer that question. The last part of Matthew 25 gives us guidance. SIFAT's motto is, "Sharing God's love in practical ways."

As part of our celebration, six SIFAT graduates from five countries on three continents came to bear witness not only to the changes in their own lives because of SIFAT, but also to the lives that they have been able to touch in meaningful ways. The message of Christ that we bear has been multiplied many times through our graduates. We introduce the six graduates who were able to get visas and funds to come celebrate in person with us. Many more who could not come were celebrating with us in their hearts.

Three came from Africa. The country of Liberia in West Africa was torn by war for 16 years. Amidst the devastation, Martha Partor and her family had to flee their country and lived for more than two years in a refugee camp. In the aftermath and survival of both war and living in such a camp, Martha and her husband John lost their teenaged daughter



to diabetes because there was no medicine. Martha holds a master's degree and with her husband John directs Frontline Indigenous Ministries. They have done much to help rebuild their war-torn country and the shattered lives of their people. Among other things, Martha's work empowers girls and women in education and microenterprise, so that they can become self-supporting again.

Pastor Pam Dagwom lives in Nigeria, where violence between Muslims and Christians is common and conflict frequent. He has witnessed much death and destruction firsthand. He is the director of Calvary International Ministries and holds a master's degree in sociology. Pastor Pam is an author of five books, a marriage counselor and peace advocate.

Jhony Bandela and his wife Prasuna, from Hyderabad, India, both hold master's degrees in social work. When her dad left them an inheritance, they used it to open a nonprofit to care for the needy. They run a home for abandoned elderly widows, an orphanage, a school and a training center for microenterprises. They work together to serve the poor.

Reverend Dr. Nana Abekah is a Methodist pastor from Ghana, West Africa with 30 years in ministry. He has been director of youth ministries in his conference and is currently director of the church's orphanage. He rescues children as young as five years old who have been sold as slaves to a fish company who uses them to fish all day every day. Nana rescues as many as he can and runs a village of homes for them with a school for them and other abandoned children.

Benjamin "Benjo" Paredes and his wife Bacilia from Bolivia were part of the beginning of SIFAT since 1977. He founded CENATEC from the jungles of Bolivia, and SIFAT came out of our experiences with Benjo and CENATEC. We count him as a co-founder of SIFAT.

You can watch the live videos we broadcast from this event and the Friday book signing event on our Facebook page.

Did you know?

Matching Funds

Have you checked to see if your employer will match your donation to SIFAT? Many companies do, and some even match donations of retirees or spouses of employees.

IRA Contributions

If you are required to take a disbursement from your IRA, you can have it donated directly to SIFAT. You can give a percentage or all of your disbursement. By donating to a nonprofit without receiving the disbursement, you do not pay taxes on the disbursement.

Questions or Need Help?

Contact Diana, accounting@sifat.org, if documentation is needed for your company's matching funds or if you have questions about getting your IRA donation sent directly to SIFAT.

#GivingTuesday

As the holidays approach, we hope you will start the season of giving with a donation to SIFAT! We will send reminders with details on how to give in our e-newsletters, so make sure you have signed up on www.sifat.org if you are not already receiving them!

Save the Date! Write Dec. 3 on your calendar, set a reminder on your phone and help us spread the word! Double your impact with our matching fund of \$60,000!

Last year, you helped us raise \$140,049.98, which included our \$60,000 matching fund. If you would like to contribute to our matching fund, contact Tom Corson, corson@sifat.org.

Black Friday. Cyber Monday.

#GIVINGTUESDAY

December 3, 2019



Purchase your brick today! Commemorative bricks make special Christmas gifts for a person you want to honor! If you include his or her address, we will send an acknowledgement card to the person or family you are honoring.

A Wedding in the Brick Garden

Sarah's Garden and Ken's Path continue to be built on our campus. Have you purchased your brick yet? You can buy a commemorative brick in honor or memory of someone - they make great gifts for pastor's appreciation month or for special Christmas gifts for a person you want to honor! If you include his or her address, we can send an acknowledgement card to the person or family you are honoring.

In late September, this beautiful setting beside Mad Indian Creek was the venue for the first wedding in Sarah's Garden, when former staff member Byron Morales returned from Honduras with his new wife Cecelia for their ceremony.

To purchase a brick for yourself or as a gift, go to www.brickrus.com/order/sifat or call the SIFAT office.



Southern Institute For
Appropriate Technology

Servants in Faith
and Technology

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

2944 County Road 113
Lineville, AL 36266

Phone: (256) 396-2015

Fax: (256) 396-2501

E-mail: info@sifat.org

www.sifat.org

Return Service Requested

SIFAT's VISION: *Bridging the First and Two-thirds Worlds to alleviate spiritual and physical poverty, encouraging people to develop their God-given potential.*

SIFAT's MISSION: *To share God's love through service, education and personal involvement with a needy world.*

FROM THE DESK OF TOM CORSON

I hope you will join us on December 3, #GivingTuesday, now a national tradition of generosity. On this day dedicated to giving, I am asking you to donate — to invest in SIFAT to make an impact that will help us continue to change the world for Christ. As in past years, we have generous donors who, knowing the importance of this opportunity, have stepped up to offer a \$60,000 matching fund, dollar for dollar on your gift. You do not have to wait until Dec. 3 to take advantage of the matching funds for your gift. You may mail a donation early, mark your check #GivingTuesday, and we will enter it on that day.

In 1976, my family lived and worked in Bolivia planting churches in a remote area. The people were hungry for the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and many became Christians. But we saw and experienced with these hard-working homesteaders the reality of not being able to meet their basic human needs of food, water and shelter, no matter how hard they worked. This led us to start SIFAT, an organization that would train people in self-help technologies to meet their own needs and provide for their families.

Now, more than 40 years later, SIFAT continues to serve and empower families by equipping them not

only to meet their own needs, but teaching them to share with their neighbors out of their abundance. We call it *Sharing God's Love in Practical Ways*.

Giving Tuesday is our once a year opportunity to catch up financially and be able to plan ahead. This year, we have taken on some bold new endeavors. We started a training center in Costa Rica, which gives opportunity to teach hundreds of people in the Dry Corridor of Central America the skills to be able to feed themselves. We are working with our graduates in Africa to provide water wells for thousands of people who never had clean water and are empowering communities to develop income generating microenterprises that provide self-help. In Asia and Africa, we have funded projects to establish sustainable schools and churches, all in the name of Jesus. In Ecuador our teams continue to build facilities that provide safe shelter for at risk children.

We need your help now more than ever to continue God's work. As you consider your year-end giving, I hope you will be aware of the impact your donation will make to help SIFAT equip some of the poorest people in the world with a hand up, not just a handout!