



Serving the UNDERSERVED

NEWSLETTER

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Love knows no barriers.



Sean, even with limited Spanish, can play ball with the kids.

From Mike - 2011

The last newsletter you received was a review of the trip highlights through the eyes of three of the team members. This newsletter is a continuation of that, containing highlights from other team members.

Mike

Sean's thoughts (15 year old team member):

[Second day] Today we went to Casa Samuel orphanage. We did eye exams and haircuts. We also entertained the kids. I was an entertainer. I told Maia before we started that the kids are unsure of us now but by the time we leave they won't want us to go.

After the kids were done with their eye exams they came and played with us. They all

loved us and wanted nothing more than

to talk to us and touch whatever toy we

had (Nerf footballs, soccer balls, and

Frisbees). Each and every one of

these kids had a smile on their face.

All of them also had something horrible

done to them to cause them to be in

the orphanage. Many of the girls were

sexually abused. In Guatemala the laws aren't as strict as they are in the U.S. May God

focus on the kids. Like Cecilia (Pastor Israel's wife) said, "Ellos mecesidan amor!" In

English, "They need love!"

[Third day] When we were done (painting at the special needs school Brillo del Sol) we went to the eyeglass clinic to eat and then play with the kids. Every ball Pete brings for





Brillo del Sol, the "special needs school", with its newly upgraded playground.

the kids is meant to stay here. But every kid tries to give it back. When we tell them they get to keep it, they smile and hold it tight. It is never fun leaving here (San Pedro Las Huertas). The people love us and we love them. God tells us to come here and we give them encouragement and hope.

Sonda's thoughts:

God gave us favor through both airports, through customs without questions in Guatemala. One bag was missing for several hours but arrived at La Posada Hotel as we finished dinner . . . The bag contained clothing for the orphanage. We needed to deliver it to Casa Samuel orphanage the next day!

[Second day] Before leaving for the orphanage Mike presented Pastor Israel with two graduation gifts—a Bible for his spiritual labor and an auto computer scanner for his physical labor. The young pastor and his wife were so pleased. The scanner will be so beneficial to the necessary job that Pastor Israel has to maintain to provide for his family since the church can't possibly support them financially.

At the orphanage, Pete ripped the seam in the back of his jeans while playing with the kid! He pretended to be a dog, at one point, for their entertainment. He is amazing with these children! God has given him an amazing heart for the children of Guatemala. They feel this love and they flock to him. They want to touch him . . . They feel the love of God being expressed through Pete. On a lighter note, Pete returned to the hotel with a case of fleas? Or chiggers? Or bedbugs? Or something??



A loving caregivers at Casa Samuel with one of the beautiful children.



The Plant Today team setting up the eyeglass clinic at Casa Samuel.

Such beautiful children! . . . most of them loving . . . all loving the attention given them today! Contrary to the picture that we all tend to have in our minds about orphanages (especially in foreign countries) these children are loved, cared for, secure (for perhaps the first time in their lives). The older ones take care of the younger ones!

The most tragic thing about this is that many of the 60 children are there because they have been sexually abused. More than the tragedy that they already dealt with in their young lives is the lack of hope for their future. No one can singlehandedly change this for them! But if each one of us will do something, from our abundance, we can change some



First group of children at the eyeglass clinic at Casa Samuel.



The kids LOVE Pete's entertainment!



One of the Casa Samuel children "showing off" her new glasses.

of their lives for the better.

The children at Casa Samuel cannot be adopted to foreigners. Even though we cannot physically adopt these children, we can help brighten their future. Just as the generosity of Plant Today partners paid for surgery for Tina, Plant Today partners can provide monthly support to make sure these children have more than the bare necessities of life. We can contribute to provide hope for their future.

The orphanage, Casa Samuel, is surrounded by strong walls, a large gate, and an armed guard to help protect the children inside against crime and violence that is so prevalent in the area. But inside these walls, children are taught that Jesus loves them.

Mike S's thoughts:

Here I sit in a airplane cruising approximately 35,000 feet, returning from my sixth trip to Guatemala (San Pedro Las Huertas) doing introspection of why I keep going there. I searched my mind for a logical reason not to go, but to no avail. Then I started to search my heart for answers and I am sure I found one of many I thought was especially for this trip.

The challenge (of many) came on the third day we were there, Mike M. asked me to do the daily devotion, which we do every day at 7:30 a.m. The first thought was what could I say or do that may have an influence on the group. What subject would be appropriate for doing the work of God?

The day before this, we went to the Casa Samuel Orphanage, about a two hour drive from Antigua. We were doing an eye clinic and haircuts for approximately 60 children, ages two through 18, and the staff. This is a privately funded orphanage, with no help from the Guatemala government whatsoever and yet they place most of these kids there. Many of these kids have been physically or sexually abused. But when you meet these children, you would never know it. The only thing you see is their love and appreciation for anything and everything. You do not see this in the USA normally. This is just a happy and loving faith based environment, not staged or a put-on act. These kids show their love in ways that would overwhelm any adult, even after the negative event they have experience before arriving there.

I went to bed that night still trying to figure out the subject matter [for prayer time]. I got up early the next morning, still no answer! Now I was getting desperate and reached for the Bible (which I had done the night before . . . the answer is always there) and I opened it blindly to 2 Peter 1:3-10 . . . verse 5 jumped at me with an awareness that I have never had before: "IN VIEW OF ALL THIS, MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO RESPOND TO



Jeanette (a local trained by Plant Today) providing a haircut at one of the coutreaches.



Local couple coming for their eye exam.



One of the village women taking tortillas to sell at the marketplace.

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GOD'S PROMISES. SUPPLEMENT YOUR FAITH WITH A GENEROUS PROVISION OF MORAL EXCELLENCE, AND MORAL EXCELLENCE WITH KNOWLEDGE, AND KNOWLEDGE WITH SELF-CONTROL, AND SELF-CONTROL WITH PATIENT ENDURANCE, AND PATIENT ENDURANCE WITH GODLINESS, AND GODLINESS WITH BROTHERLY AFFECTION, AND BROTHERLY AFFECTION WITH LOVE FOR EVERYONE. THE MORE YOU GROW LIKE THIS, THE MORE PRODUCTIVE AND USEFUL YOU WILL BE IN YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST."

I have come to the conclusion that these trips to Guatemala are more beneficial to me in the fact that I am totally focused on doing God's work, and He is working on me and guiding me for self introspection about Him, especially where I came from and what I am today and in the future.

For anyone who has not gone on a missions trip—GO—you will never be the same, no matter what your relationship is with God. If you use the lack of money as an excuse not to go, once you COMMIT to go, God will provide the needed funds. He will provide your needs, not your wants. I personally knew that I was using the money excuse many times because I did not have it. But when I made the COMMITMENT, God has always provided for the six trips.

A final note from Mike –

Mike S. has given you a challenge. Join us on our next trip, **October 25-October 31, 2011**. You can email me or go to the website for more information. God bless you abundantly for being obedient to what He tells you to do.

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