



**Servants in Faith and Technology /**  
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## Worth the Wait

**By Marie Lanier Narváez**

### **Promotions and Marketing Coordinator**

For 10 years, the church in Aida Leon, a neighborhood in the south of Quito, Ecuador, waited for SIFAT teams to come start an addition for their afterschool children's program. They had little space in which to welcome these at-risk students to get them off the streets and in school, to help them with their schoolwork and to feed them nutritious, hot meal lunches.

They never imagined it would take 10 years to break ground to start building. Who could have imagined a president wanting to build a bunker and use imminent domain to take the land? How could it take so long to receive permits and clearance to build? But finally, everything was in place and our teams arrived in 2018 to support SIFAT graduate Pastor Wilson and his church. Our teams worked diligently when plans changed, and a basement needed to be dug! For two years, we served the

people of Aida Leon, while enjoying beautiful views of the mountains. As we all remember, the world stopped in 2020 and so did construction in Aida Leon. At that time, we thought it might be a delay of a few months, maybe a year at most. However, we soon realized we would be paused indefinitely. That's where you stepped in!

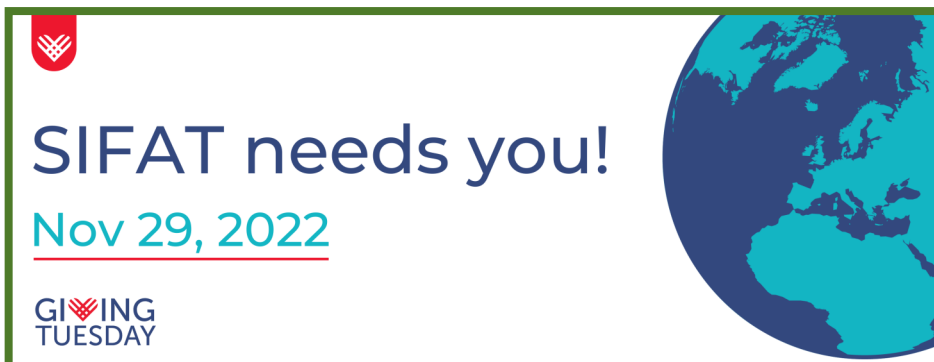


*SIFAT Ecuador Director Dr. Roberto Contreras, international team coordinator Peggy Walker, Aida Leon leader Cecelia and I enjoy our favorite treats in the new kitchen — tostado y chicharrón.*

Our international mission team members, their sending churches and other SIFAT supporters answered our call for help! You donated funds, so that we could purchase materials and hire local workers who needed jobs to finish this project. We received pictures and updates from our SIFAT Ecuador staff and were excited to share these on social media. When we saw the children exploring the building for the first time, our hearts were filled with joy, not only at seeing a completed facility and knowing how it will change the future for these students, but also at the culmination of this project, which at times seemed riddled with obstacles.

*(Continued on back page.)*

————— **Save the Date for GivingTuesday: Nov. 29, 2022** —————



*Kick off the gift-giving season by donating to SIFAT. Watch your email and our social media as we share about our matching fund that will double your gift and how to donate.*

**Mark your calendar — Nov. 29, 2022!**  
*We need your help to meet our goal and finish the year strong!*

What we were not prepared for was our in-person visits in July. Emotions were high as we arrived, ready to see the building for ourselves. On this visit, our SIFAT staff members from the USA were greeted by Cecelia, the leader of the afterschool program, who knew we were coming. She led the children in welcoming us, then gave us a complete tour of the building. We were overwhelmed to be there again after two and a half years of waiting and to be wrapped in hugs from the church staff and children whom we know so well.

However, we stopped by unexpectedly with a SIFAT team a few weeks later. We received the same welcome as before! What a sight to see! The rooms were full of students — from young elementary kids to older youth. They were working on art projects, singing and going about their daily activities. The team members with us that day — some of whom had helped in construction or led VBS classes for these children — were able to envision the lasting impact their short week in Ecuador makes on these communities for the long-term. Yes, we enjoyed the reciting of Bible verses and singing of songs. And of course, everyone ended up on the roof to take pictures and celebrate the completion of this construction project and the beginning of its use.

For me, I saw that this experience was not a show put on for pictures and videos. Cecelia and her staff pour their love and encouragement into the lives of the next generation. Not only are they safe and secure in a new building with room to accept more students, but these children and youth have a bright, cheerful place to learn and grow. They are learning the Bible and spiritual truths that they will carry with them into adulthood. Many live in situations we cannot understand, though we try to imagine what their daily lives are like when we go on home visits. But for a few hours each day, they have a church family that cares for them and for their future.

During my trips to Ecuador this year, I also got to see some of the success stories of our work in Ecuador — young adults who are now translating for our medical teams and serving in leadership roles in Villaflora with Pastor Rafael and Anita. We expect the children in Aida Leon to become a new generation in their church and community, much like our friends in Villaflora have. What a blessing for us to be a part of their stories and success in *Sharing God's Love in Practical Ways*!



*Songs and Bible verses were shared by each class.*



*One morning on our way to Machachi, we decided to “hang a right” and stop to see our friends in Aida Leon, who graciously welcomed our team for a tour.*



*The new building in Aida Leon may lack paint on the outside, but the inside is full of bright colors and happy voices!*

### ***Be part of our work in Ecuador!***

***Support SIFAT Doctor in your House/The Golden Bread:*** To continue supporting the children of Aida Leon and other SIFAT projects in Quito, designate your gift Doctor in your House/The Golden Bread.

***Join or lead a mission team:*** E-mail [internationalteams@sifat.org](mailto:internationalteams@sifat.org) for information about 2023 mission teams to Machachi! We need construction and medical teams with VBS components.