



SIFAT JOURNAL

SHARING GOD'S LOVE IN PRACTICAL WAYS

FALL 2020

#GivingTuesday is Dec. 1

Thank you for being a part of our SIFAT Family. You receive the *SIFAT Journal* because you have been part of an international mission team, financially supported our ministry or somehow given of yourself to SIFAT. We would not be in our 41st year without you! #GivingTuesday is Dec. 1, and we hope you will find a way to be active in this global day of giving that celebrates generosity and kindness. Embrace the spirit of giving this holiday season.

Three Ways to Participate in #GivingTuesday:

1. **Share your SIFAT Experience.** Everyone needs a smile and encouragement these days. Share one of your favorite SIFAT memories (funny or serious) on social media. Use the hashtag #MySIFATMoment, so we can share them.
2. **Commit to Pray for SIFAT staff, projects and programs.** Help SIFAT by keeping us in your daily prayer time. Your prayers are heard and are such an encouragement.

3. **Donate to SIFAT.** Generous donors created a \$60,000 matching fund that will double your donation! Our goal is to raise \$125,000. *You can donate by check (designate #GivingTuesday) or online.*

Three Options to Donate online at www.sifat.org/donate:

1. Give directly to SIFAT (first donate button). You will be redirected to our PayPal page, where you can donate with your credit or debit card. A transaction fee will be deducted from your donation.
2. Give through the PayPal Giving Fund (second donate button) You will be redirected to the PayPal Giving Fund, which covers the transaction fee. Donations given through this method can take up to 45 days for us to receive. To designate your gift for #GivingTuesday, please email accounting@sifat.org.
3. Give through The Advance (UMC Global Ministries) (green box). SIFAT receives 100% of each donation without any transaction fees being taken. Donors can choose to give credit to their local UMC congregation, as well. There is a delay for SIFAT to receive funds and donor information.

If you have questions about how to participate or would like a reminder on Dec. 1, contact Marie at lanierm@sifat.org.



GIVINGTUESDAY

Dios les Pague! Thank You for Support

Peggy Walker
International Team Coordinator

A simple *thank you* is never enough to express our gratitude for your support of SIFAT's *Doctor in your House* program in Ecuador. Through your gifts to SIFAT, families have not had to go without food. Children in our projects who suffer from malnutrition are able to fend off infections because they received vitamins, and many people who have no access to medical attention have been kept alive by receiving much needed medications. The list of those who have been helped by your support in this worst of times keeps growing.

When we started this program in March, none of us had any idea that the pandemic would last this long and bring complete devastation to so many people, especially to those most in need. Who could have predicted we would be entering a second wave of this horrible disease, predicted to be even worse than we experienced earlier this year. We had hoped to continue the program until the end of 2020, praying a vaccine would be developed and readily available worldwide. Now, we all realize that will not happen and the need for *Doctor in your House* will continue well into 2021 as the threat from COVID-19 becomes even more widespread.

During the pandemic, our SIFAT team members and donors have stepped up to support the communities in which we serve in Ecuador in two vital areas—medical care and food. Most are struggling to survive the effects of both lockdown and COVID-19. People in these communities have little hope because no jobs are available and conditions continue to deteriorate.

Recently, Ledy, SIFAT graduate and leader of our Atucucho project, sent a letter to us on behalf of her community.

She is taking care of 80 of the most vulnerable elderly by providing hot breakfasts every week.

Dios les pague a SIFAT (God will repay SIFAT). In some cases, this is the only meal the elderly will have each day. I am very happy to see that our older adults are waiting for us day by day for their breakfast.

A deep thanks to Tom Corson and Dr. Roberto Contreras for keeping Atucucho



Dr. Roberto uses technology to make virtual house calls and then packages each patient's medications to distribute. He is also providing anti-parasite treatments and vitamins to keep the children in our projects healthy.

in their hearts and continuing to help us. Many thanks to SIFAT's Doctor in your House program. Through video conference, Dr. Roberto talks with each patient, giving them a word of hope and reinforcing that God loves each one of them. Then, Dr. Roberto prepares the bags with a month's supply of medicine for each patient, and we distribute these.

As a Community Representative, I have a concern about the amount of malnutrition that exists among young children. This program gives anti-parasite medicines,

vitamins and nutritional supplements, which will be a big impact in the children's development.

We trust God will continue sending "Our angel SIFAT" to continue helping us, especially our children and elderly.

Atucucho is only one of the five projects and their five extensions that are benefitting from this program. SIFAT's *Doctor in your House* empowers our SIFAT graduates to reach out to the most critical cases in their communities and meet physical needs, while also encouraging these families spiritually. This program is providing medical care, food through The Golden Bread and also providing salaries for our full-time SIFAT Ecuador staff. Normally, their salary support comes from the fees paid by our mission teams. Keeping our international and domestic staff has been very important to our SIFAT leadership. The Ecuadorian government is allowing companies to drastically reduce salaries. But, we know that our staff is still working daily and have living expenses. Thank you for helping SIFAT pay our staff fairly and continually during this crisis.

We want to share two stories with you as examples of the thousands who are benefitting from your generosity.

Venezuelan Refugees Our Villaflores project site is supporting a group of 20 Venezuelan families that live together in the south of Quito. They live in an old house that has been split into five apartments. Each family stays in one bedroom. The three or four families in each apartment share the kitchen and bathroom, though some cook in their bedroom with a small gas stove. Before the lockdown, they tried to find work in the streets selling anything, washing cars and even resorting to simply begging. They

ting Doctor in your House in Ecuador

send many thanks to the church and to SIFAT for their support to the neediest people like them.

Multi-generational Family
Maria lives with her daughter, son-in-law, granddaughter and great-granddaughter. Maria's daughter has a kidney condition and cannot work. Maria's son-in-law was a security guard, but lost his job because of the pandemic. Maria can barely find work as a maid and laundress. This family is now being evicted from their home.

Four years ago, Maria was invited to church by one of the Machachi church members (an extension of the Villaflora church). Since then, she has joined one of the Church Prayer Circles. Being part of this group brings her joy, and she is praying the pandemic ends soon. She is forever grateful for the food donations for her family.

The people with whom we work in Ecuador are hard-working and proud. They want to provide for their families, but many are single mothers or elderly. With no jobs or social programs available and with the churches having few resources to fall back on, SIFAT's *Doctor in your House* is the only help

they are receiving during this time of uncertainty. In the U.S., we talk about the difficulties of virtual learning, keeping our children entertained and being unable to attend social functions as we have so freely done in the past. It is often hard for us to imagine how it must feel for so many crowded together in one room with no internet, no cable tv, no transportation and no safe outdoor places for children to play. We cannot change their living conditions, but because of your generosity, we can help keep many alive until this horrific time is behind us and assure them that people do care.

As the cases of COVID-19 increase, so do the needs of the people in our projects in Ecuador. We must keep this program going through most of 2021! For our Ecuador mission team members who know and love the children and families in our Quito projects, for churches supporting SIFAT and for you who have only read about our work there, we are appealing to you for continued support. This pandemic cannot last forever. With the food and medicines provided by *Doctor in your House* during this time, you become a part of ensuring the survival of so many.



Maria is one of the multi-generational families who live together and are affected by the strict lockdowns and loss of jobs. This food does not just feed her family, but it gives them hope.

We at SIFAT thank you again, and as Ledy in Atucucho promises, Dios les pague/God will repay you all!

Blessings, muchas gracias and Thanksgiving good wishes,

Peggy, Tom, Marie and all our SIFAT Ecuador staff.

Please designate your gift to SIFAT *Doctor in your House* on the check memo or in the notes of your online donations.

For all of our *Doctor in your House* updates, visit www.sifat.org/tag/sifat-doctor-in-your-house

Left: Your donations are empowering our SIFAT project leaders like Pastor Rafael (far left) to give food to those in dire need, such as this group of 20 Venezuelan refugee families who live together in Quito.



Remembering SIFAT's Beginnings

Jim Warnes

Member of SIFAT's First Board of Directors

Before there was a SIFAT, my sister, Robin, lived with Ken and Sarah Corson in Bolivia. Her three-month internship turned into a yearlong adventure. When Ken and Sarah came to speak at our church in Athens, Ga., they stayed at our home. While Sarah and my wife Carol were preparing supper, Ken and I were getting to know each other in the den. During our conversation, I realized my five-year-old daughter, Nell, who avoided strangers, was climbing all over Ken. That was my first recognition of what a special person Ken is.

In May 1979, we and about 65 others were invited to the First United Methodist Church in Wedowee, Ala., to hear the Corsons share their vision and dream for SIFAT. Knowing how the fish ponds and the native pottery transformed the lives and wellbeing of those in Sapecho and learning about appropriate technology as a means of addressing the needs of a whole person's life — physically and spiritually, I immediately wanted to be a part of this venture.

The Southern Institute for Appropriate Technology, Inc., grew out of that first meeting. Ken wanted a Christ-based organization that would also appeal to the corporate world. The organization needed a name to be incorporated, but the intent was always to change it. The legal name is a mouthful, so SIFAT began to be used. An early board meeting adopted the themes *Servants in Faith and Technology* and *Sharing God's Love in Practical Ways*. Both of these describe the essence of SIFAT.

The initial meeting was the planting of the seed. SIFAT originally operated out of Ken and Sarah's home. An early cultivating of the seed was the building of the Warehouse, to provide offices, storage and space for carrying out appropriate technology experiments. In 1981, 80 men gathered to erect the Warehouse. They came from Indiana, Tennessee, Mississippi, Georgia and Alabama. The professional contractor who had agreed to supervise the construction did not know how to lead volunteer strangers, and the previous week's weather prevented the slab from being completely poured. But when God has a project to be completed, He provides a way. Rev.

Austin Boggins, a board member, stepped up. He directed one crew to finish pouring the slab, while another crew began framing the 12-foot tall wall on the opposite end. He enlisted two other crews to begin laying out and framing the side walls of the building. When the end wall was complete, men lifted it into place. The first portions of the walls on each side went up, stabilizing the end. As soon as two more sections of the side walls went up, a crew began the roof framing. Another crew began nailing the galvanized siding. By the end of the day, the slab was finished, the side walls were erected to the point where the newly poured concrete began, 40 percent of the roof was framed, the back wall siding was complete and the siding on the side walls was partially complete. But, the true miracle was when the volunteers stepped back and realized that not only had a group of strangers been united to erect a building to further God's work, but there had not been one cross word or argument the entire day. Ken likes to say, "Many hands make light work." That was illustrated the day of the Warehouse raising.



For years, Ken would call me in the evening to think out loud. One night, he told me that the owner of 176 acres on Mad Indian Creek had offered to sell it to SIFAT at a bargain price. The owner was an atheist, but had become enamored with the concept of SIFAT and how it exemplified its purposes. While Ken could see the value of SIFAT having a permanent base and could envision the variety of potential uses, there was no money to buy land. But, the board agreed that SIFAT could raise the down payment and finance the balance. As soon as the word was out, donations began pouring in.

Galilee Farm was born. The brick house was the office, dorm and classroom. Milk from the cows and goats was kept in the refrigerator. The next building was the earth berm cafeteria. A church donated a gas stove when it remodeled its kitchen. When my family spent our vacation at SIFAT, I worked with Johnny Buttrum doing maintenance, while Carol completely dismantled the gas stove, cleaned all the parts and reassembled it. We slept in a mobile home on mattresses on the floor and fixed our meals in the brick house. One morning, while Carol was cooking breakfast, our middle daughter, Sara, poured herself a glass of milk from the refrigerator. "Mom, this milk tastes funny." We all had a big laugh when it was discovered she had poured herself a glass of goat's milk. What memories!

A Road to Pararia

Sarah Corson
SIFAT Co-founder

Since 2010, Auburn University's Engineers Without Borders (EWB) team has been going to Quesimpuco, Bolivia, to help remote villages around Quesimpuco build micro-irrigation systems. Because of an arid climate, the farmers could only plant once a year during the rainy season. Hunger stalked the villagers for nine months of the year. Now with the success of these systems, they have multiple harvests each year.

By our standards, many may still seem poor, but they do not think so! They have food year-round and hope for the future. With this success, requests came for help from other villages.

However, much of the team's time is spent hiking long, steep trails at high altitudes into and out of villages each day because of the lack of roads (picture). The leaders of Pararia approached the regional government in Pocoato. They wrote a proposal for a road to connect Pararia to the outside world. It was approved! When Huber Ramos became director of CENATEC, he communicated with the officials regularly and did not let them forget their promise, even in this hard year.

Building a road in the Andes is no small job! But the road has now been finished. The EWB team will be able to go in jeeps to the work site and spend more hours a day helping with the irrigation system, which they plan to initiate as soon as COVID-19 allows. The villages in the Quesimpuco area have proved to us that people can develop given the right circumstances and "seed money" to get the right start.



Shop for a Cause!

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

Thousands of retailers will donate a percentage of your purchase to SIFAT. Use Goodshop or iGive, search for your favorite store and follow the link to its website to shop with purpose.

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

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

www.smile.amazon.com/ch/63-0776048

Android and iPhone users can turn on AmazonSmile in their updated app's settings.

Paying it Forward in Uganda



Brothers Elvis and Jovan are graduates of Agape and are pursuing college degrees. They recently spent time teaching local community members in Mukono about sack gardens.

Finding my Purpose During Retirement

Art Stephenson

SIFAT Board of Directors Member / Chairperson of Graduate Project Committee

When I retired from a busy, full-time, working life, I decided that rather than chasing a small white ball around the course three or four times a week, I would like to spend most of my retirement with my family and “giving back,” helping those whom Jesus called “the least of these.” I could not have imagined where this decision, influenced by God I am sure, would lead. As a result, God has blessed me by connecting me to organizations that serve people living in poverty.

SIFAT captured my passion. I was introduced to SIFAT through our Houston, Texas, church, Clear Lake United Methodist Church in 2006, when a work team traveled to the campus in Alabama to maintain and improve campus facilities. I learned about SIFAT’s work around the world through leaders from indigenous communities who have been trained by SIFAT in community development and appropriate technologies. What a wonderful way to reach out to help those in need – through community leaders who learned from SIFAT these skills and returned to their communities to apply this knowledge, working with their people to address the unique and most pressing needs of their community. SIFAT has graduates in more than 90 countries. The impact is beyond imagination as SIFAT graduates train others in this knowledge, and they, in turn, train others.

In 2016, I volunteered to lead a committee whose task was to set up and administer a process through which SIFAT graduates could apply for financial grants — seed money to improve the lives of the poor for the better. This idea was not new for SIFAT, but needed an updated application and approval process. Sarah and Ken Corson had been leading such an effort for decades, providing graduates with resources to

kick start projects that provided basic human needs. In Ken’s words, “God provided, so that we could teach appropriate technologies to help some of the poorest people in the world find ways to meet their basic human needs of clean water, food, alternative energy, housing, health, education and microenterprise for a livelihood.” One key requirement of each approved graduate project is that it must lead to a sustainable improvement. The improvement made would result in a significant benefit to the community for years to come without having to ask for additional funds from SIFAT or others.

SIFAT Graduate Projects (since 2016)

Number of projects fully funded: 42

Amount of donor funds for graduate projects: \$330,000

Types of projects: wells, food security, school construction, wellness seminars, livelihood for disabled people, land acquisition for farming and schools, micro industry, livestock, fish and poultry farms, refugee community church, computer lab, solar array power

Countries where projects have taken place: Bolivia, Ecuador, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti, Kenya, Liberia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Uganda, Zambia

I have been privileged to carry this effort on, currently with the help of Jarred Griffin, Britt Carter and Carolann Smith. Through the generosity of SIFAT donors, we have approved and fully funded 42 graduate projects, averaging \$7,000 each.

Because of my work with SIFAT, I have had the wonderful opportunity to communicate with graduates around the world. Those of us associated with these life-giving projects have witnessed God’s hand in giving hope to communities in need. Joy has come to many people in many lands in many ways. Imagine my joy and the joy of donors, for example, seeing people dancing around a well that produces free, clean, safe drinking water for the first time ever for their community! Well, do not imagine it, see this for yourself! Go to www.youtube.com/sifattube to watch Pastor Obi’s video *Dawn of a New Day*, which documents

the drilling of a well in a remote community in Nigeria.

If you are interested in donating to a SIFAT graduate project, visit the Current Projects at www.sifat.org/international-missions/international-projects. A SIFAT donor has offered to match each dollar donated up to the amount still needed to fully fund these four projects (\$26,800). So, do not delay, donate today. No amount is too small.

Training is the beginning, but not the end. SIFAT serves as a bridge between people in need and people who want to help, offering you an opportunity to work alongside our graduates and their communities.



In Haiti, Samuel is working with a group of women who have come together to produce food to help families combat food and economic insecurity. He continues their training, teaching new techniques and ways they can improve their yield and protect their crops. The women even decided to put 10 percent of the money they have raised back into the project, which helps this project become self-sustaining.



In Nigeria, Raphael purchased land with funds provided by SIFAT donors. He uses this land to train farmers (refugees from northern Nigeria), who feed their families with the corn they grow and can sell the extra. The first training group will graduate this December. Eight are already talking with landowners to purchase their own properties. Raphael is recruiting the second group during November.

Raising Chicken and Fish for CENATEC

Sarah Corson
SIFAT Co-founder

CENATEC received a grant from SIFAT's Graduates' Projects Committee to get a microenterprise project started. Its purpose is to (1) produce a protein source (chicken and later fish) for homesteaders in the Alto Beni of Bolivia and (2) to make a profit to keep CENATEC operating. Like SIFAT, CENATEC's goal is to support sustainable and integrated development of body, mind and soul of poor communities. They plan to raise chickens. The waste from the enterprise will feed fast-producing tilapia fingerlings, which will be used to feed paiche, the world's largest freshwater fish that can grow to be almost 10 feet long.

The project started with great hope in July, but quickly met obstacles because of COVID-19. During the lockdown, small groups went on their own properties to cut posts for three buildings to house the chickens. The roof had to be bought in the capital city. For weeks, no one could travel, and then demand caused waitlists for materials. Finally, the roof arrived. Then, they applied with the government agency for a facility inspection, so they can legally sell food products. The inspection was in October, but they are still waiting for approval. They can buy chicks when the paperwork is finalized.

Despite the obstacles, they have great hope that this microenterprise is going to give this community a source of good protein. The profit can sustain CENATEC and enable it to continue to serve the poorest communities in Bolivia. The CENATEC leaders ask for prayers that God will lead them through these obstacles to success! They have no doubt that it will happen.



Benjo oversees the building for the chicken farm in Bolivia.

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.

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.

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.

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.

World Food Day

Sarah Corson
SIFAT Co-founder

On October 16, 2020, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) celebrated its 75th anniversary on World Food Day. People from 150 countries participated in the celebration with different events in their countries.

SIFAT's international training director, Kathy Bryson, was invited to speak for SIFAT at an event hosted by the National University of Agriculture (UNA) in Honduras. A virtual two-day symposium with international speakers, this event was watched in many countries, especially throughout Latin America. The director of the event was Dr. Héctor Gómez, director of the Academic Department of Food at UNA, who is a SIFAT graduate.



UNA-Honduras students participate in a SIFAT training in Costa Rica.

World Food Day inspires many events and activities across the world for those who want to end the hunger crisis. It promotes worldwide awareness and action for those who suffer from hunger and malnutrition. This year was an exceptional celebration because the widespread effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have also created a global hunger pandemic as millions are in lockdowns and cannot work. Today, nearly 690 million people are hungry, an increase in 10 million since 2019. FAO warns that the COVID-19 pandemic could add between 83 to 132 million more people to this number, depending on how COVID-19 and economic growth work out.

Kathy's presentation at the virtual UNA event described methods SIFAT uses to help people develop their own food security. She also included the testimony of two of the many students and teachers who have worked with SIFAT to make us known throughout much of Central and South America as a Christian agency helping in the hunger crisis. They have especially helped us to be known not only for providing food and water relief in emergency situations, but more importantly, in helping communities develop and

provide their own food and clean water systems for their own people.

Professor José Matute from UNA, who is responsible for helping more than 70 students to study at SIFAT, gave one of the testimonies. These Honduran graduates have organized into a SIFAT alumni group called AHESUNA.

They are spread across Honduras teaching their communities how to make their situations more food secure. David Rojas, a SIFAT and UNA graduate from Guatemala who directed the activities of SIFAT Costa Rica and helped us get established the first year, was part of the SIFAT presentation.

This year was not an ordinary celebration of World Food Day. Churches, governments, nonprofits, businesses and groups produced hundreds of events and outreach activities to bring people who care about our world and suffering people in it together to work for food security for all. We are thankful that SIFAT was invited to participate in UNA's event.

A Permanent Home in Costa Rica

Kathy Bryson
International Training Director

Sarah Corson
SIFAT Co-founder

Celebrate with us as our long-worked-for dream has become a reality! We now have our own SIFAT Central American Training Center in Costa Rica and are preparing to receive church and community leaders from needy areas throughout Central America and beyond. We are so thankful to the donors that made this possible! Already, applicants are signing up to come to the first training sessions to be held as soon as is feasible with the pandemic.

For two years, SIFAT has been training at a church camp, working on agriculture projects with the hope to start a demonstration farm. But with COVID-19 and the lockdown, the church was pressured to use their land for more lucrative cattle-raising, which reduced the area available for agricultural development. We were unsure of the next step until we discovered a rustic eco-lodge with dorm space for 35 and an open-air cafeteria to host more than 100 with the possibility for further development.

COVID-19 kept the tourists away until the owner was bankrupt and facing foreclosure. Yet, SIFAT dared not think of trying to buy this perfect spot for a campus in such hard times as this. But God can move the largest mountains

and the last day before repossession, friends of SIFAT sent funds to buy the mini-farm.

Though a little less than three acres, it has everything necessary to present SIFAT's training, including organic garden beds and some appropriate technology models. It even has a river on one side like Mad Indian Creek here on SIFAT's Galilee Campus in Alabama and several springs to demonstrate water technologies. The climate allows us to have year-round demonstration gardens with tropical plants similar to the majority of the developing world.

SIFAT's Central American Training Center will allow us to reach more people with life-saving skills. 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 communities instead of having to migrate to other countries. SIFAT has found 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.

We invite you to visit this campus when COVID-19 is under control. Meanwhile, our residential staff are busy laying the foundation for upcoming trainings! Please join us in this new venture with your support and prayers. Our training



Don Jose (center), his wife Emilia and son Ismael join Kathy at the entrance to our new training center in Costa Rica. A handmade dove hammered out of a barrel in Haiti hangs over the gate, symbolizing peace and restoration to all who come from around the world to study here.

on Galilee Campus will continue for those from other countries who are able to obtain visas and those from the United States.

Stay Connected with SIFAT for our Latest News!

Visit our blog (sifat.org/blog) and find us on Facebook (facebook.com/sifatbook) or Twitter ([@sifattweets](https://twitter.com/sifattweets)) for updates between newsletters! Sign up for our e-newsletter at www.sifat.org.

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.

A Farm Manager for Costa Rica

Kathy Bryson
International Training Director

Editor's Note: In this article, the title of Don is given to a gentleman to show respect and honor.

Don Jose grew up in rural Costa Rica with six siblings. They were poor, but proud, and worked hard to survive. When Don Jose was 10, his father gave him a small plot of land to work. He said, "Son, it is your job to make it produce." He showed Don Jose how to prepare the land and gave him seeds to grow cilantro. "You are in charge. We are counting on you to help us survive."

Don Jose carefully tended the cilantro. On harvest day, he made 100 small rolls of cilantro and set off on his bicycle to sell them. He worked until sunset and sold all his cilantro, thrilled to have made money for his family. Since then, he has worked nonstop.

Early life experiences formed the work ethic so apparent in Don Jose's character. It also gave him skills in raising cattle, pigs, chickens and goats and skills in carpentry, plumbing and small repairs for farm maintenance.

Don Jose has an indomitable spirit. He has lived through difficult times and learned that through grit, hard work and perseverance, he can make it. His positive attitude and spirit of encouraging others allowed him to land a lucrative job. He kept getting promotions as a salesman in an international shoe company. His micro-entrepreneurial spirit led him to start small businesses, including a bakery for his handicapped son to have employment.

He started on his dream 16 years ago—buying land and investing to create an ecotourism farm for Costa Ricans to bring their families from the city to learn about farm life. They could milk a cow, harvest organic produce, catch tilapia and enjoy pristine jungle wildlife. Things went well until the economy stalled. Then, COVID-19 struck. His businesses failed. Soon, he was facing bankruptcy.

This crisis led Don Jose to reassess his life. Years of hard work had paid off. His family was doing far better than how he grew up. Yet he had drifted away from his wife and children, working constantly. He had begun drinking heavily.

When the crisis struck, his money sources dried up, but the bills continued. Debt was crushing him, and creditors were incessant. He was losing everything!

He joined a Christian businessmen's association, and God started to work in his life. Don Jose realized he had his priorities wrong. He had neglected his spiritual life and his family. He made a commitment to put God first. The group prayed together weekly for God's will for his life.

When Don Jose was at his lowest point, God lifted him up. He and his wife Emilia invited me for lunch on the farm SIFAT bought from him. Don Jose shared his testimony with me.



Don Jose with squash that he grew.

These have been the worst years of my life. However, this has been the best time because of what God has shown me. He has done a miracle with my relationship with my family. I would not change that for all the money and success! I thank God for the hard times because those led me to Him, and He transformed me inside. I am clear whose I am and that with my family, we can face an uncertain future fearlessly with God.

When it was inevitable that the bank would repossess the farm, I prayed—'OK, God, whatever you have for my life ... Here I am.' That day, SIFAT called and proposed saving the farm. You offered for me to become a part of the SIFAT mission to help others. My family could scarcely believe this miracle. My faith had been too small.

God knew SIFAT, and He knew me. His plan to bring us together to help others from different countries, sharing our experiences, skills and testimonies about how important it is to put God first, to not neglect our spiritual lives and to invest in our families. I am excited about the possibility to dedicate my life to support SIFAT and God's plan in this mission!

SIFAT works in Community Development, promoting the Integrated Gospel of Jesus Christ. We are clear that the poverty and overwhelming need on our planet has spiritual and physical components. Don Jose's testimony reaffirmed our focus on restoring relationships. Clean water filters, sustainable food production, fuel-efficient cookstoves and life-saving appropriate technologies are important, but so are transforming relationships with the power of our Awesome God!

A Dream of Working at SIFAT

Josiah Corson
Operations Manager

As a young boy, I always knew SIFAT was special. If I only knew then the incredible role SIFAT would play in my life. My life's motto has always been "Here I am God, send me." As a teenager on the verge of adulthood, God showed me in 2013 that my calling has been right in front of me this entire time. My mission started. I began trying to seek out God and make myself the best I could for SIFAT by refining myself and acquiring knowledge and skills needed to be an asset to the team.

In 2016, I started working on the maintenance crew. In 2017, I was a farm to table intern, and in 2019 I was head of the summer flex staff. My goal was to work in as many positions as I could, so that one day I could better understand SIFAT's needs from an employee's perspective. As I worked at SIFAT part time, went to college and talked to new people, I realized that SIFAT's core mission is what many people are just figuring out is one of the best methods for missions and for showing God's love in practical ways.

Many people get ahead of themselves when trying to share God's word. SIFAT teaches to value the word of God; it is the basis on which we function. We also value people, their needs and relationship building. I think SIFAT does a great job at meeting people where they are, getting to know them and then being able to pinpoint exactly how they can best receive the Gospel. It is a beautiful thing to watch and something I probably took for granted as a child. As an adult, now I recognize all the points in which my family, and the SIFAT staff were incredibly intentional when helping people — truly showing them the love of God. They were loving the individuals so well that the overflow was just to show Jesus through their lives and eventually through His infallible Word. SIFAT's devotion to loving God and people is where the Gospel takes hold and is able to permeate borders, lands and the hearts of so many touched by the way of Jesus. SIFAT's goal is that those who hear this will tell others.

On the SIFAT Galilee Campus, we bring an awareness of what poverty looks like and how to help to Americans, but

also train internationals in appropriate technologies that can better their quality of life.

The practical side of SIFAT has always been what I have most admired. I love the idea that a family has a moringa tree in their yard and by harvesting its seeds, they can acquire clean drinking water. There are other great ways in which we teach people more efficient ways of meeting their basic needs. God is doing amazing things on SIFAT's campus. SIFAT's mission and goal are powerful and meaningful to me, and I am honored to have joined the team officially.



Josiah (center) leads a group through the Challenge Course.

The months during COVID-19 have truly been a strange season on our campus. While we have been unable to host groups, we have definitely stayed busy. The campus staff has made important improvements to the property. Something that has always been important to the mission of SIFAT is hospitality. There is great value in welcoming and hosting people from all over the world. The community that this creates is one thing that makes SIFAT unique. Another thing we hold dear is stewardship. Our campus is possible because of the donations from the people

who support us. Taking care of those gifts is the best way to remain thankful and utilize what has been provided. For example, we have worked on making our Global Village paths more accessible to everyone by adding gravel and fixing our erosion problem. Our latest addition to the village are our new latrines, installed with appropriate technology lighting.

Our five lodging buildings received new interior paint, stained decks and updated furniture where needed. These needed updates let SIFAT make the groups that God gives us feel more safe, comfortable and at home during their experience.

This year has been an unexpected introduction to my working at SIFAT. While we would love the campus to be bustling with groups, we still have improvements we can make until it is safe to welcome visitors back. Without you, nothing that we have done here would have been possible. We hope to reach more of our campus goals, such as maintaining and adding to our outdoor facilities. With prayer, donations and volunteers it will happen! Thank you for being part of SIFAT. We hope to see you on the Galilee Campus soon!



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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

Many of you know Ruth Noemi, whom SIFAT supporters helped to attend medical school. Dr. Ruth is now the physician who serves in Quesimpuco and the surrounding villages. She married William, another SIFAT graduate who is the pastor there. They were living in the parsonage, which SIFAT teams built, when COVID-19 invaded Quesimpuco. Immediately, Dr. Ruth and Pastor William moved into a hospital room, so they could turn their home into a quarantined place to treat those sick with the virus. This home is the only one in Quesimpuco that has an indoor bathroom, clean water and electricity.

Dr. Ruth's brother, Jhony, is also a graduate of SIFAT's school and is the chairman of the city council of Pocoato, the capital of the region where Quesimpuco is. Jhony was working hard to help the sick and dying, but they did not have enough supplies for this pandemic. They did not have a single ventilator in the area. Jhony contacted SIFAT and asked for help in getting one.

How could SIFAT buy a ventilator? They are expensive! Why, my own county in Alabama only has one! It seemed impossible. But, we have learned during

this pandemic that God still works miracles. I went to Dr. Tom Burch, our Auburn University Engineers Without Borders mission team leader, with our need. Tom and Michael Zabala, both faculty in Auburn University's Samuel Ginn College of Engineering, and Hayden Burch, an engineering student, created a ventilator using a CPAP machine and additional components. EWB adviser for the Bolivia team Dr. Joe Ragan, additional faculty and alumni helped finalize the design. Although it takes about four hours to assemble, a CPAP and extra parts, this device, named RE-INVENT, costs about \$1,700 plus shipping, which is much less than a \$25,000 ventilator!

SIFAT shipped four RE-INVENT devices to the central hospital of Pocoato. Because of the extreme elevation, each unit required two CPAP machines. Although SIFAT's focus is on helping people develop physically and spiritually, so that they can meet their own basic needs, in times of emergency like we face today, we need to help give relief to suffering people. We are thankful to our supporters at Auburn University and Auburn UMC, who made it possible for SIFAT to provide these life-saving machines for the people in this remote, impoverished area of Bolivia.