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August 2011

VOLUME 6 No. 3

Financial Donations Administered by Partnering Ministry:

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Tim Reflects on Teams

Dear Friends, Family and Ministry Partners,

Missions Teams are a huge blessing to us and to the extra projects going on in Costa Rica and in Guatemala. In large part, the teams that have come to serve us this year are helping us get out of the financial crisis "danger zone!" They've not only helped us financially, but have also covered the costs to add cement benches all the way around our Rancho, and do much needed painting on the railings and window bars of house two.

We just had two teams in Costa Rica actually overlapping for 6 days. Right now, we're in Guatemala assisting the Suttons and Hogar de Vida Guatemala as they host a Minnesota medical team.

All I can say is that the teams are a blessing to this mission, and its so much fun to see how God touches each person on a team in a way they least expect. Many have shared how their time here has opened their hearts up to so much. Most feel they are taking away much more than they have given, completely consistent with the biblical principal that when you seed or give much you also reap or harvest much. In II Cor. 9:6-11, **The Message** puts it this way:

"Remember: A stingy planter gets a stingy crop; a lavish planter gets a lavish crop. I want each of you to take plenty of time to think it over, and make up your own mind what you will give. That will protect you against sob stories and arm-twisting. God loves it when

the giver delights in the giving.

God can pour on the blessings in astonishing ways so that you're ready for anything and everything, more than just ready to do what needs to be done. As one psalmist puts it,

He throws caution to the winds, giving to the needy in reckless abandon. His right-living, right-giving ways never run out, never wear out.

This most generous God who gives seed to the farmer that becomes bread for your meals is more than extravagant with you. He gives

you something you can then give away, which grows into full-formed lives, robust in God, wealthy in every way, so that you can be generous in every way, producing with us great praise to God." --- II Cor. 9:6-11



Besides the teams, so many of you have given to help us in this time of need. I want you all to know that we are deeply grateful and our heartfelt thanks go out to all of you. I think the most powerful gift is

to pray for us, and for others just as the Lord asks you! He wants to use you as His PVC pipe to deliver fresh water to those that need it. That is done in prayer, fasting and giving. Read Matt 6!

Hugs and Love,

Tim Stromstad



Elena's Day at Hogar de Vida

Elena came to Hogar de Vida when she was 3 months old. In many ways she is "ours" although we hope she will soon be returned to her family or given to an adoptive family. She turned 2 years old in May. She lives in House #2.

Elena doesn't talk much but she has a good set of lungs and often exercises her right to be heard. She needs help with her language development, one of the challenges we sometimes face with children that come from at risk situations. She is learning to communicate: "mia" means "comida" (or food) and "peco" is "fresco" (drink). She loves tia Yorleni and calls her "Neni."

She doesn't like the other kids to touch her physically, she doesn't like the kids to take her toys away (who does?), and she is learning not to bite other children. We could say she has a "strong character."

Morning begins at 5:30 when Elena wakes up, but she has to wait for one of the "tias" (aunties) to open the door. Still in her pajamas, breakfast tastes good. Each day the menu is different. Elena's favorite is hot empanadas freshly made and filled with cheese and refried beans.

Next comes bath time where she shares the tub with other little girls - often screaming loudly her desire to stay in longer. Elena looks like a little princess when she's in a dress, which she much prefers over shorts.

The whole Hogar community comes together in the rancho for devotional time led by staff. A half hour is a LONG time for a two year old to sit still. Then it's back to the house for a snack cafeteria style with the other 10 children to eat fruit or some of Ma's (tia in charge) hot bread. Hot bread and sour cream? Mmmmmmm!

Play time on the porch or outside is an option but Elena prefers to be inside because Ma feeds her like a little bird, bits and pieces of whatever is being prepared for lunch. This gives Elena a sense of family and belonging.



School-time with Christy provides an opportunity for Elena to paint, develop her gross motor skills on the mattress, or play a musical instrument (toy tambourine). School is socialization at its best.

Lunchtime comes early at 11:00 a.m. Typical fare has rice and beans featured somewhere. The children get a rounded Costa Rican diet which we respect as part of their cultural heritage.

After lunch, nap time is absolutely necessary for Elena to recharge her batteries. She always sleeps. In a couple of hours it's time to get up again, have a diaper change, get shoes on, and if the sun is shining, more outside play, sometimes on the football soccer field next door.

Afternoon includes another snack and now it's dinner time at 5:00 p.m. when Elena feeds herself. Before bedtime the children, once again in pajamas, watch an approved video, each week watching the same ones over and over again. Bedtime arrives around 6:30 and along with the children some of the tias sign off as well in order to get a good night's rest.

Then it all begins again the next day. The daily routine is important for the children, although Elena's days are somewhat different when she has medical appointments, when she goes to church on Sunday or when there is a birthday parties or special visitors that bring new clothes or toys.

- To sponsor a child like Elena, or a tia who cares for them, please refer to the enclosed description of the Sponsorship Program and the Reply Slip on its reverse side.
- When making a contribution, please help the Children of Promise staff to direct your gift to its intended purpose by specifying the Stromstads, the missions at Costa Rica or Guatemala, a particular sponsorship or another specific purpose. Children of Promise supports many missionaries and projects, so your help is appreciated. You can confirm your gift designation on your return receipt.

• *Note: Pictures of children are slightly modified and their names are changed, especially in Costa Rica, for their safety and to protect their identity.*