



## Who'd a Thought...

...that in 2004, when SHIP first began, it would grow to become a ministry that would reach so many for Jesus Christ? While our vision was small – just build a new home for the kids in the orphanage and a building (with four bedrooms) where we could bring small mission teams once (maybe twice) a year – God's vision was as big as, well, GOD! He has patiently opened door after door, to give SHIP opportunities to share Jesus with our neighborhood in El Salvador.

We are only four months into 2015, and already we have had two mission trips of amazingly selfless SHIP trippers who have been smitten with the love that was showered on them by the SHIP El Salvador community.



One group from the sister Chapel North churches in Ohio and Illinois found us online. In February, 19 people left the U.S. and ice and snow, wearing parkas and gloves and boots and ventured into the warmer climate of El Salvador, where they quickly put on T-shirts and flipflops and began enjoying the beauty of the country and the people. You'll read some of their stories in the following pages.

And in March, high school and university students, along with a God-sent translator-couple, from Bryan-College Station, Texas, joined us for a spring break trip that changed a lot of lives, including their own. Among many other activities that week, the team was invited by a local junior high school English teacher, to come and speak English to her students. Our team shared their testimonies of Jesus' impact on their lives. The picture to the left shows our team with the students.

Steve and Kerry Beck conducted a seminar for the women who work at the SHIP Shop in El Salvador, with Julia Lynch translating. The Becks have years of experience in how to grow



businesses and are always happy to share their knowledge. It's a blessing to these ladies to learn of ways to grow their businesses, and they leave encouraged and equipped with new ideas.

Want to read more about the SHIP trip experiences? Check out our new blog at <http://shipinternational.org/blog/>.



## Love Them Like Jesus

by Julia & Christian Lynch – Texas

“Adventure, with all its requisite danger and wildness, is a deeply spiritual longing written into the soul of man.” ~ John Eldridge



I first *knew* I wanted to marry my husband when, on a coffee date, I asked him what he wanted in life and a relationship. He said, “To love, be loved, and serve the Lord.” About eight months ago, just before our wedding day, I wrote him a letter that ended this way: “Committing to love, be loved, and serve the Lord could take us anywhere. It will be an adventure. Thank you for choosing me.” In March, we had the opportunity to take the first of what will hopefully be a life-long’s worth of adventures together to SHIP’s site in El Salvador.

As the interpreters for the team, we had our finger in every pie. We were pulled here and there to translate the words coming from the hearts of a group of over 20 high school and college-age young people who wanted to spend their “Spring Break 2K16” truly loving, being loved, and serving the Lord. They built houses, spent time playing with the kids at the orphanage and in the community, conducted Vacation Bible School, boldly shared their testimonies, sang, danced, and led Bible studies, all to the glory of God. In reality, these servants needed very little interpretation on my or my husband’s part. The Holy Spirit needed no help from us in communicating their love for this community.

I will give just one of many such examples that stand out in my mind...

In VBS, the kids made paintings of a burro, whose head they created by stamping their painted foot on the paper.



They then made the palm leaves out of painted handprints. The young lady in charge of the painting and stamping was Courtney Kidwell. When I wheeled one of the boys, who has muscular dystrophy, from the orphanage over to where Courtney was hunched



down, she looked up and smiled, took one of his twisted, barefoot feet and brushed it with the paint. He recoiled his foot

from the tickling sensation and looked at us with a delighted smile. I thought, “how often does he get to feel sensations like these, the way healthy kids do – the feeling of grass or sand on their feet, or the way the bark of the mango trees feel when they climb them?” I also thought, “Is the loving way Courtney is handling his feet the way Jesus handled his



disciples’ feet as He washed them?” I think it was, and that kind of love needs no translation.

Going on this trip was not only an adventure we will never forget, (Christian won the award for “most enthusiastic about the Salvadoran experience”), it is one we hope to make many more times to come, and one we encourage anyone, married or single, to take. Though, in my experience, nothing beats having your best buddy to share in the adventure of loving, being loved, and serving the Lord.



## Love without Boundaries

by John, Sherry, Jonathan, and Hannah Brown – Ohio

When presented with the opportunity to go on a mission trip to El Salvador with SHIP, we as a family talked about it and prayed about the possibility of the whole family going. And God made that happen!



We felt very welcomed at SHIP’s facility and were surrounded by such an open and loving spirit. We were overwhelmed with joy, love, and hugs from strangers, who quickly became friends. The local ladies served us authentic Salvadoran food, which was wonderful after our long flight. Once we settled in, we had the honor of getting acquainted with the masterminds behind the whole SHIP operation: Robert and Ann Horton, along with Leon and Noralee Moore. They truly have a passion and desire to serve the Salvadoran people, and it shows. We fell in love with them; their heart, spirit, and passion for

the work being done encouraged us to see the good in all that we were surrounded with. They truly rely on God for direction with the ministry, and the facility is run like a fine-oiled machine. We were excited as we looked forward to the coming week of ministry in El Salvador.

While we were there, we had the opportunity to witness and be God's hands and feet through helping build a family home and teaching Bible school with



the local kids and the children in the orphanage. We found that it wasn't the environment that determines happiness or contentment in an individual or a family, but it's the love of Christ that is freely shared and received. We also discovered that poverty or the appearance of it is not a location or a third-world country, but it is a mindset. We are called to be a blessing, and we can be the change agent to set others free from bondage.

We were humbled and honored to share the love of Christ and to be the recipients of it, as well. You see, God's love has no boundaries, whether it is cultural, social economics, or even a language barrier; love translates over all types of boundaries. We, as a family, will seek out other mission opportunities in the future after the experience we shared in El Salvador!

## Changing Lives

by Matt Johnson – Ohio

In February, I joined a team from my church in Ohio and went to El Salvador to positively affect the lives of a small section of that country. It was something



I had long desired – a chance to touch lives for Christ in a third-world country. Little did I realize that it was my life that would be permanently changed through this experience. What the Salvadoran people lack in material comforts is more than compensated for in an abundance of love, respect, and hearts that could fill the Grand Canyon.



Our team leaders took us into the jungle to rebuild a home for a family of five. It was a home that would not qualify as a shed in the United States, yet the love of Christ and a sense of self-worth permeated this humble dwelling. The parents live for their children, and the children love life, although they have never seen

an Xbox and only have two sets of clothes to wear to school.

SHIP's leadership team has formed a vision for this community that is in tune with the heart of God. Their presence in this small corner of El Salvador

radiates the love of Christ and fulfills the Great Commission of preaching the Gospel through education, service, and opportunity to enable those families to lift themselves upward in both the practical and spiritual realms.



Empowering families to change their lives, their communities, and their futures – this is what I took away after one brief week in El Salvador. It was a week that changed my life, redirected my call, and caused me to re-examine my budget to include ongoing support for this beacon of hope called SHIP. I'm humbled to be a small



part of such great men and women of God. Change the world, change your life – join and support SHIP for an experience that has eternal rewards.



## Lessons Learned

by Abigail English – Texas



I spent a good hour of our plane trip to El Salvador trying to memorize Romans 6:23 and John 3:16 in Spanish. I knew that we would be doing a lot of teaching while there, and I wanted to be prepared for that opportunity. While we did get to lead a VBS and some Bible studies, what I hadn't prepared for was all the learning that I would get to experience while I was there. God didn't just provide me with the opportunity to teach and serve; He also used the trip to teach me about true joy, gratefulness, and trusting in Him.

The Salvadoran kids really stole my heart and taught me so much about being joyful. One of my favorite little girls could laugh for hours just by being lifted in the air like an airplane or being engaged in a tickle fight. It didn't matter that this was being done in the orphanage where the night before she had brushed her teeth with a dry toothbrush because she didn't have toothpaste and the water was down.



Not only did she not complain about her circumstances, but she also didn't let them decide her outlook on life. Every time she giggled or laughed, I would thank God for giving her

that joyful spirit and being faithful in taking care of these children.

The kids in the community also exemplified such a happy and grateful spirit. I was quickly humbled in thinking of all the things I complain about, school especially. These kids worked so hard and realized what a blessing it was to have a good learning environment. They didn't take anything for granted and never forgot to thank those who were helping them along the way.

Finally, God used the SHIP leadership team to show me the benefits of being obedient and trusting. I loved getting to hear the story of how SHIP developed and how they approached bumps in the road with prayer and faith. Ann Horton was telling me that the "piedras en el camino (bumps in the road) pale



in comparison to what we can look back on with pure happiness and realize that we are where we belong." What an encouraging thing to hear as a college student about to try to find her place in the world! I am so thankful that God allowed me to

cross paths with the Hortons and all the other trip leaders, as I gained a lot of wisdom from our interactions as well. They were also so full of grace (when I wasn't very graceful).

When we arrived home, I was initially disheartened in thinking that I had done the mission trip wrong. I wanted to go on the mission trip to serve and pour out, but I myself was served and poured

into. But that is the beauty of what God can do on mission trips; He can find the perfect balance of service and growth. I can't wait to return for round two!

## Window to the Future

Meet SHIP's head tutor David and tutors Isela and Ana (not pictured is Erick). They are standing in the not-yet-completed classrooms of the new building at SHIP El Salvador.

These tutors have worked hard, and their work is paying off. The children they tutor are excelling, and we are proud of all of them.



But they need a dedicated space, where they can teach and the children can learn without the distractions of their current location – on the balcony of the very active SHIP building, with missions teams coming and going and lots of other activities taking place.

Please pray for the tutors and students. And please pray about how you can help meet the needs of these students and also the women's work center.

SHIP needs \$78,000 to complete the new 5,000 square foot building. To date, SHIP has not incurred any debt, and we intend to keep it that way. But we do need your help.

You can also help by sponsoring a child's education. It costs approximately \$150 a month for tuition, uniforms, transportation, books, supplies, and tutoring for SHIP to send a child to school.

We would appreciate your help, as we follow God's leadership in providing for the least of these. Your tax-deductible contributions may be made at [SHIPInternational.org/donate](http://SHIPInternational.org/donate) or by mailing them to us at P.O. Box 3003, Bryan, TX 77805-3003.

## Here We Go Again!

It's almost 11 years since our first trip to El Salvador, and that huge facility that was completed in 2011 and that we thought would be enough room forever, is too small. One of our biggest challenges today is finding room for all the children and adults we serve and also having enough rooms (though we now 11 bedrooms) to accommodate those who desire to join a mission team and serve.

So, we are building again to be able to better accomplish what God has brought us here to do. The new building will be three stories and be home to new classrooms to use for after-school tutoring for the 22 neighborhood children SHIP sends to a private Christian school, larger retail and storage areas for SHIP's women's work center, which currently provides job opportunities for more than 140 women, and living space for long-term workers and missionaries.



God has really blessed the building efforts, and to date, we are debt free. But we do need \$78,000 to finish the building. Please pray about how you can help us complete the building. You can contribute online at [shipinternational.org/donate/](http://shipinternational.org/donate/) or by sending your contribution to SHIP, P.O. Box 3003, Bryan, TX 77805-3003. All contributions are tax-deductible for federal income tax purposes.



## Reasons to Celebrate!

Great news! David Benitez, son of orphanage directors Jhony and Elena Benitez, recently graduated with his law degree. We're so proud of David and excited to see how God will use him and his skills in the future.

This milestone in David's life would not have been possible without the support of Kay Sanders – one of SHIP's greatest champions, encouragers, and friends. As a SHIP tripper during SHIP's earliest days in El Salvador, Kay saw a group of extremely bright kids, whose education would not continue past high school; due to a lack of funding, they were not able to attend university. Kay spearheaded the effort to make sure that four orphanage kids got the education they needed. Sadly, Kay passed away in 2012 after a long struggle with cancer. But Kay's legacy of compassion lives on, and her impact is still



felt today. We're grateful to Kay and her family for their support, but most of all, for their friendship. David is the first graduate, and we hope to celebrate graduation of the others soon.

If you would like to carry on what Kay began, go to [shipinternational.org/donate/](http://shipinternational.org/donate/).



And more wonderful news... April 26 was a big day for one of the young ladies at Jehova Jireh. Emma de Jesus became the wife of Jose Argueta!

We have watched Emma grow up at the orphanage, and we know that she is an amazing, sweet, Godly young woman. She and Jose are just starting out, and they have a lot of love between them but not a lot else. We want to give them a wedding shower in



May when we are in El Salvador with our first mission trip of the summer. One of our former SHIP trippers, Susan Richardson, has created a registry for them at Target. If you would like to help SHIP shower Emma and Jose with some needed items for their new home, please go to [www.target.com](http://www.target.com). The registry can be found by entering Emma's first name (Emma) and her last name (de Jesus). While we will be having the shower on the May mission trip, we will be making a number of trips to El Salvador with other mission teams this summer, and we can deliver gifts then, too. If you'd rather send money to help purchase a bed or table and chairs, or whatever they need, you can send your donation with a note that it is a gift for Emma and Jose. We want to bless this sweet couple as they begin their married life!

## Shelter the Homeless International Projects

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**James 1:27** *"Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world."*

## Blessed

by Cindy Hinds – Indiana

The time spent in El Salvador blessed my life. Sometimes we get wrapped up in ourselves and forget there is a big world out there that needs to know our big God. SHIP

is truly an example of the hands and feet of Jesus reaching to the need of



others, one good deed at a time. I am still in awe as I recall how this selfless ministry of faith poured blessings into the lives of so many people, including those of us who went to be a blessing. SHIP is about relationSHIP building, first and foremost with God! From devotionals for beginners through induction into The Royal Order of the Rapidor for veteran SHIP trippers, it was a great week of getting to serve others and build lasting relationships. We

were excited to be part of blessing Genesis and her family with a home on earth. Can you imagine how excited God must be about building for us a home in heaven?

