





A Ministry of the Handmaids of the Sacred Heart of Jesus

Fall 2013

FIAT *Happenings*

Dear Friends,

When thinking back on all we have accomplished this past year we remember with gratitude all the unsung heroes who volunteered with us in El Salvador, who prayed for us from home, who raised funds, and who worked in our mission office. Without your help not much would have been accomplished; but with your help, and the grace of God, we have accomplished great things.



One of our favorite projects is the reading program for adults. How happy the people are to finally be able to read and write. These senior citizens now have a new skill and a new dignity.

With the help of some parishes and individuals we have been able to buy text books for four grades at a school in Ciudad Arce and have plans to purchase more next year. The children, with great pride, show us how well they are keeping their books so that they can be passed on to next year's students.

The "army" of volunteers who have served in the trenches in the heat, with calluses on their hands and twinges in their backs will remember their summer of digging and becoming one with the villagers who also helped dig the trenches for water pipes. At the completion of the project, water will be more readily available to the villagers.



Construction work is never ending. This summer we finished the home for Rocenda and her six children. Through the help of our volunteers, this abused women has learned a trade: She bakes bread, cakes, and cookies which her children help to sell. With pride and enthusiasm she carefully chose the paint colors for her dream home.



Ciudad Arce now has two more classrooms for Kindergarten and First Grade thanks to a lot of hard work this past year. Eventually, our dream is to have a smaller structure for a computer lab.

The tutoring still goes on for the school children in Las Delicias. Further projects are workshops for parents and teachers to help ensure that the children are better educated. These are given in memory of Sr. Elizabeth McCoy acj, a dedicated educator who did much for the education of youth in our school in Wyncote, PA.

The purchasing of land to build houses for abandoned and abused women is still in process. In addition we have a psychologist working on a program, which we hope to implement soon, to help these women with self esteem issues. Once the houses are built, university students will be available to provide lessons on how to prepare and cultivate their land.

Approximately fifteen senior citizens have had their roofs repaired. Living in a one room tin house with multiple holes in the roof during the rainy season makes them particularly vulnerable to the elements. The torrential rains quickly turn their dirt floors into mud floors, and many sleep covered with plastic to prevent getting wet. Thanks to parish fundraising and individuals who saw the problem, these senior citizens are having some basic needs met.



The lunch program continues to thrive with both children and senior citizens. Children are better nourished and healthier, which improves their concentration at school. The nutritious meals have also helped to strengthen the immune systems of the senior citizens.

All of the above and much more is done in the name of the Lord and with the help of volunteers.

You are sending us forth to invite all peoples to adore you as Saviour and Lord . ***St. Raphaela Mary***

We are extremely grateful for your ongoing support. You are all remembered in our prayers.

Sister Gloria Petrone acj and Lynette Kyle

Love...Love Changes Everything





Working with these people, who have so little and are so friendly, makes me reflect on my life and how I should try to emulate their attitudes and life skills.
Guy Alloway



It's hard for me to describe to others what El Salvador means to me or how I felt coming back home. I felt useless. How could I pretend that everything was fine after seeing what I saw and meeting the people I met. My experience in El Salvador made me decide that I wanted to devote my life to helping others. If a college degree wasn't required for most positions in the Peace Corps, I wouldn't be in my third year of college. I have my experience in El Salvador to thank for helping me make this decision. If I hadn't been given the opportunity to go, I don't know who I would be today. I don't think I would be as compassionate as I am now, and I would still probably carry a large void in my heart. Not only was El Salvador the greatest gift I could have been given and not only is it the first time that I truly felt love for something that wasn't a friend or family member, but it has also broken my heart and made me feel ruined. It made me feel ruined in the most beautiful way possible, and there is nothing I would rather do than be able to feel it all once again.
Gianna Rico

St. Francis of Assisi once said, "Preach the Gospel at all time. When necessary, use words." The same is true, I believe, for our week in El Salvador. Even if I can't make others understand the incredible experiences we had there, I can live it in my life every day. I try to change in small ways, which I hope will bring big differences. True, I have altered my life in concrete ways, from my shorter showers to smaller portion sizes. However, I believe my attitude is a better testament to our mission trip. I realize I have so much to be grateful for; and I try, more than ever, to thank God every day. Yet I remind myself that, while things and possessions can make us happy for a time, joy is found in our relationships with people.
Rachel Cain















I could never have predicted the long-lasting impact of my trip to El Salvador. My first night home after the trip sparked a passion that has only increased every single day since then. That night, I realized I was sleeping alone in a room whose size was the equivalent of a home of a family of 8 in El Salvador. I realized that all the people I had begun to deeply care for were living in conditions that were incomprehensible. This reverse culture shock sparked a variety of emotions including anger, frustration, sadness, but most importantly passion. It sparked a desire in me to make some personal and life changes in order to fulfill my new found passion in service.
Mia Matan

Projects in Motion

Food for Thought Program- Continues to grow each year with malnourished or undernourished children and senior citizens. The food program costs approximately $1000/month to run and can feed up to 60 people daily. A group of women in Las Delicias donate their time in the purchasing of food, preparation and serving of the meals.

Water Project- Is near completion. Approximately 80 yards of new pipes are yet to be to installed. This phase of the project with Engineers Without Borders will provide more efficient distribution of water to the households. The current piping in Las Delicias is corroding and constantly breaking down leaving many people without water for days.

Sponsor a Child- Involves four villages where 275 children receive bookbags, school supplies and two pairs of sneakers all for $60. There are over 100 names of children on a waiting list to enter the program. The children being sponsored are grateful for the opportunity to study and dream that one day they will be able to financially support their families with a secure job.

Tutoring/Purchasing of Books- Identifies a large number of children having difficulty completing school work. With the help of a reading specialist and a math tutor, the children are developing stronger foundations by building their self esteem and inner motivation to stay in school. This program is invaluable in providing the one on one that is needed to overcome their difficulties. Supporters continue to generously donate towards the purchase of books for the library and classrooms.

Medical Needs- Along with providing psychological help for victims of incest, this program assists in paying for medical tests, hearing aids, medicines and other expenses. Eye examinations were also provided for 50 senior citizens this year which uncovered visual problems. These problems were corrected by eye glasses which dramatically improved their vision.

IN MEMORIAM







El Salvador has lost a great friend and volunteer. David Haeussler, who died in December of 2012, is now supporting us from heaven. Dave, one of the first volunteers from the Philadelphia area, came not because he wanted to go serve in a poor country, but because he would not let his wife, Monica, go alone. From his first day in El Salvador, Dave was moved by the people and the conditions in which they lived. He chose to come back every year thereafter because he fell in love with El Salvador and its people.

One day returning from working in Las Delicias he came into the office to talk with me. He said that he cried that day. He was in the bottom of a large hole digging out a septic tank at the library when he heard a lot of noise and thought there was a parade going by. He hoisted himself up to look over the side, and he told me that then he began to cry. He saw a large group of mothers with children in their arms and by their side, and they were all moving toward the clinic. He said, "I saw that and thought, I was part of that project." He realized that by building the clinic, the children would now get the necessary help they needed. Dave was a very loud voice for the people of El Salvador. His company, EMCOR, sent Dave down to El Salvador with all the electrical supplies needed to wire the clinic. Dave also put in the electrical system for the library, day care, and several houses in Las Delicias and Ilobasco. In addition Dave raised funds and awareness for El Salvador, and he himself gave monthly donations to support a family. God bless you Dave and may you enjoy your heavenly reward.

Sister Gloria Petrone acj

Volunteer Honored



Kaylee Moen, who worked for the past five years each summer in El Salvador for Project FIAT, was honored with the Grand Lodge of Connecticut's Masonic Youth Award. This is given in special recognition for dedication and leadership in the field of humanitarian service. Kaylee, as was noted in the presentation, "looked poverty squarely in the eye and saw neighbor helping neighbor build a wall brick by brick or clear a field. She found delight in smiles and laughter over small gifts and gentle touches, in sunsets and sunrises, and Sister Gloria's horn awakening all to a new day. Above all, Kaylee learned in Las Delicias that 'we are their hands to help do as they do, not to show them a better way, or make them follow our way.' "

Congratulations Kaylee!

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Did you know that the Handmaids of the Sacred Heart of Jesus have a retreat house in Haverford, PA?
Vist www.straphaelacenter.org

My trip to El Salvador has been, by far, one of the most influential experiences of my life. I learned so much from the people there about gratitude, patience, simplicity, family, and faith. I believe going to El Salvador has made me a kinder person with a greater ability to step back and look at the grand scheme of things. The quality of the relationships I built with the community in just one week is amazing to me. I was surprised to find myself so wholly connected to the people I met. Despite great distance and months apart I still feel a strong devotion and link to everyone there, and I have so much gratitude for everything they have given me. It has translated to my relationships at home and made me so much more open to working with and getting to know people.

Kiera Muckenhirn





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

www.projectfiat.org