



SIFAT JOURNAL

SHARING GOD'S LOVE IN PRACTICAL WAYS

SPRING 2024

Celebrating 45 Years of SIFAT

Ken Corson
SIFAT Co-founder

Editor's Note: This year marks 45 years of SIFAT! We asked co-founder Ken Corson to share his thoughts on this milestone.

The Scottish poet said, "A man's reach should exceed his grasp or what's a heaven for." Sometimes, a dream, an aspiration or a vision may seem impossible, beyond our grasp, beyond possibility.

Forty-five years ago, SIFAT was only a vision. Sarah and I had just returned from a two-year term of service in Bolivia, where we had lived on a Bolivian pastor's monthly salary of \$80 with our family of six. We had no capital or savings to begin anything that resembled the vision of SIFAT. But we had lived with desperate people struggling to survive, and we came home with a vision—SIFAT!

Clarence Jordan, a New Testament scholar, translated Hebrews 11:1 as "Faith is the turning of dreams into deeds..." That verse resonated with me.

I felt that many people have faith as an end in itself. But, this was saying that faith led to doing something *beyond words*! "Turning dreams into deeds" made sense to me. Those who see their commitment to God only as one of belief fail to understand that true faith, true belief, leads to deeds. The apostle James expressed this as "faith without works is dead." Our decision to be Christian is not as much theological as it is practical. This type of faith is life-changing. It empowers us to have compassion and action. Do you believe in your faith enough to act upon it? If my faith does not make a difference in how someone else lives, maybe I have an anemic faith. I did not want a faith that separated believers. I wanted a faith that brought people together.

Early in SIFAT's existence, some who would drop by asked, "What is SIFAT's doctrine?" Our answer was, "If you believe in the values Jesus taught: righteousness, justice, love, compassion, and forgiveness—come join us in *Sharing God's Love in Practical Ways*."

Throughout the last 45 years, SIFAT has brought people together with unity amidst diversity to act on this motto. SIFAT graduates are living out this message in more than 90 countries. Among other things, SIFAT has built a

hospital and schools, helped bring clean water to thousands and constructed daycare centers with loving, caring environments with material and spiritual support for thousands of desperately needy children. Our training to help people meet their own needs has been incorporated into universities, seminaries, Bible schools and many church and community groups on all continents except Antarctica. Now, besides our campus in Alabama, there is also a SIFAT campus in Costa Rica for those who cannot get visas to come study here.

"[SIFAT] began as a vision
and became a reality
that has changed lives
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some live at all."

— Ken Corson, co-founder

With no resources, we started this thing called SIFAT. It began as a vision and became a reality that has changed lives for Christ and made the difference in how well many live and whether some live at all. Sarah and I could never have developed SIFAT alone. Hundreds of people from diverse backgrounds came together to unite in unity of spirit to make SIFAT. These people from different races, cultures and nations put their faith into action. We are deeply grateful to God and to every person who has chosen to share the vision. To all those who have worked together with their prayers, resources, time and energy these past 45 years to share the "Life More Abundant" that Jesus came to bring with thousands around the world, thank you for helping make SIFAT a reality!

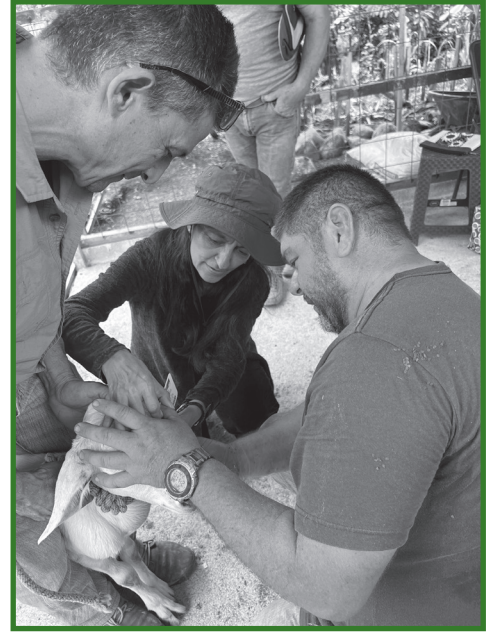
Goat Training in Costa Rica

Kathy Bryson
International Training Director

Raising small animals is an important source of food and income for many rural families in the developing world. At our Central American Training Center in Costa Rica, we have begun a small animal demonstration farm component. We wanted expert advice and to offer training to local farm families.

We invited Dr. Uma Karki, professor and director of Small Ruminant Research and Education Center at Tuskegee University, to Costa Rica in February to lead a two-day workshop for local farm families to learn best practices on goat raising. Some had goats, while others were interested in getting started. Dr. Karki, who grew up raising goats in Nepal, had the perfect blend of scientific expertise and practical life experience to connect with these families. She put them at ease immediately, and they felt free to ask questions and learn by practicing on our goats.

Community participants learned about nutrition, rotational grazing, basic assessment of the health of a goat, how to prepare areas for goats so that they will not eat your garden and how to keep goats healthy. Dr. Karki offered a more in-depth course on the FORMACHA method of parasite control. We believe this was a first in Costa Rica. This technique uses appropriate technology to prevent the common problem of parasites. Besides preventing overgrazing, it focuses on examining and treating individual goats instead of the whole flock, thereby reducing resistance to deworming treatments. Twenty-eight people took the initial workshop. Then 14 farmers received the official FORMACHA specialty training from Dr. Karki. They were thrilled with the training and appreciated Dr. Karki's practical advice, as well as her personal interest in them.



Dr. Karki from Tuskegee University taught best practices for raising goats during a workshop in February at SIFAT's Central American Training Center in Costa Rica. She followed this training with a more in-depth course on the FORMACHA method of parasite control.

More Than Just Goats

Kathy Bryson
International Training Director



Edith (left) and Dr. Karki (right)

At the close of the workshop on goats, our neighbor Edith, a grandmother raising her granddaughter Sofia on a limited income, wanted to say a few words of appreciation to Dr. Karki. Slowly, but earnestly in her quiet voice, she said "My two goats are like sons to me. They take care of us; they provide for us. They give us milk, cheese, cream, yogurt. We could not buy these things. I feel so good to have fresh healthy food for my granddaughter." Edith's eyes swelled with tears; I was not expecting these emotions. She continued, "Now, you have given us a treasure—you have taught us how to take better care of our goats who take care of our needs. We are so very thankful."

Dr. Karki hugged Edith. Edith said, "I have told my granddaughter that she now has a reason to study—so she can become a veterinarian and do what you do." Dr. Karki then went over to encourage Sofia and another young woman who was also interested in animal science. This training has already impacted our community with improved knowledge about goats, but also with encouragement to young women from a woman who dedicates her life to helping others learn what she loves.

Samuel's Successful Projects in Haiti

Sarah Corson
SIFAT Co-founder

In 2010, Samuel graduated from SIFAT. Since then, he has been teaching his people in Haiti the things he learned about growing more food and purifying their water. In 2019, SIFAT funded his first proposal to help 50 women get food security for their families by learning better agricultural techniques and working together to help each other. These women worked hard together, prayed together and believed that God would help them. The project was successful, and the women grew enough vegetables to eat with extra to sell. They could pay school fees for their children and buy things for their families.

More than five years later, they are still succeeding in their agricultural co-op. Their gardens have become sustainable. They have helped Samuel start other agricultural projects in communities where children are hungry and cannot go to school. University students studying agronomy have visited Samuel to see his successful projects.

But in recent years, a bigger challenge has arisen. Haiti is experiencing a terrible situation because of gangs and violence originating in the capital, Port-au-Prince. The gangs virtually rule the capital and the area around it. Women and children are fleeing this violence

by escaping into the more remote hills, where Samuel lives and serves. Samuel is helping these families settle among the communities participating in his projects. The women who were once so desperate themselves are sharing what they have to help these refugees.

A recent letter from Samuel describes the situation: "I received 30 women and their children today, crying, because



Samuel's agriculture and water projects funded by the GPC are making a positive impact on communities in Haiti.

gang violence and guns made them leave their homes. I accompanied them to stay in Jannot, where we are working on an agricultural project. I wanted to make sure that these families leave the difficulty of finding a place to stay and to get food and clean water to drink.

I prayed with them a lot and let them know that we will bring them together with the community to work together. The women and children of Jannot cried because of the great pain and sorrow in their hearts when they saw that these refugees have nothing. I told the new families not to be discouraged. The women of Jannot have already found a small piece of land that other families there have set aside for them to make their own gardens in the future to solve the problem of hunger and poverty." Until these refugees can get their gardens growing, Samuel and the people he works with are sharing what they have, so that all will have something to eat.

Samuel is working on the fifth agricultural project. When this one begins to produce, there will be five communities he has helped train in agriculture techniques. He has helped more than 250 families go from utter starvation to having sufficient food for their family and enough money to send their children to school. How can people who are still very poor and have families to support still share with so many refugees in Haiti

now? I believe the answer is because when Samuel works with the people, he takes them spiritual bread, as well as physical food. Each week, he visits the women's fields, and once a month, all

(continued on page 4)

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.



Above: Samuel's projects help families fleeing violence and seeking better lives for their families. Below: SIFAT graduate Isaiah's ministry in the DRC recently purchased a cement mixer for his vocational school with funding from the GPC.



Samuel

(Continued from Page 3)

the women in the community meet together to discuss their problems and their plans for overcoming. He teaches them about the love of God, and they feel that love in Samuel. They pray together often, because they have learned from Samuel that they have a Heavenly Father who suffers with them and will empower them to work and help their families. We have a lot to learn from Samuel's example, too!

Some of you have helped SIFAT raise the funds to get these groups started—the “seed money”—that they have used to build a small economic base that is supporting them. I cannot remember all the times Samuel has written SIFAT saying Thank You! He says the women ask him to tell SIFAT thank you, and he also says thank you for himself, because he would be hurting so badly if he could not do something to help. Every letter he writes is praising God because we can work together to be the hands of Jesus in these tragedies. We want to say thank you for supporting SIFAT. You pray for us and for Samuel, as well as for all our graduates throughout the world and the hurting people with whom they are working. Thank you for praying with us and, like the women of Jannot, sharing with SIFAT, so that we can share with Samuel, and he can share with those in need.

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](https://twitter.com/sifattweets) or Learn & Serve's Instagram [@sifatLandS](https://www.instagram.com/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.

"let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up."
galatians 6:9

Support SIFAT While Shopping 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 or www.igive.com/sifat

Welcome Center Opens

Marie Lanier Narváez
Promotions and Marketing Coordinator

In April, Clear Lake UMC's work team became the first group to use the new Welcome Center on SIFAT's campus in Alabama. SIFAT co-founders Ken and Sarah Corson spent the evening sharing some of their memories of years at SIFAT.

Ken began by sharing about the vision of creating this ministry and the faith that it took to start something from nothing. But he also reminded everyone that faith was the most important part of SIFAT's mission. Sarah remembered the simple beginnings of the building where we were and its physical transformation — from a humble goat shed to a training pavilion and until recently, home of the SIFAT Village Store. She told memorable stories of transformation and challenged the team members to continue their involvement and not let this be their last visit to SIFAT.

Together just as they were when they began SIFAT in 1979, Ken and Sarah shared with laughter and a few tears. Their firsthand experiences and hearts for serving others encouraged the roomful of people.



The Welcome Center waits for groups and individuals as a meeting spot when they arrive on our campus. With televisions and displays, our staff can share the story of SIFAT before an event or for those unable to take a tour. We still have plans for expanding our displays and are excited about this “new” addition to our facilities.



Madison (far right) leads the science club in Costa Rica

Fighting Hunger by Investing in Children's Science Club

Kathy Bryson
International Training Director

SIFAT training intern Madison Gnoose has been diligent in engaging community children in our science club in Costa Rica. It has been a joy to watch them discover things under the microscope. Recently, they explored the forest floor and saw the role of decomposers. This lesson was in preparation for the next one on making compost for the children's garden.

Major problems of hunger globally can be traced to lack of good environmental practices, or creation care. Part of good community development is training children to appreciate the importance of taking care of our soil, animals, trees, water and land. It is amazing how excited they can get over ecological concerns! They end up being the best trash police and recyclers, reminding adults to see the details in our neighborhood.

The Privilege of Service

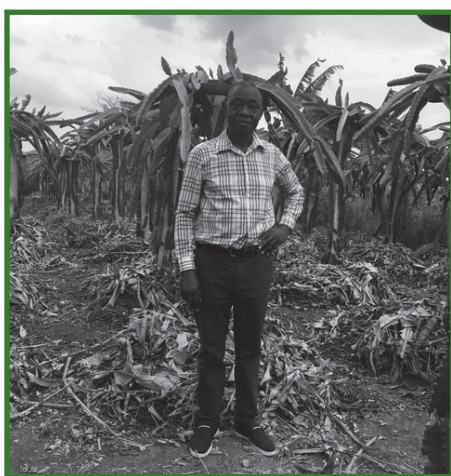
Art Stephenson
Board Member and GPC chairman

I have the privilege of serving on SIFAT's Board of Directors and also being the person interfacing with SIFAT graduates around the world as they apply for our Graduate Projects' grants and carry out their projects. Those who complete SIFAT's training are offered the opportunity to apply for these funds as "seed money" to help improve the lives of people in their communities. SIFAT has trained untold numbers of indigenous community leaders from more than 90 countries during the past 45 years.

The Graduate Projects' Committee (GPC) that I chair formed in 2016 and has approved 67 graduate projects through 2023. Generous donors have donated \$480,000 for these projects with an average amount of \$7,164 per project. Most of these projects require about \$5,000, but some have required much more. SIFAT does not have money allocated for graduate projects in our annual operating budget, so the GPC raises money from individual donors for each approved project. We do this by calling upon friends, family and those we know. The outpouring of support has amazed us; God provides through the hearts of loving people. Donors have the joy of reading reports on the success and impact of the projects they support. What a wonderful thing, they say, it is to see how money we have donated transforms the lives of people

who, for example, go from destitute to independent living or from sickness to health by having clean, safe water. (Read the article about Samuel on page 3 for a success story.)

Since I serve as the main contact for these projects, I have the special joy of not only helping our graduates shape their project to achieve approval with the help of the GPC members, but then telling them when we have reached their funding goal. As the project proceeds,



SIFAT graduate Michael in Uganda has used grants from the Graduate Projects' Committee for agricultural projects.

I receive, read and share reports with donors on the successful impact of their project in their community. Graduates determine the projects to use to apply for a grant, based on their knowledge and work within their community. Their projects the best address the greatest needs in their communities.

When graduates return home from training, they are loaded with new knowledge about community development and different appropriate technologies. SIFAT co-founder Ken Corson says, "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."

If you would like to learn about these 67 projects or donate to a future graduate project (new ones are posted twice a year), visit the International Projects page at www.sifat.org.

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.

You Can Go Home Again

Peggy Walker
International Team Coordinator

Looking out over the lights of Quito as we flew home in March 2023, I had tears in my eyes and a deep sadness, knowing I would probably never again be with friends I had made during the last 20 years of working in Ecuador or serve on mission sites where I had been blessed to see the changes made by SIFAT teams in the lives of so many children who might otherwise have still been on the streets. I lost my eye in an accident the week before, and I was physically and emotionally wounded.

How wrong I was! I let my faith take a back seat to the pain and fear I was feeling as I sat in my hotel room that week worrying about my future. My favorite Bible verse has always been Jeremiah 29:11, but did I honestly believe it? How could I live alone at my age with these injuries? How could I continue to work with SIFAT if I could no longer travel? God said He knew His plans for me, to give me hope and a future. None of that made sense, and I continued to feel self-pity after I came home. As friends and coworkers rallied around me, I slowly gained strength and acceptance, and I truly learned to believe again that He did have a plan for my life, just not the one I could understand at that point. My faith slowly returned, as did my determination. This March, I overcame my fear and flew back to Ecuador to serve in Villaflora with a team from Auburn University's College of Nursing.

If I thought I would just gradually get back into serving with SIFAT, was I ever wrong! This incredible team hit the ground running. It was one of the largest and most diverse medical teams we have had in Quito. Led by professor Ann Lambert, the team included two women's health providers, a pediatric nurse practitioner, a retired Navy nurse practitioner to treat the community's men, a pediatric dentist, a pharmacist, nursing students and child life specialist students, who were a new addition to our team and proved to be invaluable. This team treated 466 patients, many with very serious conditions. Our dentist saw 91 patients, while our team pharmacy filled 1,748 prescriptions! Did I mention Charlotte Bentley returned to Ecuador after eight years to lead a daily VBS for 100+ children? Their songs and constant laughter left little doubt about the success of this VBS!

It was wonderful! I quickly found my position registering



Peggy, our team coordinator, suffered a devastating eye injury in Ecuador in March 2023. This year, she served on her first team since the accident. In this article, she shares her experience and how deeply returning to Quito impacted her. Pictured left: Peggy, Tom and Marie visit historic sites in downtown Quito.

patients, getting their medical history and current symptoms before sending them to triage. When not doing that, I was bagging vitamins or explaining how to take the prescribed medicines while dispensing prescriptions.

Everyone on the team was tired, but smiling. We all cheerfully worked alongside Pastor Rafael, his wife Anita and the ladies in their church who give tirelessly to better the lives of those in need. How humbled we felt by the example they are to each of us, as we realized that we will return to our comfortable homes at the end of the week to enjoy a lifestyle they can only imagine. We know they will still be in Ecuador, continuing their work to share the love of Jesus and try to provide opportunities for the children to learn skills to prepare for a wonderful life outside of the poverty into which they were born. The dedication to this mission never ends.

I cannot begin to explain the emotions I felt as church members told me they had prayed for me every morning since my accident. They have truly become my family. SIFAT has always stressed the ministry of presence. Although a building may not get finished or plans may get changed last minute, the thing we never want to cut short is our relationship with the people we are there to serve.

I did not realize how empty I felt not being on teams last year. Serving with like-minded people on a mission trip is an awesome, life-changing experience. Please do not miss out on this blessing by thinking you do not have the right skills or that age is a factor. On a SIFAT trip, we have something meaningful for all team members to do. Never underestimate the impact of a hug or being there to listen. Please start planning now to join us on a team this summer or in 2025! Email internationalteams@sifat.org for more info.

Life-changing Experiences on Mis

Tom Corson
Executive Director

Mom and Dad coined the phrase “learn and serve” in Puerto Rico in the early 1960s. If I asked most Americans to travel with us on a mission trip to get to know a different culture in a strange country, they would not be interested. If I asked them to go help with a project that would benefit people who are less fortunate, they are more inclined to want to make a difference for these “poor people”. When returning home, I often hear, “We came to help needy people, but we were the ones being served. We got more than we gave.” I also hear that we go to share the Gospel only to find that God is already there and at work!

Learning and serving is about understanding the people we are visiting with a goal of working together for the good of all. Last month, a building science team from Auburn University went to serve the people of Machachi. The students shared their journals with SIFAT, and these reflections were an inspiration to me. I hope these excerpts below will be for you, too! Read on, my friends, for a glimpse as to why we do not just send money, but go and participate in the lives of our SIFAT graduates.

Gavin Medley writes ...

Engaging in the service-learning experience was a profoundly transformative journey that far exceeded my initial expectations. What seemed like a simple opportunity to contribute to a meaningful cause evolved into a deeply introspective and enlightening exploration of cultural differences, personal growth and the profound impact of empathy. I envisioned a fulfilling experience, yet the depth of connection and learning that unfolded surpassed even my wildest dreams. As I immersed myself in the service-learning project, I was not just a participant but a witness to the profound changes it brought about, both within myself and in the communities we served. This firsthand experience reshaped my perspective on service and community engagement, revealing layers of complexity and significance that I had not fully grasped. From mixing concrete under the scorching sun to engaging in heartfelt conversations with locals, every moment of this journey left an indelible

mark on my understanding of service, empathy, and the interconnectedness of our global community.

Shane Kelly shares ...

I learned that I was more physically able to do the work than I thought I would be, for example carrying 110 lb. bags of concrete up three flights of stairs. I also learned a lot about myself spiritually. It was very touching to attend church on Sunday and see how different the Ecuadorian services are than ours. I enjoyed getting to work at a church and building the classrooms for the children. It felt very rewarding at the end of the week.



Ecuadorian culture is different as they appreciate everything more than people in the United States. We have so much here and are always striving for more. They live a much simpler life, and I feel like they appreciate everything more than us.

Joshua Garner reflects ...

Through this trip, I learned more about myself than expected and gained an experience that I will never forget. I learned how privileged I am. Seeing the struggles the locals must go through and how hard it is to make a living was very eye opening. I have been blessed with the life I have and will never take my life for granted. Experiencing

Ecuadorian culture firsthand, which includes their traditions, beliefs, customs and their way of life, has deepened my understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity.

Reynolds Jones considers ...

I have learned that there are other people who wish to be servants and help people. After working in construction and other jobs, I have developed an attitude of only doing what I am getting paid to do. The importance of this is the realization that you do get something out of charity work. It may not be tangible, like money in the bank or a new truck, but it is something that grows your heart.

The culture is similar to ours in that we are obsessed with social media. This was reinforced when the pastor’s message in church was like a hang up and hang out sermon that would

sion Teams

be given at Auburn Community Church. This is important because even though Ecuador is a developing country, it still faces the social dilemma of living in the moment. The perspective gained from the trip was only possible if I went, and because of this I was grateful that I signed up.

Tyler Machen says ...

I would have never gotten to meet Victor, Miguel, Jose, Carlos and many more if I was scared to go and see the beautiful country of Ecuador. Not only did I get to see how they all lived, but I got to break bread with them after working some hard hours. I got to share stories with Carlos about what all I liked to do, like riding horses and hunting, while he shared stories about him hang gliding and our common love of finishing concrete.

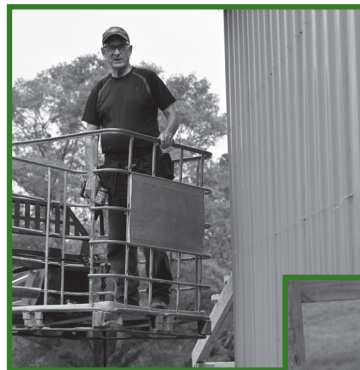
I think the most humble thing you can do is to put yourself in someone else's shoes to live and work with them, even if it is only for a few days, to understand where they come from. Anyone can vacation to Ecuador, but not everyone will ever experience Ecuador like we did.

Needless to say, this experience will affect the rest of my life, hence forward in all aspects academically and socially. I brought back much more than just stories and souvenirs. I brought back a new understanding of the culture, people and architecture of Ecuador. This service-learning class touched my life in more ways than I could have ever imagined.

My takeaway

Two brothers here in Alabama always argue between sending money for a project versus serving on a project. My response is that we need both to fulfill our mission. Going on a team, however, will change your life. We read *it is more blessed to give than receive*; however, going and giving your time lets you hug the children and see their smiles. You better understand the people we are helping to be more effective in sharing the love of God in their own communities by providing facilities for their ministry and by building relationships. We have been working with the church in Villaflores that planted this church in Machachi, the seventh from that congregation, and they have just purchased land to plant the eighth church and children's program. Many of the leaders have gone through this program, which our teams supported with their time and talents. I encourage you to consider going with us on mission like these students from Auburn did to experience the life-changing opportunity of being the hands and feet of Christ. Contact us for more information on how you can join us to change the world for Christ serving with us in mission!

Clear Lake UMC Continues Work Team Tradition



Clear Lake UMC from Houston, Texas, has a long-term partnership with SIFAT! Since 2013, they have brought an annual work team to help on our campus in Alabama

This year, they continued their project from 2023 — constructing our new storage building.



They spend time building relationships with our staff during morning devotions, delicious home-cooked lunches and evening activities.



Some of the ladies helped in the Village Store at SIFAT — deep cleaning, tagging merchandise and counting inventory.



Thank you, Clear Lake, for your support of SIFAT and your invaluable effort this week!

University Partners Help SIFAT Grow

Shelby Dickey
Learn & Serve Coordinator

Our Learn & Serve programming strives to provide young and old with an experience to give insight into the lives of people around the world. Learning to empathize with others is the first step on the road to making a difference. Empathy, awareness and critical thinking are important skills to have as young adults move from college to the work force. Colleges and universities are recognizing this and are incorporating community development and global studies into their curriculums to better prepare their students to be change makers in their communities.

We have built relationships with schools throughout Alabama that bring students to experience our L&S programs. Universities, such as Samford, Troy and Auburn, bring their nursing students for training through Global Health Days (GHDs). During GHDs, our campus staff create four stations in the Global Village to simulate living conditions in Guatemala, the Philippines, Uganda and urban slums. Each station focuses on a different global health topic: smoke inhalation, water purification, nutrition and sanitation. Students rotate through



each station, where they look at each scenario put before them, discuss the issues that may present themselves based on what they see and do not see, and discuss the solutions that they could implement to help the family living in the situation.

GHDs help health students to think critically and recognize that we have to look at the entire picture to properly and holistically help people. They begin to realize that people are more complex than stats on a chart and that building trust and relationships with their patients is a key step for finding solutions to issues that are causing illnesses and in the healing process. We stress that even if they do not end up working in other countries, these lessons are still valuable and apply to the patients who they will treat in the United States. Sadly, there are many people, including in North America, that experience the issues that are discussed during GHDs. People in our own state suffer because of poor nutrition and sanitation issues. Building relationships with their patients is important to build trust and properly diagnose illnesses.

We are grateful for our relationships with all of the schools that partner



with SIFAT! It has become a symbiotic relationship in that we help train their students, and they help SIFAT with projects in Alabama and abroad. For example, students from Auburn University serve on mission teams in Ecuador and Bolivia.

Through research performed by students and professors at partner universities, we have been able to help more people around the world meet their basic needs. An education professor at West Alabama, who is a big promoter of SIFAT, recently gave a presentation to colleagues about the benefits of working with our organization and how it has impacted her students. We are also working on a new program that focuses on sustainable building techniques and how design and construction impacts communities and culture and vice versa. Auburn's Building Science team was instrumental in giving feedback and critiquing the tour, and we are looking forward to presenting it to students in the construction and design fields. Partnerships like these help us continue to grow and find new ways to share God's love in practical ways.

Want to bring students to SIFAT?
Contact learnandserve@sifat.org.

Make a Donation in Honor/Memory of Someone Special

Not sure what to get for a birthday or an upcoming special event? Are you looking for a gift with meaning and longevity? 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.

L&S Summer 2024 — Coming Soon ...

Learn & Serve Staff

L&S Summer '24

~~Week 1: June 2-6 Full!~~

Week 2: June 9-13

Family Weekend: June 13-15 *

Week 3: June 16-20

Week 4: June 23-27

Week 5: July 7-11 - limited space

Week 6: July 14-18

Week 7: July 21-25

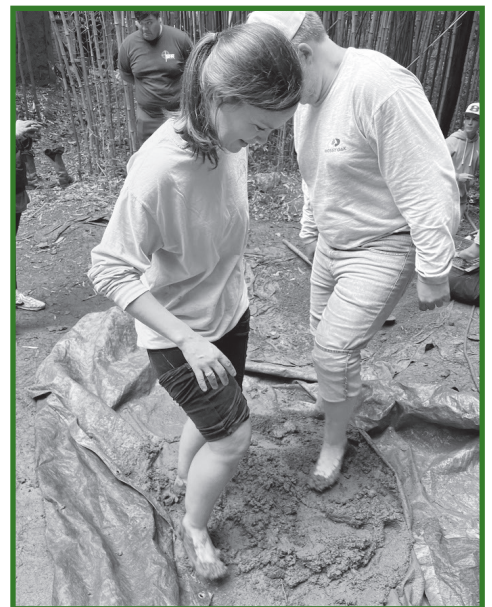
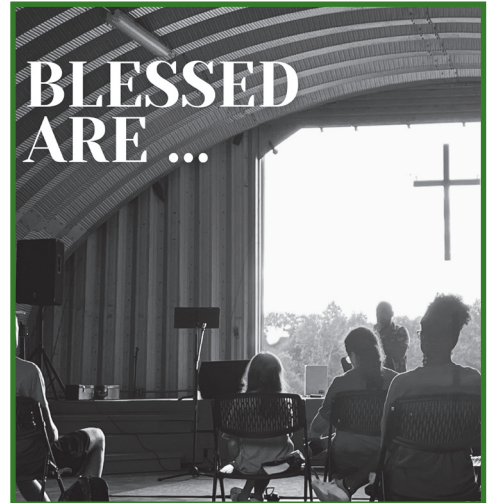
*For ages 8+; \$250 for two,
plus \$65 per additional family
member.

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**Thank you
for being our
2023-2024
campus intern,
Alex Rubio!**



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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

When Pastor Rafael and his wife, SIFAT graduate Anita, started a church and after-school program in an abandoned brothel in Quito, Ecuador, SIFAT decided to help them. Their priority was to build a facility to bring in at-risk children and use a small part of the building for their church in the Villaflora neighborhood.

Our help was an encouragement, but the local church is the heart and soul of this project. Many mornings, I would pass by the altar and members were on their knees praying for God to bless their community. People who work six days a week would come to church and then work all afternoon to keep the construction going.

In March, Auburn University teams served outreach churches Pastor Rafael has started. The construction team built the third floor to increase the after-school program in Machachi, while the medical team served more than 550 patients in Villaflora.

Many of the young church leaders there were born into poverty, but because of the church in Villaflora and its after-school program, they finished high school and even college. They are now leading congregations, giving

back by teaching and preaching what they learned because of this church's ministry in Villaflora. We see those first young children from destitute families, now transformed by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. These fresh, dedicated leaders are carrying Christ's message into eight other neighborhoods and into a new generation, as they help lead the churches started by Pastor Rafael and Anita.

Jesus asked us to pray for more laborers for the Lord of the harvest, as recorded in Matthew 9:37-38. "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field." The after-school programs SIFAT teams helped start in Ecuador teach many to become laborers in God's vineyard. Thank you all who have been part of building, caring and funding these projects that have transformed the lives of children in Ecuador and around the world. We see that God has been using these programs to expand His Kingdom. As we celebrated the resurrection of our Lord, I see what that means to half-abandoned children of the streets, when they are touched by His love in a way they can understand. And then, they grow up to become laborers for Christ in other needy communities!