





Fall 2012

FIAT Happenings

Dear Friends,

Once again we have been blessed with your prayers and support. With your help we were able to do many things in El Salvador this past year. We saw the inauguration of our second Angel Mia day care in Las Delicias, finished a classroom in Ilobasco, built homes for the poor in Las Delicias and Villa Zaragoza, initiated a water project in Las Delicias with Engineers Without Boarders, expanded the Lunch Program to include senior citizens, saw the growth of the tutoring program in the school and the alphabetization of seniors learning to read, and in general helped many individuals and families in need with food and healthcare.

This year our hearts have been touched in a special way by the plight of the senior citizens. Things are so bad for them that we have included them in the lunch program of the children. Would you believe that they begin to come to the community center at 9:00 am for lunch that isn't served until 12:00 pm? This, however, as we have learned, is because they are also hungry for companionship. They come early to color with the children and to play checkers. It has been good for the children and there is now a fierce competition to see who can come close to beating the seniors. So far this has not happened and the children are learning that with age comes wisdom. The seniors are winning all the prizes.



Thanks again to volunteers we were able to purchase good shoes for the seniors. We had to keep a straight face and not laugh as they pranced around the room trying out their shoes and showing them off to anyone they could find. It has been a pleasure to be able to help them. The elderly were not the only ones to receive new shoes. We managed to distribute shoes to children and other adults due to the generosity of fund raisers run by our volunteers. As an instrument of your goodness to the people we are very grateful to be in the position to distribute your help.

Looking to the future we are dreaming of a senior center where the elderly can get breakfast and lunch, take a shower, wash their clothes in a washing machine, spend the day in a large comfortable space where they can enjoy each other's company, play games, watch movies, and take a nap. Perhaps we could create a communal garden where the children and seniors would benefit. All is possible for those who trust God and have good volunteers.

Sr. Gloria Petrone acj
Lynette Kyle

A COMMUNITY LENDS A HELPING HAND TO ONE OF THEIR OWN













LOVE HAS NO BOUNDARIES



Before arriving in El Salvador I was definitely nervous. Not only was I traveling to a different country where a different language was spoken but I was also born with a physical disability. I was worried that many physical limitations would arise over the course of the week. With the help of the group I traveled with as well as those I met in El Salvador, I was able to push myself physically, emotionally, and spiritually more so than I had ever done before. One particular experience that I will always carry with me is my visit to Ilobasco. There I chiseled rock and traveled through the rough terrain of the village. My perseverance was definitely tested that day, but I was rewarded with the opportunity to meet and work alongside amazing people. Pedro Arrupe once said, "Fall in love, stay in love and it will decide everything." Well, I definitely fell in love with the people of El Salvador, and the week I spent there continues to have a huge impact on my life today.



Moira Whalen (St. Joeseph's University)



I see how many "things" in my life are unnecessary and I believe, even more strongly, that our reason for existence is to serve others, especially those so less fortunate than ourselves. I am so blessed to have been given so much in my life, and I know I need to pay it forward for God. If the people of El Salvador can survive the rainy season with nothing but a rusted tin roof over their heads, I can certainly survive without the newest IPhone.

Olivia Cook (Georgia)

INSPIRED BY MY EXPERIENCE

At the beginning of the trip I was nervous to use what little Spanish I knew, embarrassed by the fact that I could barely put together a complete sentence. It was the children in Villa Zaragoza that first showed me just how far a simple smile and laugh can go. The children would grab our hands and pull us over to the swings and the teeter-totter to play or down to the valley to show us how beautiful the scenery was from the village. The happiness and excitement didn't stop there. I saw it everywhere I went during my time in El Salvador. The kindness of everyone that we encountered was unbelievable. The relationships that I built with the people there were unforgettable.



The memories of digging, painting, helping a child read, or playing with the children on the sites or in the orphanage will remain with me forever. I never thought that just one short week could have such an impact on my life. It really made me realize that some of the things that I held on a pedestal weren't actually that important. It made me realize how truly important family and friends are. It's truly all about the people in your life.

The experience that I had in El Salvador inspired me to do more for others, whether it was in my community or overseas. I've recently become involved in the start-up of a volunteer organization call WeVol. WeVol is a non-profit organization that is dedicated to building connections and meeting people's needs around the world. As the organization grows, we hope to connect volunteers to volunteer opportunities and give many people the same amazing experience that I had in El Salvador.

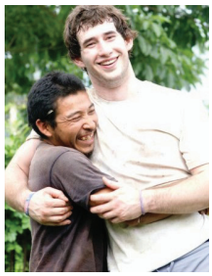
Looking back on the trip, I thought I was going to El Salvador to touch the lives of the people in the communities where we were working. Oh how wrong I was. The people and the experience have touched my life in a way that words cannot describe.

Whitney Rucker (Colorado School of Mines)

A LESSON LEARNED

All throughout high school I learned about Catholic social teaching, simple living, and solidarity. Learning this sparked an interest into learning more. The next step for me was to go somewhere that could really show me the essence behind these teachings. As a freshman at the University of Scranton I was given the opportunity to do this twice: once in Camden, New Jersey and once again in El Salvador.

My trip to El Salvador confirmed just about everything I learned. I do not consider what I did in El Salvador to be work necessarily; what I really did was learn from these people who live within an entirely different culture and socioeconomic status. I was humbled by these men, women, children, and also by the Handmaids of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. These people welcomed us, worked with us, prayed with us, and established friendships with us regardless of the fact that we were only there for a single week. It's hard to get through a single day in the States without being influenced in some way, shape, or form by the media. Our culture here is largely materialistic. I needed to travel all the way to El Salvador in order to realize that. It makes me value the things I have so much more, and it makes a frugal and simplistic lifestyle seem much more than reasonable, even in the U.S. It makes you want to have less in your life, but at the same time enable yourself to do more so that your life might end up revolving around something more meaningful than the simple "American dream."



I was once encouraged by my high school ethics teacher to visit an impoverished area instead of only writing a check. Now I see why he made this suggestion. It may be difficult to express some sort of empathy for the less fortunate of the world until they become not just the "poor" but a name, face, person, and friend. It puts an entirely different meaning behind the word solidarity: being a witness and establishing a relationship with these people. I feel very fortunate to have been a part of this experience. It has motivated me to dedicate my life to serving the poor and disenfranchised, whether it be in the inner city of Camden or El Salvador or any other place in need.

Joe Florenzo (University of Scranton)

Completed Projects



A home for Don Cornelio and his family in Villa Zaragoza

Angel Mia day care center in Las Delicias





A home for the Hernandez family in Las Delicias

A classroom added on to the school in Ilobasco





Being a missionary in El Salvador was incredible, inspiring, amazing! It was full of hard work, joy, emotion, dirt, fun, sweat, laughter, new understandings and love. In a word, my experience in El Salvador was complete.

Julene M. Newland-Pifer (Washington)















HANDMAIDS OF THE
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All donations are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

WORK IN PROGRESS



In collaboration with Engineers Without Borders, the Fiat Volunteers have completed phase one of the water project in Las Delicias.



www.projectfiat.org