



scholarSHIP Students

## A Hope and a Future

*"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." Jeremiah 29:11*

"They don't know how to dream." That was one of the first things we were told about the children when we began working in El Salvador. We thought every child of God had the same opportunities that we have. But we were so wrong. We quickly learned that the very young Salvadoran children have dreams of what they want to be – policeman, president, princess – but as they get older, they realize that goals, plans, and dreams are for other people and not for them. Their dreams aren't any higher than the curb, because no one has told them that they can reach for the stars.

If you saw where they lived, perhaps you'd better understand why they don't know how to dream. Children in our neighborhood are born into a vicious cycle of poverty and low expectations, going back generations. SHIP is trying to break that cycle, one precious kid at a time. You see, we believe that every life, every mind, every future is a sacred and precious gift from God. We believe it's important to tell them that they are loved not just by us, but that they are loved and valued by Jesus. And they are included in God's promise of a hope and a future despite their current circumstances.

Zuleyma is 16 years old and in 9th grade. In January, she realized that she had come to the end of her educational road because her dad had lost his job, her parents couldn't afford to continue sending her to private school, and the public school was just too dangerous to attend. But she heard about the SHIP *sponsorSHIP* program, which sends kids to safe, private Christian schools and offers tutoring for them in the afternoons. So she applied. "I was so sad that I couldn't go to school, but now I am happy because SHIP opened the door for me to go to a good school!" She's dreaming now of becoming a doctor.

Jocelyn is 14 years old and in the 7th grade. She is in her fourth year with the *sponsorSHIP* program. When she first came to SHIP, taking a test scared her to death, but through the love and nurturing she received in tutoring, she has overcome that fear, and last year she was one of our star students. She's dreaming of being a nurse.

"Hi! I can speak English," is how 13-year-old Ceci greeted the SHIP mission team that came to build a house near her home. Actually, after that greeting, we found that we had heard her entire English vocabulary. But that didn't stop her from communicating herself right into our *sponsorSHIP* program. She's in her second year, and her infectious smile and big hugs will make you a fan of Ceci. She's dreaming of being an accountant.

Their futures are brighter because they are receiving a quality education, thanks to SHIP's donors and the *sponsorSHIP* program that provide funding for tuition, books, uniforms, supplies, tutoring, and an extra measure of the love of Jesus. They're learning and discovering that they CAN succeed.

Unfortunately, there are so many more children we can't help because of a lack of funding and staff. On every trip to El Salvador, moms come to our gate begging us to allow their child into the program. Currently, we have more than 50 students, but that number could easily double, if we had funding and staff.

We hope you'll join us at our upcoming luncheon, *God's Promise: A Hope & a Future for the Children of El Salvador*, where you'll learn how you can help children dream again and claim God's promises in Jeremiah 29:11 as their own.

### Mark Your Calendar!

October 17, 2017

12 to 1 p.m.

College Station, Texas

**God's Promise: A Hope & a Future  
for the Children of El Salvador  
Luncheon & Fundraiser**

Reservations required

## Trusting Him More

by Shelly Peters

I've been on mission trips before; we've done a mission trip domestically, and my children have participated in many mission opportunities over the last six years. However, this mission trip was different. Each time I serve God, He grows me in new ways. He knows who we are. He knows our strengths and weaknesses and who else will show up to work beside us on mission.

I'm a planner. I love to get a group of people together, find out what they enjoy doing, and watch it all come together with a well-executed plan. Nothing thrills my heart more. This summer, He taught me not just the head knowledge of that but the heart knowledge as I watched Him bring together 13 people from my church, Parkway Baptist in College Station, Texas, and others from local bodies of Christ who were ready to do whatever they were called to do.

The first day was a real challenge for me. After leaving for the airport at 4 a.m., we showed up at SHIP's facility ready to "get to work" and guess what...we put away our personal belongings and waited until it was time for dinner. No one told us what to do or how to do it. I truly didn't know what to do with myself. What was the plan? I was not in charge, so there was nothing to tell anyone else to do. We wandered up to the "outdoor dining area/



living room" that became home for the next week. We visited with new faces and exchanged introductions. We drank tea and shared life. We ate dinner and went

to bed. I think I got 12 hours of sleep that night. I would wake up and ask God "what on earth?" and go back to sleep. It was finally time to get up and eat breakfast. Here we were eating again. Sharing life and breaking bread with friends and new faces. Within 24 hours, people were sharing their hearts

with me like never before and opening up in new ways that somehow felt safe so far away from home.

I'm a doer. I was ready to do something, and God spoke to my heart and said "I am the Almighty – the ultimate planner of the universe. I know this team. I see each one of them and know how to put them together. Relax and do whatever you feel called to do each day of the trip." I watched as the Lord pushed people out of their comfort zones – exactly what they needed to grow in a new way. It might be trying to speak Spanish, saying a prayer over the food, leading a devotional, teaching a Bible study, giving a testimony, growing a relationship with the Salvadoran people, or even digging a ditch for a sewer line. Each day after breakfast, we began with a devotional and then heard what opportunities the Lord had for us that day. We then chose a direction and went to work. Some days, it was VBS, some days it was digging a ditch, and some days it was helping to build a house.

So often at home, I hear people say "so much to do and so little time to do it." In El Salvador, it was so different – so much to do but so much "God time" to do it. He knew the needs, and He brought the workers. We asked Him what to do and just did it. We accomplished so much in the short seven days, but I had more authentic fellowship, ate three meals a day with my new family, and got more sleep than I have in years. I came home ready to figure out how to put this practice into my everyday life. God continues to remind me that He is the perfect planner, the one who sees each one of us individually (our strengths and weaknesses), and is the best executer in the universe. Learning to trust Him more each day – that's the never-ending task until Jesus comes back!



## God Is on the Move

by Mary Ethridge, SHIP Intern

My time in El Salvador was filled with great joys and deep frustrations. My desire to proclaim and communicate the Gospel was never fully realized due to my inability to speak Spanish. During the first few days of my trip, my heart was broken over the lack of Gospel conversations, and I put pressure on myself and others to deliver that message. If we weren't able to do it, how would they hear and believe?



But God humbled my heart. How prideful I was to think that we were the only way for people to hear the marvelous message of the Savior Jesus Christ, come to redeem God's people back to him.

God allowed me to see how present He really is through the death of 15-year-old Jesús, a boy who suffered for years with muscular dystrophy. His life ended abruptly, and his loss filled us all



with a mourning that humans weren't originally created to know. However, I found myself surrounded by grieving people who chose to praise God in a time of hurt, to cling to His promises despite the pain, and to believe that

through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, there is hope that defeats our sin. They were filled with a joy that can only be obtained by faith in the saving work of Jesus Christ. How beautiful it was to see a people crying out to God in song and praising him for the hope we have through Jesus Christ.

God is on the move! He's calling us to go forth and proclaim profound truth, to love His people, and to cling to His sweet promises of a restored relationship with Him through Jesus Christ. He calls us to worship Him now as we bear the joys and hurts of this broken world with the hope of an eternity of worshipping him. Praise Him!

## Lessons Learned

by Melissa Poling

For our family of four, this was our first mission trip. Our kids are 14 and 11 years old, and one of our thoughts early on was that this trip



would be good for them. God quickly and gently helped us realize that it would be good for ALL of us. Making the decision to go was a step of faith. While there, with distractions removed, our hearts were happy to serve in a variety of ways – ways we felt comfortable and in other ways, where there was a need – even if it was outside our comfort zones. At a planning meeting, we heard all the different needs for Vacation Bible School. While I was trying to decide which roles to encourage my boys to sign up for, my oldest raised his hand unprompted to teach the memory verse on the first day! My youngest eagerly volunteered to help with games! They just did what God had



called them to do. The Lord loves it when we serve Him by serving others. It felt good to know that I was doing something pleasing to God. I was in His will.

He blessed our motivations to serve Him by giving us positive interactions with the people there. We asked if we could visit a school, not really knowing what that would look like. Through a team effort between SHIP staff, interns, and team members, we were able to share the Gospel in Spanish to 18 different classrooms!

At one point on the trip, one of the teenage boys from the SHIP neighborhood pulled a chair up beside

me. Earlier in the week, we had interacted a little – mainly while I watched my kids playing soccer with him. But this day was different. “Robert” seemed to just want to talk, and my boys weren’t around. I had an idea – I looked around and found a bilingual Bible. I wanted to share some of my favorite verses, and I wanted to make sure he understood them. I found a

couple of my favorites, read them in English and then pointed to the words in Spanish and asked him to read them out loud. After a few nods and smiles, I stumbled onto Ephesians 1:16. I was able to communicate to Robert, with the help of the translation on the pages before me, that I was thankful for him and would remember him in my prayers. God provided a creative way for me to get past the language barrier to have a spiritual conversation. The lesson for me in this moment was that even with a language barrier, God provides a way. Am I willing to have spiritual conversations with those right here at home, with no language barrier to overcome? Do I trust Him to provide the words?

I want to live every day and every hour in a way that puts God first. I want to challenge myself every day to put the distractions aside and show compassion to those around me, look for opportunities to turn conversations toward Him, and serve Him by serving others. Our week in El Salvador was spent on things that matter... relationships, talking about Jesus, serving others. I had to go to another country to grow, to be obedient – and to learn the habit of serving Him daily.

## Demonstrating God’s Love

by Kirsten Bynum

What a culture shock! Being from the USA, I know that the general public doesn’t necessarily live lavishly, but they live quite comfortably. Upon arriving in El Salvador, the need in this country was apparent. Old worn vehicles, shack-like houses, and other signs of poverty were



evident. Even shack-like houses were more than some people could afford.

One of the tasks of our mission trip was to build a house for a family who was currently without one. The recipient’s name was Paola, and she has six children. The house we were building her was far from American standards. It basically consisted of a wood frame surrounded by sheets of tin and a tin roof. It also had a door and two windows. Nothing special to any of us, but it’s a blessing for Paola.

During construction of the house, Paola’s selflessness was showcased. Paola and I conversed daily with small talk and broken Spanish on my end. Through these conversations, we formed a friendship. What stood out to me though, was her willingness to help and give to us. The first day, she actively tried to assist



us, holding boards that we were cutting in an attempt to take part in building her home rather than watching us do it all for her. Another day, she brought us fruit that she had picked. Although she and her family don’t have much, Paola was generous with what she had. What she lacked materially, she made up for in her selflessness and love for others.

When we turned Paola’s home over to her and dedicated it, she pulled me aside. With tears in her eyes, she gave me a hug. She was so grateful for this gift of shelter for her family. The new house certainly didn’t meet our American standard of

living, but to Paola, it was so much more than a house – it was a demonstration of God’s love for her, and she was thankful.

This experience taught me to be grateful for what I have. No matter the circumstances or what might go wrong in life, there’s no excuse not to show God’s love to others.

## Adding Extra to the Ordinary

by Thomas & Glynna Ratliff

SHIP is serving the Lord in El Salvador by building relationships, serving others, spreading the Gospel, and making disciples. They teach and train men, women, and children in the community, thereby helping these families and building lasting relationships with them.

Because of this, SHIP is well respected and loved throughout the community. People in the community want to hear what SHIP

has to say about God and Jesus. They want to hear the Gospel and are very receptive to it! Most days we were there, the SHIP facility was open to the community for VBS, Bible studies, job training, etc. I (Thomas) was always gone during the day (working on a house in



the community), but one evening while I was at the SHIP facility, we had over 100 people from the community come to a praise and worship service and heard the Gospel message!

SHIP also empowers the numerous mission team members who come to serve in this mission field. God uses SHIP to develop their spiritual gifts and talents by allowing them to teach God's word to men, women, and children, lead Bible studies, lead praise and worship services, share their testimony, preach a sermon, teach sporting events, organize soccer tournaments, train men and women in multiple job skills, teach at the public schools, lead devotionals, and build houses. It's pretty amazing to watch God use team members' gifts and talents to be His hands and feet and to serve others. God gets the glory, and we are blessed with the joy of serving a mighty God!

SHIP is the true essence of a "light" on a hill (or in their case, a mountain) that shines brightly and never goes out! SHIP offers those around them love,

security, hope, and joy even amid their circumstances! For those who accept Christ's invitation for salvation, they exemplify a joy that puts me to shame!

Each evening, SHIP extended invitations to a couple of neighborhood families to come and share a meal with all of us at SHIP's facility. SHIP had helped these families by building them a house or sponsored their children to attend a private Christian school. These families always showed up with a huge smile on their faces and a twinkle

in their eyes! That is the joy of the Lord!

To quote the author of *The Circle Maker*, Mark Batterson, SHIP is "slapping eviction notices on the doors once ruled by satan and opening the doors for Jesus to move in. And if God can get enough people in an area to reject the ruler-ship and the dominion of satan with humility, brokenness, and in repentant intercession, then God will move in!"

SHIP has become exceptional at the ordinary things of life like feeding the hungry, building shelter to protect them, digging a life-giving water well, tutoring children, providing clothing, and sharing God's love. And God keeps adding the extra to their ordinary.

## A Much Better Plan

by Philip Mann

It's hard to explain how much spending two weeks in the most beautiful corner of the world meant to me this summer.

When I signed up to come back for my third mission trip with SHIP, I was expecting a good trip with good people, good food, and hard work. If I'm completely honest, I expected this trip to be much like my first two trips: glad I came and glad to go home at the end of the week. A good experience, but nothing life changing.

God had different plans though. A much better plan. As Proverbs 19:21 says, man has many ideas for his life, but God's purposes are established forever. Being volunteered to help with and subsequently lead VBS led to the best experiences of the trip. While originally motivated serving Jesus in every task, a



new motivation quickly arose alongside. I fell in love with the men, women, and children who joyfully welcomed me into their lives.

I made it a point to learn as many names as possible in El Salvador to remember in my prayers. In addition to my 30-something fellow SHIP trippers, I wrote down 51 names of people from the neighborhood, orphanage, and church. That doesn't even include many others whom I failed to remember or never had a chance to ask. It wouldn't surprise me if God used over 100 people to love me as one of His children, as part of His family.



We are all broken and experience many troubles, as our lives are marred by sin. We usually try to do our best but often fail. Emotions, illnesses, and weary bodies slow us down and cause us to turn against each other. But despite all that, we have a Savior from whose love NOTHING can separate us (Romans 8:38-39).

Although broken, I've never lost my desire to see others come to know Jesus as I know Him: Perfect Father, Perfect Savior. If it's not already obvious, these two weeks changed me. It was amazing living life with the SHIP community, and I'm confident this won't be my last trip.

The send-off I received before I left for the airport was unexpected and caused me both great joy and great sorrow. The joy of someone who truly belongs, followed by the sorrow of leaving a place, a home. Words can't express my gratitude for SHIP and its mission. None of us would have been there otherwise. Fantastic people, wonderful food, joy-filled work, and a God who can accomplish anything. He who began a good work in us will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

## Accept No Substitutes

by Chris Ross



"The great enemy of the life of faith in God is not sin, but the good which is not good enough. The good is always the enemy of the best." – Oswald Chambers

I love the USA. I'm thankful for our freedoms and the opportunities offered to us here. Recently, my wife Kimberly and I experienced the thrill of taking ownership of our own business, a career change that widened our financial horizons. We immediately began to dream of new possibilities for our future and our children's futures as a result.

It's easy to be tricked into thinking the main project of our life is to arrange things so that our brief sojourn here is as enjoyable and comfortable as possible, before we depart (hopefully quickly and painlessly) into the hereafter. This dream is a very attractive one, which is why it poses such a threat to our spiritual lives. It is good, but not good enough. It can subtly take the place of the *best* to which our Lord calls us – an empty, saccharine substitute for the abundant life Jesus said he would give his followers.

Our family spent a week serving with SHIP in El Salvador this summer, and the experience reminded me what being a disciple of Christ means. In a country with scars left from twelve years of civil war and an ongoing gang epidemic, where the average income is 1/7 of that in America, I was reminded of how God so loved the world (John 3:16), of the sacrifice he was willing to make for us, and of how little



that has to do with my own dreams of financial security.

Working with our team alongside the SHIP staff and interns, I saw firsthand how grateful people in the community were for SHIP's presence there. I thought of all the other communities in El Salvador who didn't have an amazing ministry like this one to show them God's love, and I was reminded that the harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few (Luke 10:2). I was also reminded that real love reaches out past our inner circle of family and friends, to the foreigner, the orphan, the widow, and even the enemy. Love is fluent in every language.

Even though we stayed very busy during our week with SHIP – sharing our testimonies, helping with VBS, speaking to local schoolchildren, repairing a home – I wouldn't say we made a huge impact on El Salvador. We were part of something larger and more enduring, for sure, but the real impact happened *in us*. In El Salvador, our eyes were opened again to the gospel-centered life, the very *best* life there is.

## God Never Fails

by Amanda Rivera

When my daughter and I first looked into going on a mission trip to El Salvador with SHIP, we had so many questions and very few answers. I just didn't know what to expect. I worried about safety and getting sick. I knew God had a plan because He was faithful in providing us with the funds to go. I also had faith in God to know it was going to be a good experience. This mission trip

wasn't just a good experience, it was an amazing experience! God never fails! I was amazed with all the things we did. I'm not the type to go out and hand out pamphlets; I've always been the type who wants to show God's love.

SHIP has invested time and money into ministering

to its Salvadoran neighborhood. They help women learn business skills so they can provide for their families. With the support of their donors, SHIP sends kids to private school and even universities. When SHIP sees a need, they not only pray, but they help meet the need. One night, we had an evangelistic outreach



service and fed 136 people from the neighborhood. We built a house in two days for a family of five. I know that I alone cannot feed all the hungry and shelter all the homeless, but knowing I helped feed some of the hungry and helped build a shelter that created a home for a family is one of the most rewarding experiences I have ever been

a part of. The emotions we felt when the family was expressing their thankfulness for their new house gave us chills. It was such a privilege, with God's help, to play a part in building a home for this family.

The week we spent in El Salvador was non-stop. In addition to the house we built, we also dug about

half the length of ditches needed to install a septic system in another house. We hosted VBS for the neighborhood kids and also had women's and men's Bible studies. Some rebuilt shelves in the laundry room. Others taped, floated, and painted the great room. We hosted a soccer tournament with a devotion time and snacks for the kids. We also sorted boxes of donated clothes that local women can purchase at a very low price in the SHIP Shop and sell, and organized the electrical and plumbing rooms. We helped change the brake cylinder and master cylinder on the SHIP van and helped build 2 tables for the kitchen. Whew!

By helping change the lives of families in El Salvador, our lives were forever changed!



## 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."*

## Help Wanted!

SHIP's work in El Salvador continues to grow at an amazing pace. This growth means we need HELP! Currently we are recruiting an experienced missionary couple, passionate about reaching and discipling people for Jesus, fluent in Spanish, familiar with the culture of Central/South America, and able to oversee a variety of projects and programs. Housing and vehicle furnished.



SHIP is also looking for a "mom" for the young women's transition home. She will need to be able to speak Spanish, disciple young women in a home environment, set goals and boundaries, and be a loving, nurturing, and consistent mom. Duties would also include hosting Bible studies for the young women in the neighborhood. Housing and vehicle furnished.

Also needed is a "coach" for the young men, discipling them, engaging them in sports and other activities, conducting Bible studies, and reaching out to the young men in the neighborhood, encouraging them to

pursue godly lives. Housing and vehicle furnished.

If you are interested or know of anyone who might be interested in helping SHIP change lives in El Salvador, please contact SHIP at 979.260.7447 or [contact@shipinternational.org](mailto:contact@shipinternational.org).

