

In Memory of our Dearly Loved Brother — Cecil Edwin Contreras —

Tom Corson
Executive Director

We can hardly believe that we were just standing beside you as you directed our SIFAT team building the addition at the church in Machachi two weeks ago. Today, you have gone ahead of us into the arms of God. We can only be happy for you, as you have graduated from this earthly life of pain, sickness and struggle. You have heard the Savior say, "Well done, good and faithful servant. Enter into the joys of thy Lord!" But, we are sad to say goodbye because we will miss you more than words can express. We have depended on you. When we have needed you, you were there for us and for the children in the impoverished barrios of Ecuador!

Most people would have retired. Although you were sick and your body in pain, you continued to work as the hands of Christ. You felt God's deep call to help the suffering children. You were faithful to that call until the very end of your earthly life.

I remember when we met you 23 years ago. You agreed to help SIFAT for one team, but you did so reluctantly, thinking Christians were hypocrites. You mocked us at times, trying to provoke us to make us mad. But Jesus loved you so much, He kept bringing you back each day, which gave us a chance to get to know you and to love you, too. The last night of that trip, you stood in front of everyone to read a letter that you had written, telling us that you had decided to follow Christ. We had all been praying for you each day. What joy your testimony brought us! What a climax to our week in Ecuador! From that moment on, you were part of the SIFAT family.



Your thoughts, your work, everything you did centered on what you could do to help SIFAT help the children who were suffering. You even changed your name from who your old friends knew as Cecil to Edwin, similar to the apostle Paul changing his name to make a break from your old self to the new self in Christ.

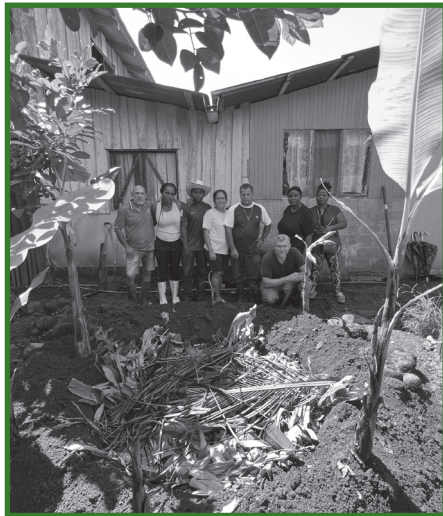
We have many wonderful memories of the weeks we spent with you! You helped us so much in every aspect of our ministry. I remember one evening after a hard day's work

when the big, beautiful church building in Atucucho was almost finished. We stood together, looking down the steep hill at the church and the little shacks around it. You had tears in your eyes as you said, "Look! Look at the hundreds of children all down this hillside! They need Jesus! They need teaching. They need food and medical care. That is what they will get here. There are problems in getting this built. Why do we keep struggling to make it happen? Because of the children! We are doing it for Jesus! We can never walk away and leave them without hope!" You never did. You kept working until

the very end of your life. Through pain and sickness, you kept the faith. You were there with them until death!

Who will help the children now? We are behind you, Edwin. One day we will join you up there with Jesus! But until God calls us to come, we will do our best to keep working to save the children! Your example will continue to inspire us when we are tired or facing problems! Thank you, Edwin, for all you did to help SIFAT reach the children and for the testimony you lived out before us these 23 years!

Until later! We will see you again!



Appropriate Technology Corner

Kathy Bryson
International Training Director

During a training in Costa Rica, SIFAT students completed a “Circle of Banana Trees,” a technique that filters household grey water from the kitchen and laundry by filling a large receiving hole with dried leaves and branches. The recycled water and nitrogen provide excellent fertilizer for the banana trees, which thrive and provide food for the family. It also prevents environmental pollution and stagnant water that breeds mosquitoes.

Support SIFAT When You Shop Online!

Did you know that thousands of retailers donate percentages of purchases to charity? Use Goodshop or iGive, search your favorite store and follow the provided website link to shop for SIFAT. Coupons are linked to help you save.

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

www.igive.com/sifat

An Emergency Taxi Ride

Pedro Lucas
Ecuador Mission Team Member

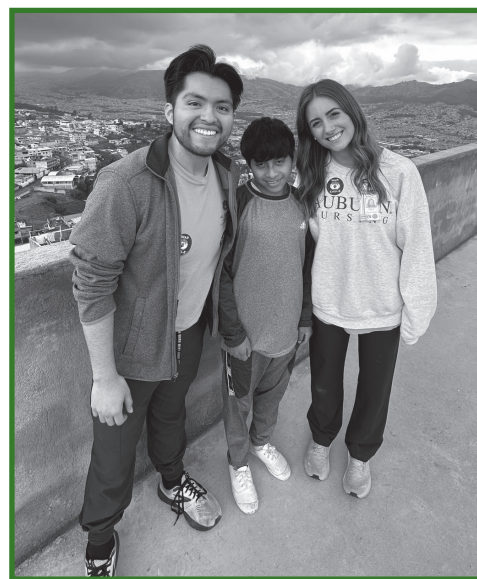
I am Pedro Lucas, a third-year pharmacy student at Auburn University's Harrison College of Pharmacy. When I first received news about an opportunity to go on a medical mission trip, I immediately signed up! I have always wanted to serve medically, especially in under served areas. I was excited about the opportunity to be part of this medical team.

My time in Quito, Ecuador, was one of the most impactful trips! From eating guinea pig, playing soccer, seeing mountain views, drinking coffee, visiting artisan markets and walking in the rain to visiting Ecuadorian pharmacies, journeying around Quito and singing “Este es el Día”, my experience was once in a lifetime. I was honored to serve alongside nursing students, nurse practitioners, physicians and pharmacists. I got to learn so much when it comes to interprofessional collaboration. Working with them gave me a sense of appreciation for their roles in the healthcare system.

It was humbling to serve at Iglesia Esperanza Eterna in Aida Leon. Everyone I met was incredibly kind and appreciative of the services we were providing. My role was to dispense and counsel patients on their medications. I also played the role of a translator. This trip also allowed me to see the disparities in healthcare in Quito.

One extraordinary, unprecedented moment was taking a patient to the hospital in an emergency taxi ride. Diego, a 14 year old, was unstable with an extremely low oxygen saturation level and other symptoms. The team tried to call 911, but the ambulance refused to come. At one point, we were not sure Diego would survive the taxi ride. Thankfully, we made it to the hospital, where Diego was diagnosed with a panic attack and received treatment. The next day, I got to speak with him, which emotionally impacted me; he was doing fine. We became great friends when he came back to visit the team at the clinic! We played soccer and played the guitar together.

This experience reminded me of Proverbs 3:5, “Trust in the Lord with all



AU students Pedro and Allison took care of Diego during an emergency situation on Tuesday of our clinic. Diego came back later in the week to thank them and visit. This 14-year-old boy made a lasting impact on the entire team and was a special patient everyone will remember.

your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding.” I did not understand why this was happening with Diego. However, the Lord is faithful and sovereign. Overall, this was a trip I will never forget!

A Sweet Reunion Five Years in the Making

Emma Wood
Ecuador Mission Team Member

Having the opportunity to serve again in Aida León was sweeter than I could have imagined! I was blessed to reconnect with some of the children I met five years ago while serving with Auburn University's College of Nursing in their Vacation Bible School activities. I was 18 years old then. After not travelling to Ecuador since the pandemic started, I was excited to return this year as a triage nurse and be able to work with each patient that came through our team's clinic.

When I saw her name at the top of the patient form, I knew she was one of my former VBS friends from 2018. I remembered Shirley as a little 10 year old, eager to learn about Jesus, and sweet as could be. We became fast friends while making craft necklaces and singing about Jesus's love for us. Like most Ecuadorian children, Shirley loved hugs and expressed such genuine thankfulness for our time together.

Now, Shirley is a beautiful 15 year old, involved in her church and leading younger children. I could not have been more excited to see her again! We both gasped when we recognized each other and shared the biggest embrace! What a treasure to see her all grown up and continuing to follow Jesus!

When reconnecting with Shirley and the other children at Aida León, I could not help but reflect on Revelation 7:9-10: We know that "every nation, tribe, people and language" will one day be "standing before the throne and before the Lamb" worshipping our Lord Jesus, and my heart rejoices to say with the saints, "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"

What a joy to consider that there will be familiar faces in heaven! This is the beauty of the work SIFAT does across the globe, connecting people with resources to thrive and sharing the good news that Jesus Christ gave His life for our salvation!



Then and now ... Emma and Shirley reconnected this March after five years apart. They both remembered one another from a previous mission experience in Aida León.

Stay Connected with SIFAT

Sign up to receive our monthly e-newsletter at www.sifat.org (bottom right corner).

Visit our blog on our website or follow us on social media (facebook.com/sifatbook, @sifattweets or Learn & Serve's Instagram @sifatLandS) for updates between issues of *The SIFAT Journal*!

Are you moving? Email your new mailing address, phone number or email address to info@sifat.org.

Would your church like copies of *The SIFAT Journal* or brochures? Let us know how many you need.



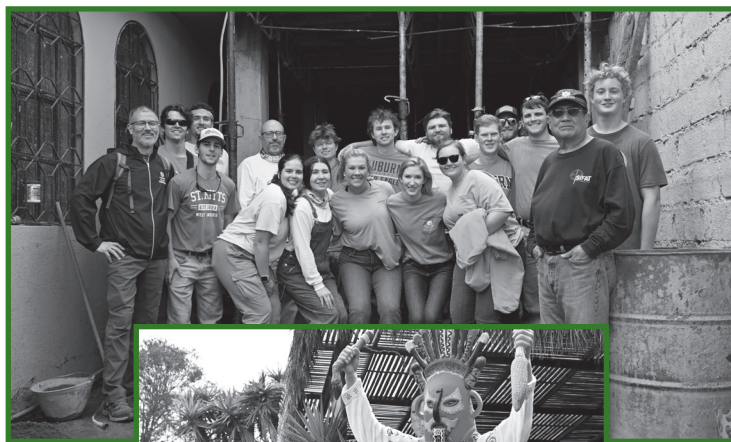
Join a SIFAT team today! Clear Lake UMC in Houston, Texas, wants you to be part of their mission trip to Ecuador. This team has members from different churches and are welcoming to everyone. Are you available July 15-23? Contact internationalteams@sifat.org for details.

Picture Yourself in Ecuador

It is always difficult to say thank you to our mission teams. They are such an integral part of bringing SIFAT's mission to life. They use their skills to serve others, and even when some might say they have no skills to share, they implement the ministry of presence. By stepping out of their comfort zones, sacrificing to raise travel and supply funds and arriving in another country, their presence encourages and empowers the church families with whom we work. Thank you for taking this step of faith and joining a SIFAT team! We hope this will not be your last trip. As Dr. Roberto always reminds us, make Ecuador your second home!

Luke 10:2 states, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few." That has never been truer for our SIFAT mission teams. Since the pandemic, our mission teams are struggling to find enough team members, and the majority of our scheduled teams have been forced to cancel. Are you interested in joining a SIFAT team this year or starting to plan to lead a team this fall or in 2024? Visit www.sifat.org/international-missions/ecuador or email internationalteams@sifat.org.

Auburn University
McWhorter School of
Building Science



St. James UMC
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Auburn University
College of Nursing



Take a SHARE in SIFAT!

Be part of SIFAT all year! Monthly commitments — our SHARE program — help us budget effectively. Sign up at www.sifat.org/donate or contact Marie Narváez, narvaezm@sifat.org.

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.

Leave a Legacy

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

Matching Funds

Does your employer match your donation to SIFAT? Many companies do, and some even match donations of retirees or spouses of employees.

Questions or Need Help?

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

Providing Medical Care in Ecuador

Dr. Roberto Contreras
SIFAT Ecuador Director

To achieve an integral development of our Ecuadorian population, it is essential to guarantee a healthy and dignified life. However, the Ecuadorian health system has serious shortcomings in access, coverage and quality in health services, as well as deficiencies in the rates of health professionals. Additionally, the current crisis caused by COVID-19 highlighted our system's limited capacity.

Every time that our Ecuadorian families in extreme poverty need a medication, an appointment with a private doctor, outpatient procedures or hospitalizations, they are incurring expenses that they cannot finance or that cause them to not have enough to pay other bills: groceries, utilities, housing or school fees.

It has been a blessing for me to guide our Ecuadorian pastors and community leaders, who are SIFAT graduates, on the process to provide integral health/medical care that is soul, body and spirit to their communities in extreme need.

God has been so good and has moved the hearts of many SIFAT medical teams from the United States, who have been coming to Ecuador to serve thousands of our poor people each year.

This year, I want to highlight the faithfulness of Auburn University's College of Nursing team, who have come to Ecuador for the past 18 years to serve in the area of gynecology. This area is the most critical for poor women who can never pay for gynecological care, and therefore, causes them the

greatest anguish and risk of death from uterine cancer or other related diseases. This March, 185 women were examined, 76 Pap smears performed and we gave 784 prescriptions and 46 specialist referrals, while 165 children were medically treated and given 169 prescriptions and 34 referrals. We also gave reading glasses to 242 people. While patients were waiting, the nursing students held health education classes, including teachings on nutrition, heart disease, diabetes, contraceptive use, sexually transmitted diseases, breast

nurse practitioner. Since Esteban was 7, he has helped with the VBS children or as a translator for teams. But this was his first time translating with a medical team.

Esteban wants to share with you about Diego:

Diego is 14, who while waiting for his medical visit, presented with a seizure-like attack. Medical providers and nursing students tried to stabilize him before taking him to the hospital. There, they ran tests and found out he had suffered from a panic attack.

When he came back for a follow-up visit in our clinic, he revealed to us that he had severe depression with suicidal thoughts. In the past, he had many panic attacks at school, which made him unable to concentrate. His mother wanted to get him psychological help, but because of the pandemic, she did not have a job and was living alone with her three children. We referred him to get psychological help at a center with low prices and helped the mother pay for the first sessions!

I thank God for Auburn's nursing team that made it possible to save Diego's life and for giving me this opportunity to be part of SIFAT's work in Ecuador.



Dr. Roberto Contreras with his son Esteban

self-exam and how to prevent colds and dehydration.

Among those 185 women, we found two women who were psychologically and sexually abused. We urged them to seek psychological help, talk to the pastor and get legal help. In Ecuador, only 15% of the abused women report abuse to the police, and only 5% of abusers are sanctioned.

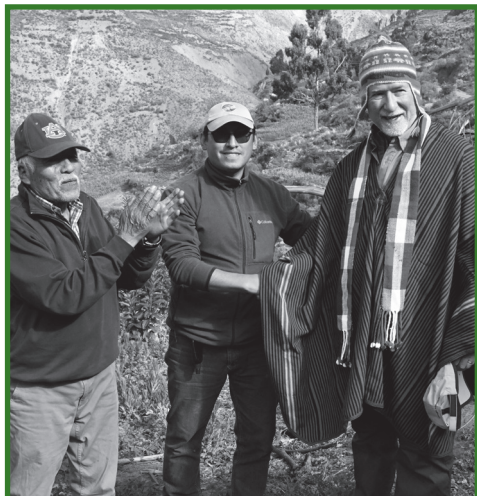
For the first time, my son Esteban, who is halfway through medical school, worked as a translator for the pediatric

"AND A GREAT CROWD OF
PEOPLE FOLLOWED HIM
BECAUSE THEY SAW THE
MIRACULOUS SIGNS HE HAD
PERFORMED ON THE SICK."

JOHN 6:2

Board Member Collaborates with SIFAT

Scott Kramer
SIFAT Board of Directors



During Scott's visit to Quesimpuco, Benjo and Huber presented him with traditional clothes.



Scott and Casimiro stop at one of the farmer's homes, who benefits from the water project.



Scott, Dr. Ruth Noemi's assistant, Dr. Ruth Noemi and Tom discuss the AU MedPak.

Medical missionaries and global healthcare professionals working in very remote areas around the world, accessible only by walking trails, have asked the College of Architecture, Design and Construction at Auburn University to design and prototype a backpack that will allow them to efficiently carry diagnostic tests, equipment and medical supplies to people that have very little or no access to healthcare services. The AU MedPak is a patented design created by Randy Bartlett, professor in industrial design, and myself, Scott Kramer of the McWhorter School of Building Science.

On one of my many visits to Haiti, I became aware of the difficulties faced by medical professionals as they tried to provide healthcare to those in mountainous rural areas. I talked to Randy, who suggested that we assign students in the industrial design studio to develop a solution to this problem. Randy's students worked in teams to develop a prototype of a lightweight backpack that can hold everything a healthcare provider could need to treat a range of problems, from minor injuries to life-threatening illnesses.

Currently, the AU MedPak is transitioning from design to reality. Randy and I had 10 AU MedPaks manufactured and are field testing them with nonprofit partners in the Caribbean, Africa and South America.

Because I have been involved with SIFAT for 13 years, I wanted to see how this tool could help communities in which SIFAT graduates work. Executive director Tom Corson and international team coordinator Peggy Walker suggested that Quesimpuco, Bolivia, would be an ideal environment to test the AU

MedPak. They explained that Dr. Ruth Naomi makes monthly medical visits to the surrounding villages outside of Quesimpuco, often walking three to five hours on foot in the Andes mountains at a 12,500-foot elevation. Fortunately, Benjo was visiting the SIFAT campus in Lineville in early 2020 and was able to take an AU MedPak back with him to Quesimpuco. Fast-forward to February 2023, Tom and I flew to LaPaz and travelled by jeep to Quesimpuco with Benjo, Huber and Angel.

The scenery on the jeep ride was amazing — the mountains, the plateau and the animals along the way. When we got off the paved road and onto the one-lane "dirty road" clinging alongside of mountain cliffs, I knew Quesimpuco was exactly the right place to conduct my research. Although Quesimpuco now has electricity, its remoteness in the Andes Mountains still makes it a special place to reflect on God's glory and grace. While there, I interviewed Dr. Ruth Noemi and the local hospital administrator through Tom's excellent interpreter skills! This trip was well worth the effort, because Ruth Noemi has been using the AU MedPak for two years and provided a wealth of research data that will be used to improve the backpack's design in the next version.

Besides the research interviews, Tom, Huber, Angel, Casimiro (a local leader) and I took a five-hour hike down the mountainside to document and inspect the installation of a gravity-fed irrigation system designed by AU's Engineers Without Borders' students and faculty. The hike was quite strenuous for me, since I am not as young as I used to be, but the views from the mountains and the vistas were unforgettable. I have been hearing about Quesimpuco for 13 years, and now I know why it remains a special place in people's hearts and memories.

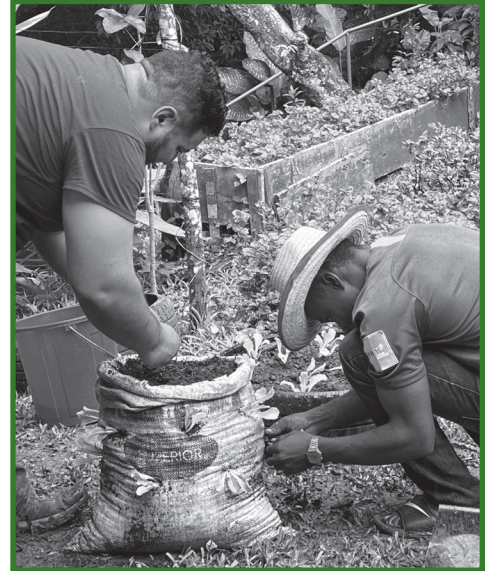
May Field Study Returns in 2023

Kathy Bryson
International Training Director

The world is in a mess. There are hungry children, sick people, gang violence and desperate immigrants. Water sources are polluted, crops are failing, education is limited, and unemployment is rampant. Hunger and environmental degradation are impacting whether some survive or thrive. Perhaps most searing is the lack of hope.

During the last two weeks of May, we expect to have community leaders from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Nigeria, India, Honduras, Guatemala, Costa Rica, Mexico and Haiti gather at our SIFAT campus in Alabama. This diverse group comes with a common purpose of wanting to impact hunger and poverty in their countries. Many are already involved in missions and outreach at home; others are looking for ideas to get started or expand. At SIFAT, they can network with others and share experiences from the trenches—what do you do in an urban setting rife with destitute people, abandoned children, gangs and violence? When you are in a rural area with little rain for the crops, soaring prices for fertilizers and seeds and malnourished children? What do you do as a widow with children who need school uniforms and supplies to attend school, yet you have no money or marketable skills? What about when many are sick in your community because the water is polluted?

At the May Field Study, community leaders will learn and share practical things that have a big impact on people who are lacking in their basic human needs of adequate food, clean water, basic sanitation, shelter, education, household energy, primary health care and income generation. For example, how you can promote a community seed exchange and keep your own seeds. How you can make your own compost and nutritious kitchen garden to maximize family health and nutrition. How to purify your water and keep your family and community healthy. How to make mud and straw fuel efficient stoves to save money, the forest, and prevent toxic smoke. How to recognize and prevent the biggest two childhood killers in the developing world. How to start a revolving community loan to promote small loans (under \$100) to start microenterprise and sustain your family. SIFAT promotes ideas and appropriate technologies that work to improve the lives of many.



SIFAT farm manager David (left) uses a sack garden technique to install plants in the kitchen garden at our Central American Training Center in Costa Rica



During a previous Field Study, students from Honduras, Pakistan, Haiti and the DRC learn to make Hugel Beds, a gardening technique that helps to retain water where it is scarce.

About 25 college students from the United States will join us for this training. Here, they will befriend and learn from these international community leaders about realities driving immigration and community fragmentation. They will be inspired by community leaders who are making a difference in their own corners of the world in very practical ways.

More than anything, SIFAT offers HOPE. We must keep hope alive by putting faith into action. Hope, coupled with practical solutions, can truly change the world! Consider donating a gift today for our scholarship fund. Please designate your donation *Training Scholarship*.

High Schoolers Experience Poverty

Editor's Note: In January, Jeff Collier, chaplain/director of leadership program at Community Christian School in Tallahassee, Fla., brought a group of high school students to SIFAT for a Learn & Serve retreat. Here are some of their reflections.

On the first day at SIFAT, we participated in team-building activities and challenges. After we settled in, we were separated into countries and were tasked with providing food and money. To provide these things, we had to trade with other countries. Through this game, we learned that not all countries are given a fair amount to trade with or feed their own people.

On the second day, we participated in the Slum Experience and the Global Village Overnight. In the Slum Experience, we had to live in a slum scenario and find jobs to provide for our families. We realized quickly that in those situations, it can be hard to make the right decisions. During the overnight experience, we lived in different styles of houses from different countries for the night.

On the final day, we were all tired and hungry. In one of the last events, we were put in the position, by random draw, of the upper, middle and lower classes throughout the world. We realized that the majority of countries are not as lucky as we are in America and struggle to have meals on a daily basis. Community Christian High School learned a lot from SIFAT, and it was a memorable and inspiring experience. Thank you, SIFAT!

— article written by Kayleigh Stuart



Community Christian School brought a group to SIFAT in early January for a multi-day retreat. Part of their time at SIFAT included the Slum Experience (pictured above).

In their words ...

Experiencing the slums and some of the hardships people face around the world, such as being cold, hungry and having little shelter, was a memorable and eye-opening experience. It showed me how blessed I am and how God has provided things in my life that we sometimes take for granted and don't realize, till we are without it. *Katelyn Pye, 10th grade*

The SIFAT slum was an incredibly impactful experience. Both the stories we heard and the the experience we lived gave us a new perspective and insight into the truly helpless reality of the people trapped in this situation. *Ethan Manning, 10th grade*

It was an amazing experience, even though we were limited on time. Although the challenges were hard at the time, you must remember that this is how these people live. *Bond Edwards*

I learned many missionary skills at SIFAT, but one thing that stood out to me was the posters on the wall. They talked about what a lot of people in first world countries do to others who are less fortunate than them, which is just pray. While this is important, we should also help them physically. *Luke Dietz*

During my time at SIFAT, I experienced a large number of emotions: feelings of hunger, pain, uncertainty, stress, sorrow and more. These strengthened me for good and reminded me that many other people experience these emotions daily. Ultimately, this reminded me to be thankful for my blessings and not take anything for granted that God has given me. *Jake Veleber*

Being able to experience the poverty that people around the world live in was truly eye opening. Living like that for even just one night makes you so much more grateful for the stuff that you have. *Jonathan Beauchamp*

Interested in a retreat at SIFAT?

Our programming can be customized for all ages and group sizes. Visit www.sifat.org/learn-serve for retreat packages and programming descriptions or email learnandserve@sifat.org for available dates, pricing or more information.

An Appropriate Technology Learning Curve

Madison Goose
Learn & Serve Intern

Appropriate technology is the most intimidating part of my internship so far. I did not spend much of my life before SIFAT working with my hands or with tools, because someone else was always around to do those sorts of things. Plus, I have always felt more comfortable in academics. Picture someone who majored in wildlife, fisheries and aquaculture. Do you see someone in a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service uniform tracking bears, running through the forest looking for endangered woodpeckers or wearing waders while wrestling alligators and catching man-eating catfish. Now, erase that image! I was the girl who used artificial intelligence algorithms to better guide coastal conservation and understand waterbird migration and wrote manuals for citizen science water quality monitoring groups. I sat at my computer all day. Halfway through my junior year was the first time I considered learning additional skills and using my ecological knowledge to help real suffering human beings, not only wildlife. It became my dream



Madison gets help making adobe bricks from Eliza Dickey, daughter of SIFAT staff member Shelby Dickey.

to help developing communities in agriculture, which meant I needed to learn these skills first.

After graduating college, as I read over SIFAT's website and prepared to apply for this internship, I remember thinking, "Learning about poverty, global hunger and how I can help? Yes, that's exactly what I want to do! Leading youth in loving those in need as God loves us all? Amen! Gardening? Amazing! Constructing water filtration systems, fuel efficient wood-burning stoves and other technologies? Well ..."

I felt a tinge of fear in my heart. "God, I will not be immediately good at this, and people might think I am stupid." But, God strengthened me and gave me courage to apply, to take a step into the unknown. "I have to learn how to do these things, so I can teach other people."

Six months later, I have learned valuable technologies that are simple and effective. Have I struggled? Absolutely! My first time using a drill was to construct a raised bed out of tin, and it took many failed attempts, including falling in the dirt face first. But, our campus staff worked together and built not one, but two large raised beds, which we are excited to use this spring and summer. SIFAT taught me how to construct a leaf dryer out of bamboo, which I used throughout the fall to dry kudzu leaves and fruits in the sun; a solar cooker, which I used to cook rice and focus more heat on my leaf dryer; a non-electric refrigerator; clay bricks for a kiln, rocket stoves,



Madison presents India during an Around the World program taken to a local school.

and a demonstration brick wall in our appropriate technology shed. Earlier this year in Costa Rica, I got a taste of tropical organic gardening. For the first time, I used a hoe, added compost to a bed and planted corn seeds. I learned how to grow beneficial bacteria to apply to seedlings, so that they grow healthier and more abundantly, a technique called mountain microbes.

If I can do it, anyone can do it. I look forward to learning yet more appropriate technologies. I am confident that even if I do not know anything about a technology at first, I can work to understand it, build it and be satisfied with both the work process and the finished product. Sharing God's love in practical ways — I can do that now and continue into the future, no matter where life takes me.

Intern at SIFAT

Visit www.sifat.org/learn-serve for more information or to apply for a semester or year-long internship!

Questions? Email learnandserve@sifat.org.

Donate in Honor/Memory of Loved Ones

Not sure what to get for Mother's Day, Father's Day or an upcoming graduation? Are you looking for a gift with meaning and longevity?

Donate to SIFAT in honor/memory of someone special!

Include a note with the name and mailing address of the honoree, and we will send an acknowledgement card.

For more information, contact accounting@sifat.org.

Buy a Brick in Sarah's Garden

Honor friends or family in a special way: buy a commemorative brick in for Sarah's Garden! Order online at www.bricksrus.com/order/sifat or email info@sifat.org.

Our Father - Learn & Serve Summer '23

Caroline Corson
Campus Coordinator

Register Today!

Each year, our team picks a different theme for our upcoming Summer Experience. *Our Father* is a series of devotions, sermons and meditations directing our hearts toward prayer and adoration to God. In 2023, we will explore the importance of God being our Father and why Jesus chose to teach us to pray using the name Our Father.

Rising 7th-12th graders are invited to come to SIFAT and experience what life is like for two-thirds of our brothers and sisters around the world. Reserve your spot today! Individuals and youth groups are welcome. Each session is \$280 per person, which includes a t-shirt, devotion guide and meals/lodging.



Week One: June 18-22 | **Week Two:** June 25-29 | **Week Three:** July 9-13
Week Four: July 16-20 | **Week Five:** July 23-27

Visit www.sifat.org/learn-serve or email learnandserve@sifat.org for more information or to sign up. Can't come for a full session? Ask about our other summer retreat options.

Learn & Serve is for Children, too



Are you looking for a global immersion experience for your children's ministry or elementary class? Our *Around the World* program is perfect for kids' groups and includes storytelling, hands-on activities, a tour of our Global Village, international snacks and a sack lunch. Whether you combine an Around the World with other retreat options for a multi-day retreat or just visit for one day, our campus staff wants your students to experience what life is like

in other countries, so that they have a better understanding of our world and the struggles others may face and how we can help.

Around the World costs \$25 per person with lunch included. To learn more or schedule an upcoming event, visit www.sifat.org/learn-serve or email learnandserve@sifat.org. We have openings throughout the year for groups of all ages and sizes.

Letters from Isaiah

Sarah Corson
SIFAT Co-founder

Editor's Note: Sarah compiled a series of recent emails from Isaiah to share his gratitude for SIFAT supporters, which is helping his vocational center flourish.

Greetings the Democratic Republic of Congo! We praise God for giving us the opportunity to reach our beloved SIFAT through email and to give you an update on our ministry. Despite challenges—disease outbreaks, the conflict in the eastern DRC and displaced people forced into hard living conditions in our village—we praise God for the gift of life and enabling us to intensify our efforts to help and strengthen needy young people. We are having a fruitful work in our school, which SIFAT helped us build.

Indeed, our educational center has been crucial for the stability among unemployed youth, who had no job skills because of the lack of education. Consequently, we see a long-lasting improvement in the lives of these youth, who before were seen begging in the streets, misbehaving or being used as child soldiers. Our staff has been providing professional skills, which equipped these youth with the ability to build, weld, saw, farm, make cement blocks and process food, such as moringa teas. Additionally, we have the best moments to learn and share God's love in a practical way. We not only equip their bodily needs, but also their souls, so they may know the meaning of Christ's words in their lives.

Each year, 20-30 vulnerable children and youth benefit from our school. Some have been child soldiers from a very young age. The duration of the courses ranges from six months to two years. When they graduate, they have skills for the labor market and



SIFAT graduate Sylvie is the agricultural teacher at Isaiah's educational center.

can provide for themselves, creating their own small business. They are able to grow vegetables, including amaranth, tomatoes, onions and carrots. The community benefits from this production of useful things to sell: food, building materials and clothes. These youth increase their family's income.

Our center is now accredited! The students receive certificates from the Division of Social Welfare upon completion of our courses, which increases their chances of finding employment and also attracts other young people to enroll in our center.

Six months ago, 17-year-old Kazadi and his friends began a welding and fitting shop. Today, they have a much-needed business going. Kazadi said, "I spent a year in an armed group as a child soldier, but when I heard that this school could give all of us who lived in the bush an opportunity to learn, I came to study here. Now, I can make my life count for something good."

Silla, age 18, has finished a sewing course and lives with her six sisters. She established a sewing workshop and is making dresses, African clothes, shirts

International Graduates' Projects

Visit our website to see current projects and fully funded graduates' projects.

www.sifat.org/international-missions/international-projects

We have approved projects that are ready to start fundraising but need a project champion! To become a project champion to raise funds or for more information, contact GPC chairman Art Stephenson, stephensona@sifat.org.

and face masks.

Mwazo, age 17, works with the block machine production and enjoys sharing the knowledge with other young people in the community.

We discovered that having vulnerable youth in this program undeniably promotes peace and social cohesion among nearby communities. Haviari, age 16, said, "Working together with people from different places gives us insight and inspiration. We are influenced to tolerate and accept the differences in people and are pressed to go beyond the boundaries we have set for ourselves. This school helps us overcome violence and live together in harmony as Jesus taught."

Our staff is happy as we continue to work in collaboration with the communities we serve. We are creating sustainable initiatives that empower communities and strengthen their ability to become self-sustainable.

We want to thank you at SIFAT from the bottom of our hearts for your generous support in reaching the vulnerable and abandoned children and youth of our area! We thank God that we can be part of the outreach of SIFAT.



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**Tom Corson, Executive Director
Marie Lanier Narváez, Editor**

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

After mechanic Wayne Delong survived a terrible accident driving his 18-wheeler, he told God that he would use the rest of his life helping others that are in need. Wayne would be a missionary to his area by using his skills to fix cars.

Recently, a deer ran into the van of former truck driver Doris O'Rourke, leaving her with no vehicle nor funds to repair it. I shared her story with Wayne, and he agreed to repair her vehicle at no charge. He told Doris how God had called him to help those in need in his home area. Doris was inspired. "I could be a missionary, too," she thought. "I should offer to drive people without transportation to their doctors' appointments now that God has provided me with a vehicle through Mr. Wayne."

Others began to hear about Doris offering to help, and they began to offer to help people in need with the skills they had. One offered to cook for the sick or handicapped. A physical therapist said, "I could give some free therapy lessons to someone who could not afford to pay for them." The idea grew. A small, informal

group started to help others as their way to serve God in our local county. As we work to help our brothers and sisters in Africa, Asia and Latin America, we also should remember those in need in our own country.

Of course, thousands of compassionate people across the world reach out daily to help those in need. You do not have to be a member of a group to be involved in local ministry. I want to encourage you to begin or to keep being attentive to people in need. I assure you there are people to serve in your neighborhood, people God brings across your path each day.

Doris continues to provide her vehicle as transportation to help those without transportation to get to appointments, the grocery store or to help others. Thank you, Wayne, for inspiring us and people in our community to be the hands—and in this case, the wheels—of Jesus locally in Randolph County, Ala. We are sharing God's love in practical ways!