



Dreaming Big Dreams

Take a minute to think about your first day of school. For most of us, that was a while back, but as you scan your Facebook feed, you'll probably see pictures of friends' children and grandchildren as they start their school year, some of them for the very first time. Those kids have on their best first-day-of-school outfits, clutch lunchboxes, and smile expectantly—nervously—about this new venture. Those big smiles hide a lot of worries, worries about meeting their new teachers, making friends, finding their classrooms, and making it through the day without mom or dad. You probably had those same worries as you boarded your first school bus.

Here in El Salvador, our kids share same worries about school. Sadly, those fears are compounded with other fears—fears of classmates who are related to gang members asking for money each day, our young boys' fears of being forced to join gangs, our girls' fears of being pursued by gang members and eventually having to quit school to avoid retaliation from gang member when the girls turn down their advances. It's those fears that led us to send

many of our local school-aged children to private schools where they will be safe.

We've been so excited to see our kids finally able to learn in safe environments. However, despite the safety of the private schools, our students often find themselves in extremely large classes with teachers who are overworked and unable to address the needs of individual students. We thought to ourselves, "There has to be a better way." And from that small idea came a big one: "What if we started our own school?"

It might sound crazy. Honestly, it's the biggest thing we've undertaken so far, but we think it's the most important. Our dream is for a school where kids are challenged academically and have the chance to expand their minds. But, most importantly, our dream is for a school with classes small enough that students are known by their teachers and a school in which each student comes to see how unique and important, how loved by God, he or she is. Yes, it is a big dream, but it's a dream that's worth making a reality.

We plan to open La Luz de Jesus Escuela (The Light of Jesus School) at SHIP's facility in January. We'll begin

with K-4 and K-5 and add a grade each subsequent year.

This summer's mission teams worked diligently on getting the building ready for our kids by doing the needed remodeling, painting walls, building desks and playground equipment, and many other tasks. We're so grateful for their help!

Please join with us and follow the journey of beginning a Christian school in our neighborhood!

Those of you who have followed SHIP for any length of time know that building and remodeling homes in our Salvadoran neighborhood is in SHIP's "DNA." What you may not know is that many other things happen, too. The remainder of this newsletter features many (but not all) of this year's projects. Enjoy!

Mark Your Calendar!

October 30, 2018

12 to 1 p.m.

College Station, Texas

Every Child Has a Dream
Luncheon & Fundraiser

Reservations required

Princesses of God

I John 3:10: "See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God."

SHIP honored 11 very special young ladies at our third quinceañera on June 3. The quinceañera is a traditional 15th birthday celebration, and few of the girls in our neighborhood ever get to celebrate it in the manner that we do at SHIP. We provided dresses (donated by VIP Bridal of Bryan, Texas), fancy shoes, elegant hairdos, manicures, pedicures, and a weekend of special activities leading up the important observance. SHIP trippers spent hours and hours decorating the venue.



Before they walked into the quince with their escorts, the girls had a time of prayer.



The girls were treated to pedicures, manicures, hair, and make-up. Additionally, they received pink t-shirts saying "Princess of the King."



During the ceremony, the girls read their life verse from the Bible and received flowers, as well as a ring. Both the flowers and the ring are symbolic of who they are in Christ.

At SHIP, a quinceañera is a lot more than a party. We spent three evenings with the girls in Bible study, prayer, and role playing to help them understand what purity is and ways they can remain pure until marriage, even in the face of temptation and pressure from others.

We wanted them to understand this truth from God's Word: God the Father loves each of these girls so much that He sent His Son to pay the "bill" for their sins. We want God's overwhelming love to wrap around each of them and draw them into a deep relationship with our loving God... to be His princesses.

I DO! I DO!! I DO!!!

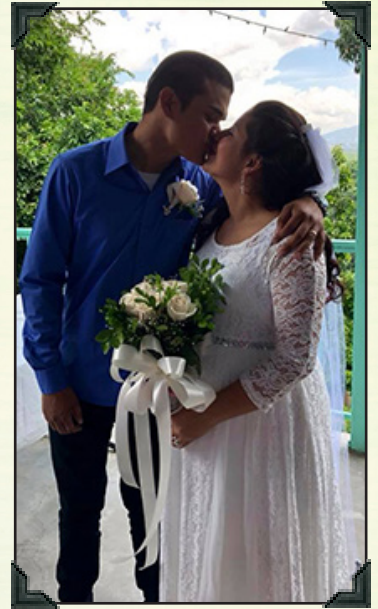
SHIP found itself in a whole new ministry this summer: Weddings! In our neighborhood, just getting married can be expensive; getting an officiant that is recognized by the government usually prices the happy couple right out of getting married. Maricruz, a young lady who had grown up in the orphanage, was ready to get married. So, we offered to provide for her and her fiancé a venue (a balcony at SHIP), a beautiful wedding dress (donated by VIP Bridal of Bryan, Texas), cake and punch, and an officiant. Just one stipulation: She and her fiancé had to attend premarital counseling with Walter and Raquel. It was a beautiful celebration.

Word spread, and before the summer mission trips were over, two more couples had studied God's Word and learned His plan for their "happily ever after."

Pray for these new families, and pray that SHIP can continue to encourage and strengthen them as they grow in love together.



Robert Horton escorts the beautiful bride, Marycruz.



Marycruz and Rodrigo sealing their vows with a kiss.



Walter Moreno shares God's plan for marriage with Kevin and Paola.



Our neighbors, Romeo and Andrea, shared their special celebration with family and friends.



SHIP Trippers will doubtless remember Kevin, our neighbor, who has been around as long as SHIP has been in El Salvador. He's grown up and a married man now. Time flies...

New Brothers & Sisters in Christ!

Angel's life has not been easy. His family has endured much suffering the past four years. After a disagreement with another boy, we had the opportunity to ask him about heaven.



Like most of our kids, Angel thought he must be "good enough" to go to heaven. Since he was unsure about going to heaven, we shared the Good News of Jesus' salvation. The next day, he prayed and trusted Jesus to save him from his sin.

Leonel was the other boy involved in the disagreement. He came back to SHIP's facility the next day, and when we asked him about heaven, he said he must keep being good to go to heaven. We discussed sin, heaven, and Jesus as the only way to be sure he would go to heaven. Leonel also prayed, believing that Jesus died for his sins.



So, what was the disagreement about between these two boys? Leonel asked Angel what time VBS started at SHIP, and Angel told him 2:00. When Leonel arrived at 2:00, he found out that VBS actually began at 1:00. An argument ensued, and Leonel ended up with a black eye! Both of these boys take VBS very seriously.

When we asked, Nahomy said that she didn't know if she would go to heaven, but her mom had told her a little about the Bible. We shared that there is a penalty for sin, and it is death.

Either our death or Jesus' death. After discussing Jesus' love and salvation, Nahomy chose to trust Jesus for her salvation. As she prayed, she cried...and our SHIP trippers cried, too.



Sometimes, our SHIP trippers come to know the Lord while in El Salvador. Through working on projects with one of our long-time staff members, Leon Moore, Zac came to know Jesus. Here's what Zac's mother, Stephanie, wrote:

"Seriously, the love in my heart for Noralee and Leon is more than words could ever express! They are such an amazing example of God's love and faithfulness. Both this year and last, Leon took Zac under his wing and taught him so much...not just how to build a house, plumbing, and power tools...he taught him how much God loves him and lit a fire in Zac to know God and have a personal relationship with Him. That is why Zac wanted Leon to be the one who baptized him. They both are such a blessing to every person that crosses their path! My cup overflows!"



Those who have been going to El Salvador with us since 2011 know Katherine and her mother, Blanca. Both Katherine and Blanca were baptized this year, and it was such a celebration. Many children in our neighborhood grow up without a father in their lives. Robert Horton has become like a father/grandfather to many of these kids, and they know that he loves them. That is his relationship with Katherine, and he was excited to baptize her. What a joy and an honor it is to see these kids come to know Jesus and follow Him in baptism!



Evangelistic Outreach Services

SHIP's outreach service started as an experiment to see if we could encourage our neighbors to join us for a worship service (usually translated), music (put together quickly from a diverse, usually non-Spanish-speaking group), dinner, and fellowship with a mission team, who for the most part, communicated only through hugs, smiles, and their own personal version of sign language.

How'd the experiment go? It was successful! Since its humble beginnings at a little house down the street from SHIP with a "crowd" of about 30, to the SHIP's soccer field, driveway, and balcony, to the "big (and incredibly hot) room, to the multipurpose room in the new school building with more than 140 people, we have outgrown every venue, and we praise God for that! Our neighbors are blessed, but we think we get the biggest blessing, loving them and being God's hands and feet.



Pastors Training Institute

When you feel God calling you into ministry, but you have no one to help you learn how to do that, what do you? Many pastors in El Salvador were in that boat. They had a Bible, but no one to teach them how to preach, counsel, or deal with the multitude of things that pastors encounter.

David Archer, long-time SHIP tripper, felt a call to do something about it. With the help of Obed and Laura Fernandez, former missionaries to Chile, they began the Pastors Training Institute this summer.



The pastors and church leaders were enthusiastic and learned a lot from the two-day seminar. Pastors and church leaders studied discipleship, led by Obed, and pastoral leadership and sermon preparation and pastoral leadership led by David. The ladies met with Laura and studied discipleship and how to strengthen the family.

Based on the enthusiastic survey results of the participants, they are ready for another time of study with this team, and they offered many suggestions of topics to cover. Please pray for these church leaders as they implement what they have learned.





Growing...

When SHIP first started reaching out to the community through Vacation Bible School and Bible studies, we could have held these events in a telephone booth. But people started coming, anxious to be told about the love that Jesus has for them.

Young ladies from our mission teams share their hearts, along with their hopes and dreams and hurts with the girls in our neighborhood. The Salvadoran girls are often surprised that girls in the United States are dealing with many of the problems, insecurities, and challenges that they are. Over coffee and cookies, they build relationships that continue, even after the teams go home.

Our mama's Bible study used to meet in one of the small apartment living rooms, but that's just not feasible any more. The ladies line the perimeter of a balcony and their laughter can be heard across the facility, as they chat and play games. They read scripture and participate together in learning what God's Word wants to teach them. For women whose lives can be challenging and stressful, it's a time of healing and growing stronger and building a network of friends.

For the mamas who hang around after the Bible study, English classes begin immediately.



It's been thrilling to watch the development of the men's Bible study. From a group who pulled a few chairs from the balcony and took them down to the eight foot by eight foot flat concrete surface atop one of the water cisterns to now filling the balcony, the teenagers and older men meet to share the Word and learn from each other's experiences and stories of growth in their Christian faith.



Jesus Loves the Little Children

Why do kids LOVE to come to VBS? Probably because they never know what's going to happen. Our SHIP Trippers have a multitude of creative ways—from drama to songs to object lessons—to let each child know just how much Jesus loves them. And then, of course, there's a fun craft project that reinforces the day's lesson and yummy refreshments.



Women's Sewing Center

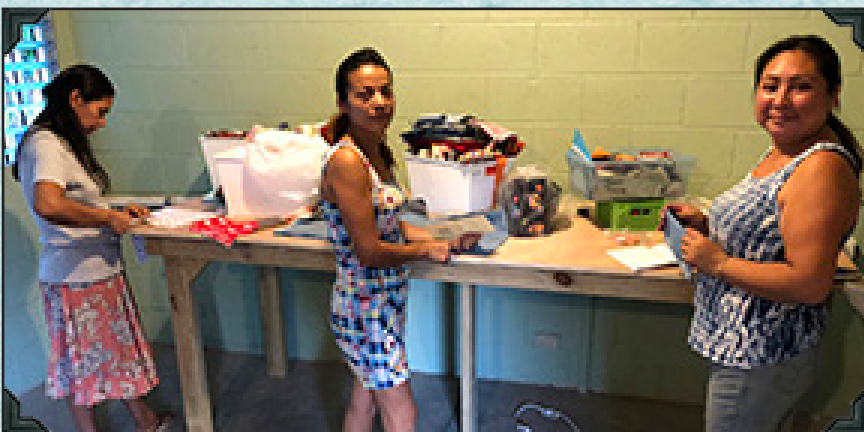
In our extremely impoverished Salvadoran neighborhood, single moms do what they can to scrape by, to feed their children, to keep a roof over their heads. In 2015, Janise Crumpler from Louisiana made her first mission trip to El Salvador with SHIP, and she began teaching the ladies to sew.

Many women have come to the sewing center to try their hand at sewing. From basic stitching to creating products that can be sold, they have learned and laughed and shared a common goal of providing for their families.

One of the first products they have made to sell is a small zippered bag. The bags are made from various

donated fabrics and are even lined! They can be used for toting small things like cosmetics, loose change, or whatever. You cannot imagine their pride when they can say, "I made this!" and get paid for it. Sure, it's not perfect. But for each mom, it's a first step to a better life.

These ladies are now learning how to make school uniforms for students in our new school. In addition to providing them with income, it will lessen the cost of school uniforms.



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Into the Light

It's a neighborhood whose street name means "darkness." Whose neighbors may belong to gangs. Where opportunity is scarce. Where single moms exponentially outnumber married couples. Where hope is scarce. Unless God's light shines.

It's to this Salvadoran neighborhood that God has called SHIP to work. So, though we can't rename the street, we can name the long driveway that leads

to our facility. La Luz de Jesus—The Light of Jesus—declares the sign posted our street light. By sharing Jesus with our neighbors, He pushes back the darkness and His light shines brightly.

Jesus spoke to them, saying, **"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."** John 8:12

