

SIFAT Doctor in your House Helps in Ecuador

Peggy Walker
International Team Coordinator

There are times when our SIFAT mission teams must switch from development to relief. The current pandemic, more than ever before, is that time. International travel was halted; teams were forced to postpone trips. We were all told we would be safer at home. The reality of this condition made us all feel more vulnerable than ever before. Along with this reality, the need to serve was ever present, but the question was how? SIFAT found a way in Ecuador with our *SIFAT Doctor in your House* program.

As the coronavirus ravished the five poor communities in which we work in Quito, SIFAT staff wondered what we could do to help from so far away without an organized program. It is our good fortune, however, to have Dr. Roberto Contreras, a medical doctor, as our SIFAT director in Ecuador. He and his wife, Monica, came up with *SIFAT Doctor in your House*, which allowed us to serve and meet the needs of these people with whom we have worked alongside for many years and have come to think of as family.

Dr. Roberto knew that if we could raise funding, he could teleconference with those needing medical attention and supply the medicines they would need for one month. He would take a different project each week, talk with the most critical cases and make sure the children and expectant mothers had vitamins that are so necessary during this time when little food is available.

There were no government programs in Ecuador to help

the people in these poor communities, and with work being nonexistent because Quito was in complete lockdown, many people were sick and some were starving. *SIFAT Doctor in your House* was desperately needed.

With the help of SIFAT donors, the program has been a tremendous success!



Pastor Rafael distributes food in Villaflores as part of the SIFAT Doctor in your House program.

Pastors in the churches with which we work were trying to provide food to the neediest with their meager resources. Once we were able to help, they wanted to maximize the number of people they could reach in their community. They decided the best way to do this was to give 25-pound bags of rice to many families. This does not sound like much, but the people had no food. This rice would be filling and keep a family of six alive for two weeks, while the pastors tried to find places to buy discarded vegetables and other things to supplement the diet.

In Atucucho, the poorest area of Quito, where SIFAT teams have worked for 20 years, SIFAT graduate and community leader Ledy Sanchez realized the greatest need was for the elderly. This poor community is filled with elderly, often alone and homeless.

As Dr. Roberto so poignantly stated:

"We thought that we could not have tears in our eyes after seeing the poverty for so many years, but after knowing the situation of the elderly in Atucucho ... we are in tears ... even Ledy is in tears, too."

Because these elderly people had no one to care for them,

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Ecuador - Doctor in Your House

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Ledy decided to use the help from SIFAT to start the *Golden Bread* program to provide a hot breakfast to 80 elderly people five days a week, praying that God will provide the funds to continue blessing these truly needy people. *SIFAT Doctor* will also give vitamins to these precious elderly by using medicines leftover from our 2019 SIFAT medical teams.

Through your gifts, SIFAT is now able to do so much by providing food, a doctor and medicines for the families of the more than 2,000 desperately poor children with whom we have been working. In the three months since we started *SIFAT Doctor in your House*, more than 9,000 people have been served in our five main Quito projects and their five extensions. We must continue to provide this help!

We cannot always quantify the benefits people receive from all our projects. Monica, however, is a wonderful record keeper and recently the following report.

SIFAT Doctor in your House

We provided medical virtual and physical visits, and medicines, to around 1000 patients:

- 200 virtual medical visits and 200 medical prescriptions. We provide medicine for 30 days for each one of the 200 people, who are mostly suffering from chronic illnesses (diabetes, hypertension, psychological illness, gynecological treatments, epilepsy, etc.)
- 400 children checked. We also gave them anti-parasitic treatment, vitamins for one month and medical certificates for their schools.
- 100 prenatal patients checked. We gave them prenatal vitamins.
- 300 adults and elderly people checked. We also gave them vitamins for one month.

The Golden Bread (food for all projects)

- We have given rice for one month to 1,600 families. That is 8,000 people considering an average of 5 people per family.

- We are giving a daily breakfast from Monday to Friday to 80 elderly people in Atucucho. That is for 14 weeks since May 14.

The economic situation of the families of our projects are worse day by day. They were poor before the pandemic, but now they are in extreme poverty. Many have become beggars.

Because of the economical situation, the families of our projects go to the streets to sell fruits, vegetables or food. But they just find COVID-19 virus. In the last weeks, the municipality has collected

150 corpses in the streets of Quito: mainly on the streets of Guamaní, Puengasí and Downtown Quito. Those 150 people were just people looking for a way to survive, but they just fell dead in the streets. They are not rebels or people who do not want to follow the rules or law; no, they are just fathers or mothers looking for some way for their children survival.

The health system in Quito is still collapsed with COVID-19 virus. So sadly, medical doctors have to decide who is hospitalized and who comes back to their home waiting for ... death ... this is provoking our medical doctors to be totally stressed. They take the Hippocratic Oath to save lives, but "they are choosing who lives and who do not." Patients with other pathologists cannot get medical attention or medicines at the public hospitals.

We must keep this program alive!

You have generously provided \$70,000 of the \$100,000 needed to continue these programs through December, when we all pray a vaccine will be developed. We need your prayers and your help as we still have a long way to go. Please pass this on to your churches and friends to help us continue to raise funds, to allow us to show God's love in these communities even when we cannot be with them in person.

I read that the lack of hope will quickly destroy the human spirit. We cannot let that happen. Through *SIFAT Doctor in your House*, we can provide the hope so needed to these people that we cherish in all our projects in Ecuador. Please send your gifts of hope by check or online to SIFAT and designate *SIFAT Doctor in your House*.



Dr. Roberto makes virtual house calls from his home office in Quito to patients from our projects. Because of medicines left by teams and donations, he has provided vitamins and medication to those who normally rely on SIFAT medical teams.



Left: In Aida Leon, Pastor Wilson gives a month's worth of rice to one of the youth for his family.

Right: In Puengasi, a mother receives food for her family.

Because many of the people work construction jobs or as street vendors, they have no way to feed their families. SIFAT Doctor in your House is helping our projects provide food and medical care to those struggling during the pandemic.



Promoting Hand Washing in the DRC

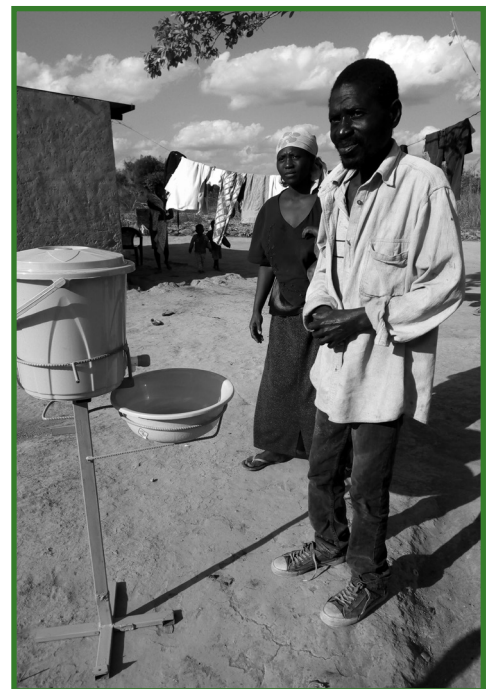
Marie Lanier
Promotions & Marketing Coordinator

Isaiah, a SIFAT graduate from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), is ministering to a rural village by promoting hand washing during the coronavirus pandemic. Some of our SIFAT family will remember Isaiah from his approved graduate projects to raise funds to build a vocational school to provide job skills training and counseling to former child soldiers who survived the civil war in the DRC. Isaiah's school and ministry are located in a rural village about 30 kilometers from his home in the capital city of Lubumbashi.

Isaiah worries about the health conditions in this village if action is not taken to fight the pandemic. Because of cultural norms, the risk of exposure is high through hand shaking and close contact. The majority of the people in this village are low income families who

struggle to provide for their families. They leave the village to look for food, even working in exchange for something to eat. Isaiah shares that these people have the difficult decision of using the little money they have to buy food or to buy a family hand washing station. Understandably, they choose to feed their families.

Students from Isaiah's school who are accomplished in the welding and job skills programs have started making hand washing stations for families living in poverty as their part in combatting the pandemic. So far, they have installed 50 of these stations. The community is excited about these stations and have asked for the school to make some for neighboring villages, too. This program is also looking into ways they can provide soap, antibacterial gel and masks, as well as creating an awareness campaign on the importance of sanitization, social distancing and hand washing to stop the spread of the virus.



Please pray for Isaiah and his family to stay healthy while they lead these preventative efforts, for their students involved in this outreach program and for the community members who have limited resources to fight COVID-19.

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Are you moving? Don't forget to send us your updated contact information. E-mail info@sifat.org with your new mailing address, phone number and e-mail address.

Feeding the Hungry in Liberia

Glo Cuthbert
SIFAT Board of Directors Member

Last year, there was a tremendous response to raising funds for building supplies for SIFAT graduates John and Martha Partor's Vocational School (named the Annella Trobaugh Smith Vocational School) in Monrovia, Liberia. The faithful members of the First United Methodist Church of Clanton, Ala., raised more than \$25,000 for completion of the school.

Just a few months after the funds were sent, COVID-19 hit. While our lives here in Alabama were changed, the people in Liberia suffered mightily. People in the villages were warned not to travel into the town market to shop. To enforce this rule, armed guards were stationed to shoot to kill if anyone disobeyed. Food supply was quickly diminished, and there was no way to get into the market for more. These poor people are not unfamiliar to disaster. Just a few years ago, Liberia was ground zero for the deadly ebola virus that killed so many of these precious souls. John and Martha realized right away

the needs of the people and began finding food resources for them. However, the food was not free. There was an immediate need for funds to feed the starving.

The Partors sent out an SOS to ask the Clanton FUMC Mission Committee to divert some of the unused funding for the building to purchase food. Of course, the permission was granted, and the relief efforts were started. They have been in constant communication with us, sending pictures of their efforts in food distribution and demonstrating the many lives that have been saved, including the beautiful children of two orphanages. Through dedication and obedience to God's command to care for His people, John and Martha Partor risked their lives both from the threat of the military and the virus to save the people they serve.

To learn more about our current International Graduate Projects, please visit www.sifat.org/international-missions/international-projects.



John and Martha Partor diverted funds from their building project to feed those without access to food because of the impact of COVID-19 in Liberia. They have fed hundreds of people who had no access to food.



Martha (center) monitors the children's temperatures before she prays over the group. The house mother (left) looks on as the children learn about the gift of food they are going to receive.

Take a SHARE in SIFAT!

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

Plan 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, corson@sifat.org, for more information.

Save the Date for #GivingTuesday

#GivingTuesday 2020 will be here soon! Mark your calendars for **Tuesday, Dec. 1, 2020**. This global day of giving unites everyone to start the holiday season off by giving to nonprofits and charities. We hope you will make SIFAT part of your #GivingTuesday plans this year. Watch upcoming e-newsletters and announcements on our website and social media for details on our matching fund and instructions on how to donate. We are always surprised and blessed by our SIFAT family's generous response to this opportunity to contribute to the future of SIFAT.



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 donate a percentage or all of it directly to SIFAT. 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.

AU EWB Sending Ventilators to Bolivia

Peggy Walker
International Team Coordinator

What a blessing that Quesimpuco is so remote! After an initial scare when students returned to the village from Peru, the Chayanta Valley has been amazingly virus free. The people in Quesimpuco are in need of food and medical care, but with Bolivia on a complete lockdown, it has been impossible to get supplies into the village. CENATEC director Huber Ramos and Benjo Paredes have been unable to travel, but we have received positive reports on conditions by phone.

However, in the Chayanta district capital of Pocoata, there has been an outbreak. The hospitals are in dire need of equipment to keep patients alive. Jhonny Mamani, Dr. Ruth Noemi's brother, is head of the Pocoata city council and has asked for SIFAT's help. He is a graduate of SIFAT's John Wesley High School in Quesimpuco.

Auburn University professor, Dr. Tom Burch, leads annual Engineers Without Borders teams to Quesimpuco, installing micro-irrigation systems to enable people in these food insecure villages to grow multiple crops each year instead of only one. Their trip had to be canceled in 2020, but Dr. Burch and a team of Auburn engineers recognized the need for ventilators in poor countries like Bolivia. They have come up with a machine utilizing an easy-to-find CPAP apparatus.

SIFAT has been able to get the district health department in Pocoata to send a letter requesting this make-shift ventilator to use in their hospital. Knowing the problems we always encounter with customs and the expense to send the machine to Bolivia, SIFAT wants to ensure the ventilator parts will not be held up and customs duty will not be prohibitive. Because travel in Bolivia is limited, it has been impossible to obtain a written release or amount of taxes on the shipment. As soon as we have the information, four ventilators will be shipped to Bolivia, providing lifesaving equipment to a district where none is available.

SIFAT Graduates Make Ministry Adjustments

Sarah Corson, SIFAT Co-founder
Marie Lanier, Promotions and
Marketing Coordinator

Editor's Note: In July, we shared this article in our e-newsletter and on our blog. After hearing from more graduates, Sarah added news from Pakistan, Ghana, Nigeria and Uganda.

SIFAT has been training community leaders in development for 41 years. As community needs change, our graduates' ministries often shift their focus. A global pandemic? That is definitely a call for adaptation to meet immediate needs. Around the world, governments are enacting strict lockdowns and stay-at-home orders, which has led to economic hardships and job loss, inflation and food shortage. We reached out to our graduates, so we can better understand the challenges they face, but also to see the ways they are thriving, despite unexpected circumstances.

India: Awon, a 2007 graduate, leads a college ministry. During the lockdown, many students traveled home, and all of their church services moved online, which brought challenges of learning new technology and ways to maintain relationships. Some stayed at the campus ministry house, and Awon realized her students were mainly asking questions about two things: suicide related deaths reported on news broadcasts and how

to remain connected as a church family. These questions led her to begin group studies on understanding depression and on church history (pictured below).

Awon is from a rural village and is still involved in ministry there, as well. Four quarantine centers were set up when more than 400 people began returning from mainland cities after they lost jobs or their schools were closed. Awon used her network of supporters to provide 120 new Bibles with reading guides in the local language.

In her update, Awon shared, "Yes, we are in the midst of the COVID-19 stormy sea. Our only hope is in our Lord Jesus Christ, our Captain, who enables us to navigate the boats of our lives to 'the other side' of this situation. He is the greatest assurance. Praise God for He will never leave us alone!"

Zimbabwe: A 2008 graduate, Tinashe shares that his country was facing political and economic challenges before the pandemic, and their inflation is the worst in the world. During the lockdown, his ministry has continued to care, educate, entertain and support children under its care in learning centers, while also providing food through rural feeding centers. Because of the restrictions, the children in the learning centers are virus free. However, all the centers are facing food shortages.

But, Tinashe has hope! At SIFAT, he learned agricultural techniques that he has already implemented in gardens at the rural feeding centers. He also attributes his "train the trainer" training to establishing effective leadership. When he could not travel to oversee the programs, his team was prepared to make tough choices without him there.

Philippines: In the Philippines, SIFAT alumni, including Cynthia (2010) and Marian (2009), remain in close contact and come together to regularly hold seminars and conferences. Since 2017, they have trained 200 struggling single mothers. A training for 20 people was postponed when coronavirus hit the islands. Participants in these trainings use their new knowledge in their homes, and some begin selling items through internet sales (on social media) or even in small storefronts. Our SIFAT graduates invited six government agencies to participate to help the mothers promote and sell their products, as well as learn about available government programs and trainings to help them in the future.

Kenya: Rahab, a 2009 graduate, and her husband Silas are part of One Mission Society. In early March, they traveled to Indiana to speak to supporters and visit friends, never expecting to be stranded here. Meanwhile in eastern Africa, locusts are destroying crops, which adds to a lack of food caused by job loss and rising food costs.

Rahab and Silas have been encouraging their ministry's leaders from afar, while they face obstacles here, such as replenishing their daily medicines without insurance. They are leaning on their faith and share Psalm 11:3, "What can an honest person do when everything crumbles?" Rahab and Silas have jumped into action.

They are raising funds through phone



Adjustments During COVID-19 Pandemic

calls and Zoom meetings. Rahab makes chapatis, a Kenyan flatbread, to share with neighbors. They volunteer weekly at a local food bank. This travel extension has also forced them to take time to rest, pray and study. But, they are ready to return home to lead senior adult Bible studies, help widows with their goat project, hold children/youth events and lead pastors' conferences.

Pakistan: SIFAT's graduate in Pakistan founded a Christian school in a remote village. Although Pakistani schools have been closed since March, teachers at this school visit the students' homes to explain their homework and leave lessons. The children's parents are illiterate, and as agricultural laborers, they work daily from dawn to dusk. The students appreciate the teachers providing this extra help as they long for an education to rescue them from poverty. The students and teachers are working hard, so that the children will pass their classes. So far, no one in this village has come down with the virus. This is a SIFAT-supported project.

Ghana: Two of our graduates in Ghana work in ministries rescuing people who have been sold into slavery.

While the custom of *trokosi* — wife of god — is illegal, it is still practiced in rural areas. When a crime is committed, a young girl must be given to the voodoo priests for life to keep the family from being cursed. Grace works with a Baptist mission that buys the freedom of these girls and women. They have been so abused that they cannot reenter society without help. Grace's mission has a school to teach the Gospel and life skills. Girls choose a vocational skill, such as cosmetology, sewing or cooking. The mission also provides seed money to help them get started. Schools in Ghana recently reopened with masks and social distancing.

Nana is youth director of the Methodist Conference and operates a home for abandoned or enslaved children whom their mission rescues. Many of these children were sold to a fish company as young children. They fish with nets on a dock to supply a processing factory. Sometimes, a net gets caught on a piling. The child has to go underwater to release it, but most cannot swim. Some drown. When Nana was at SIFAT, we visited a home on Lake Wedowee. He did not want to look at the water. He loves these children deeply, and a lake brings back memories of children he was not able to rescue. During a recent call, we could hear the children laughing and singing in the background. Nana was praising God that the coronavirus has not affected anyone in their children's home because of lockdown success, so they can continue with their school.

Nigeria: Graduates Aina and Blossom write: "People lost their businesses and means of livelihood. Lack of income, high prices and taxes are making life difficult. Hunger has become the order of the day. Stealing, rape, teenage pregnancies have become the norm. The government demands masks, closure of schools, worship centers, markets. The security forces will shoot to kill a person who breaks those rules. In our area, hunger forces people to go out and farm for food, but killings from the security forces are frequent!"

Blossom has recently had surgery, but it was only partially successful. He has recurring fevers and nausea. Please pray for Blossom's health and for those suffering the effects of the virus.

A recent e-mail from Raphael (pictured) reports on the SIFAT-sponsored project to buy land to loan refugees to grow food to eat and to sell for income. In three years if their crops grow well, they can make enough to buy a small lot



to live on and to support their families..

They are praying for protection from a terrorist group that raids and burns fields of Christians in the area. Raphael is encouraged that a lot of corn has made it this far. During this pandemic, they are rejoicing for this corn — enough for all the community to have a portion. He joyfully reports "nearly three weeks from now, we may start eating fresh corn."

Uganda: SIFAT supporters helped Sam buy a plot of land on which to build a vocational school, but he is still raising funds for the buildings. When the pandemic began, Sam led the community to plant corn on the land. Sam recently wrote, "God willing, we will be harvesting corn next week. We can share with those in need. I wish SIFAT people were here, so we could share with you." This land is already helping the community!

Shop for a Cause!

Everyday online purchases can raise money for SIFAT! Whenever you shop online, you can support SIFAT.

Use Goodshop or iGive when you shop online, 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 download the AmazonSmile app, and iPhone users can now turn on AmazonSmile in their updated app's settings.

The SIFAT Village Store is Moving

Peggy Walker
International Team Coordinator

Stand by for the grand opening of the new SIFAT Village Store in early 2021! Though we will fondly remember the old rustic store, after many years of trying to expand to meet our growing need, we have found our new home in the vacant campus director's house.

To effectively utilize every campus facility, it was decided to turn the old Village Store building into a much-needed Welcome Center, where our campus staff can meet groups coming to visit SIFAT. The building's addition will include displays and videos of the history of SIFAT, while a site map will give a preview of campus attractions. The location is perfect as this is the hub of campus activities and will be a perfect lead into Sarah's Garden and Ken's Path.

Our original plan to build a new Village Store would have been an enormous cost. Because of water runoff issues, it was more than problematic to build on the ideal site adjacent to the new Welcome Center. When this building became available, it was more perfect than we could have imagined!

In the new store, we will have enough room to stock all inventory in a climate-controlled location. We will have a beautiful space with vaulted ceilings and good lighting for displaying unique, handmade indigenous handicrafts. A room will be dedicated for fulfilling orders for an expanded online presence. With comfortable seating on the veranda and hammocks that are also for sale in the store, those waiting can relax under the fans and enjoy the view.

The Village Store will be the last stop for all SIFAT campus events. Buses and vans can park on the campground road, making it unnecessary to put in an expensive parking area in front of the Welcome Center, where they will be dropped off to begin their tour or programming.

We are in the process of cleaning, sorting and pricing all items. We hope to be finished by the end of 2020. Watch for an announcement for our ribbon cutting in early 2021 and future store hours. We are so excited for you to visit the SIFAT campus and shop in the new SIFAT Village Store!



Marie and Peggy learn the process of making hammocks in a family's home workshop in Otavalo, Ecuador. Most of the products in the SIFAT Village Store are made by small cooperatives or artisan families.

My Year at SIFAT

Zach Lott
Learn & Serve Program Intern

My time as a Learn & Serve (L&S) Program Intern was memorable. The many experiences that I had helped me grow as a person. I came to SIFAT to be an intern because as a middle and high school student, I attended Learn & Serve Summer Experience with my youth group for eight years. Each year was a new experience that helped shape me into the person I am today.

During the summer of 2018, I wanted to help others experience SIFAT the way that I had. So, of course, I had to try my hand as an L&S counselor.

I was also given the opportunity to co-lead worship. While one of my best friends was a counselor for L&S Summer Experience 2019, I returned to volunteer for a couple of weeks. During that time, I was offered a chance to apply for a yearlong internship.

As I was beginning to settle into the position and my new home in August 2019, fall had begun. The fall season is one of the busiest times of year for the SIFAT campus. I was leading groups on Global Village tours, Challenge Course elements and worship services. Fall 2019 was definitely the hardest time while I was at SIFAT, but also it was the most pleasurable and memorable of the seasons. I grew so much over the course of only a few months. I became a better leader and public speaker. I quickly grew and became comfortable with the idea of speaking to large groups of people I did not know. I got to be part of the impact that L&S has on people, whether they were participating in a field trip or a three-day retreat, diving into the realities of poverty.

But the winter was very different from the fall. Everything began slowing down, and the number of people who came to visit decreased as the weather got colder. However, although I had become comfortable with leading groups, the winter was eye opening in a different way. I started to learn more about the inner workings of the office. I became well versed with scheduling and planning. During the winter months, we focused on developing programming and marketing the 2020

L&S Summer Experience. I never saw myself as an especially organized person, but during the winter this completely changed. I learned about scheduling and marketing tactics that I had not known. Just like the fall, the winter was a life changing experience.

Soon, spring came. Flowers started to bloom, and so did the amount of retreats and field trips. Early in 2020, we visited churches in Texas and Mississippi. Our goal was to build relationships with youth pastors and churches and encourage them to make plans for the Summer Experience.

But COVID-19 hit. We were forced to postpone visitors and events. Even though this was very difficult and scary at



Zach works on repairing our Philippines house in the Global Village while campus was closed this spring.

first, it was also an amazing learning experience. During the closure, we started working on projects around the property to make it a safer and more beautiful place for when our students could return. Many of our staff were working from home to stay safe and healthy. Since I lived on campus with a few other staff members, we began a massive beautification project. This season taught me a lot about hard physical labor and the importance of keeping a magical place magical. Working in those conditions made me realize how important it is to work hard for the things that matter in life. At the end of the day, I would go home and be proud of what we had accomplished and the difference we made.

Working and living at SIFAT was challenging. It was also the most fun and fulfilling year of my life. I got to meet amazing people from all over the world and make lifelong friendships. I had a hand in the life changing work of SIFAT. My year has come to an end, but I will never stop learning from the past 10 years I spent involved with this organization. I am forever grateful for the opportunity I was given to live at SIFAT.

If you or someone you know is interested in serving as a Learn & Serve intern, contact Collin Campbell, campbellc@sifat.org. For more information about Learn & Serve, visit www.sifat.org/learn-serve.

L&S Makes a Lasting Impact on Lives

Marie Lanier
Promotions and Marketing Coordinator

This year has been unlike anything we expected at SIFAT. When 2020 began, our Learn & Serve (L&S) staff members were talking to schools, universities and churches to schedule spring retreats and summer experiences.

L&S provides opportunities to people living in the United States to gain a holistic view of the developing world through simulated experiences. Visiting the SIFAT Global Village may be someone's first time seeing how the majority of the world lives and understanding some of the daily struggles. Our programming highlights the appropriate technologies that community leaders in SIFAT training study. Participants in Learn & Serve events see how these technologies can truly make a difference in the lives of the poor and learn how our training alumni are implementing these things in their ministries throughout the world.

Because we could not host campus events this spring and summer, our campus staff focused on maintenance projects and facilities updates to improve our campus. Our staff deep cleaned and painted our lodging facilities, repaired porches and steps, performed general maintenance, and worked on our landscaping and grounds. With your financial support, we have been able to keep our staff employed during the pandemic.

Our campus makes a difference in the lives of youth, college students and others who take part in Learn & Serve programming. Jack Parkinson, who is currently a junior at Texas A&M University, recently shared what he wrote a few years ago about how a week at SIFAT as a ninth grader positively impacted his life for the future.

My Week at SIFAT by Jack Parkinson

I had the opportunity to attend SIFAT's Learn & Serve Summer Experience when I was in the ninth grade. I went alone, so I did not know a single person when I arrived. This was very scary at that age, and I was nervous and unsure if I wanted to be there. But looking back, it presented a great opportunity for me to grow. I had grown up in the church and knew what Christianity was about and would even call myself a true believer of the gospel, but was definitely lacking in my personal relationship with Christ.

My experience at SIFAT will be one I always remember, as it was an incredibly defining moment in my faith. I got firsthand



experience with the life of poverty from which too many people on the earth suffer, which taught me compassion. I also learned how much of a family the Christian community is and what it is supposed to be, as I was taken in by the staff and the other youth groups that were there.

However, the biggest reason SIFAT was so special to me is because that is where I first met God. He was there, present at the camp. For the first time I felt like I could feel His presence and hear His voice. I left after a week as a completely new person, and I have carried what I learned there with me ever since. SIFAT is an organization that loves people and follows the will of God. He works through the people involved and changes lives.

You can experience SIFAT's campus!

Thank you for continuing to support SIFAT! Your donations make a difference in lives both in the USA and around the world. During our Learn & Serve Summer Experience, students like Jack are exposed to not only the physical needs that SIFAT meets, but also take part in Bible studies, small group discussions and worship.

Our campus staff can work with your group to customize a retreat for your group throughout the year, whether it is a one-day school field trip or a multi-day youth retreat. Although we are not currently open for visitors, SIFAT continues to monitor the current guidelines for camps and large groups, as well as the coronavirus situation in our area. When it is safe, we will reopen with new policies to keep our staff and participants healthy.

How can you help SIFAT's campus now? Talk to your youth group leaders and ask if they have called to schedule a 2021 retreat or Summer Experience! Plan a tour with a group from your church or community. Share your stories with others about how experiences at SIFAT have been a meaningful part of your life.

A Lesson in Adaptation and Compassion

Collin Campbell
Learn & Serve Program Manager

For the first summer in more than a decade, the SIFAT campus sat empty of guests. Months of planning, praying and preparation led up to this strange summer of unexpected absence. This absence affected us all: the campers, saddened that they could not come learn and serve with their peers, and the counselors, who missed out on the community this campus so easily creates. It was truly a unique summer for everyone, but COVID-19 has taught us all many lessons. Two lessons that stood out to me recently are adaptation and compassion.

When we realized we could not safely host a summer experience, we began to think of new ways to adapt. We started dreaming of what we could do with the time, staff and resources we have. Exciting things came as a result of this. We began a campus makeover, renovating and updating almost every building on campus. Buildings were painted, decks were stained and bathrooms were remodeled. Our Farm-to-Table interns typically spend their summer helping create garden fresh meals for our campers. This summer, they created delicious jams and jellies using SIFAT plants and produce. In all of these different tasks, we were able to acclimate and work with the changing circumstances.

A second lesson from the summer was compassion. As the virus spread throughout the world, we were learning each week more and more how the regulations and operations would affect the SIFAT campus. As we made difficult decisions on how to move forward, our guiding principle was compassion. It showed up this summer through choices to cancel events, implement guidelines for our staff and modify the way we work, so that we could keep our community safe. We asked ourselves, "What will be the best choice for the communities we serve?"

While the summer turned out to be anything but normal, it also turned out to be a good teacher. SIFAT was able to catch up on projects long awaited, new products were made to be shared and enjoyed by our friends and guests, and we were granted the opportunity to practice adaptation and compassion. Moving forward, we can remember this unexpected summer by the lessons learned and great things accomplished.



Participants in SIFAT programming learn appropriate technologies that SIFAT promotes.

Sarah's Garden & Ken's Path



Two years ago, we broke ground on the commemorative brick garden on our campus. This summer, the bench was installed as part of the Open Spaces, Sacred Places grant awarded by the Community Foundation of Northeast Alabama. This bench is a wonderful place to rest next to Mad Indian Creek, and the bench has a journal that guests can write short reflections in to be read by others enjoying the meditative space.

If you would like to order a brick to be placed in the next phase, visit www.bricksrus.com/order/sifat. Need help with your order? Call the SIFAT office at 256.396.2015.



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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

In February of this year, we ended SIFAT's State of the Institute report for our board members with these words: Together let's make 2020 a year in which we are available to God to use us to the maximum to reach lost and suffering people of our planet! "Only one life; 'twill soon be past. Only what's done for Christ will last!" During the following month, our world was turned upside down as the coronavirus sickened and killed people across the globe, isolating people, closing businesses, taking away people's jobs, creating a pandemic of hunger worldwide, plunging us into a chaotic time unlike anything we had ever experienced. Now, those words we wrote six months ago are more relevant than ever!

We began to see nonprofits, as well as businesses, close their doors. One sad sign hung on the



door of what had been a thriving business: "Closed—Forever." Would this be the fate of SIFAT? But SIFAT is not ours. It is God who gives us the vision for SIFAT,

and the vision has not wavered. We are humbled and deeply grateful to God and to all the people God has used to keep that vision working. Even as we had to cancel main parts of our programs, other needs and opportunities arose. In some ways, SIFAT now is stronger than ever! That is because SIFAT is not just the staff that carries out our work here on the Galilee Campus and in other parts of the world. SIFAT is a network of thousands of people who pray and give of their time, their resources and their love to

"reach lost and suffering people of our planet." **Thank you for being one of those people who have kept SIFAT in your thoughts and prayers allowing us to continue to be engaged in our mission.**