

Dear Friends of SHIP,

Having just celebrated God's goodness to us at Thanksgiving and now approaching the joyful celebration of Jesus' birth, we would like to share more of what we see God is doing in El Salvador.

When we finished building the orphanage and learning center in March 2011 and the children moved into their new home, we thought our work would soon be finished there. But as it sometimes happens, God had other plans, and He expanded our vision. We began to see the needs outside the orphanage walls.

We met many of the kids in the neighborhood while we worked on the orphanage. Back then, they were more of a nuisance than a mission field. We had to watch them constantly since we heard that they'd "steal you blind." And they probably did take a few things. But after we moved in, we realized that they were our next mission. They were still stealing, but this time, they were stealing our hearts.

God's plan was that we reach the neighborhood kids and their families. On our street, there are about 45 kids, all of whom live in poverty.

We started our ministry to the neighborhood by painting several of their houses. It gave them a sense of pride, and they then started cleaning up around their homes.

This last summer, our mission teams did a lot of work. One house in the neighborhood had only half a roof, and it was the rainy season. Our team tore off the old roof and replaced it. Because it was the rainy season, we invited the children from that home for a sleep-over. It was the first time they had ever experienced a shower, and they needed help to figure out how to turn it on. They camped out in the learning center and couldn't have been more excited. The next morning, about 6:00, I made breakfast for them and sent them off to school. We're sure they're still talking about spending the night in the fancy learning center!

The reason these children had never experienced a shower is because they took baths in their yard, in a little concrete trough – not exactly a private place. So, our teams also built a shower – two of them, in fact – so that two families would have a place to clean up in private.

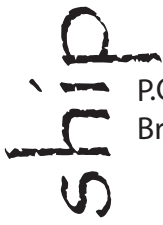
We also do some pretty odd things while we're in El Salvador, like

vaccinate the neighborhood dogs! The neighborhood children run around barefoot most of the time, and they pick up all kinds of diseases. So, we started treating the dogs for worms, and it has not only made their dogs healthier, but the kids are healthier, too.

From donations to the SHIP Resale Shop and other donors, we send shoes and clothes to El Salvador for these children. They work with us, and we keep a record of their hours. They can then "purchase" shoes and clothes, toothpaste and toothbrushes, and shampoo, using the hours they have worked. It gives them a hand up and not a hand out.

We recently planted 2,100 coffee trees on the property, and it's providing jobs for some of the people in the neighborhood. In the future, the coffee production will provide a source of income for the orphanage and for the neighbors who have invested their time in the project.

The facility that SHIP was able to build is beautiful. It's one of the nicest facilities in El Salvador. But we've also been blessed with a house down the street that was donated for our use by Dr. Flores. He's a medical doctor, who secretly watched us work for two



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or three years. He decided that SHIP was in it for the long haul and offered his house so that we could use it to teach English to the neighbors. But our main goal there will always be to teach the children about Jesus Christ.

SHIP has a number of things going on here in the States and in El Salvador:

- Our SHIP Resale Shop is located at 2905 Cavitt in Bryan. We receive donations of clothing, household items, furniture, computers, etc. We sell the items at reasonable prices and take a lot of the donations of shoes and clothing to El Salvador. We're also able to give away clothing, shoes, and furniture to local people in need. Our store manager, Damiana Ramos, has a soft but discerning heart, and she recognizes people who are in need. She's dressed needy children for school and also supplied furniture for families who were sleeping on the floor.
- SHIP is sending seven children from our neighborhood to Christian School beginning in January. In El Salvador, free public schooling goes through 7th grade, and unless the family can afford to send them, it's the end of education for many children. While I was in El Salvador recently, I met with the mothers to see if they were interested and would

support their children continuing in school. If I had any doubt that these mothers – like mothers everywhere – want their children to have this opportunity, my doubts were quickly erased. Their excitement was matched by their tears of joy and relief, knowing that their children had a chance to have a better life. The children are excited and eager to learn.

Sending these children to Christian School is an expensive undertaking. It costs about \$700 per student per year with books, uniforms, tuition, and transportation. Without an education, there's really not much hope, but SHIP is there to build hope and, in turn, improve the quality of life in our new neighborhood.

To help the 35 children who currently live at the orphanage and also the children in the neighborhood, SHIP has hired tutors. The neighborhood children are behind in school, so the SHIP learning center will be open every day to help them excel – and to tell them more about Jesus.

- SHIP, with the help of the Rotary Club of Aggieland, is drilling a water well. It will provide a constant source of quality water not only for the orphanage, but also for the neighborhood.

- Our plans are to build a work center nearby so mothers in the neighborhood can work but also be close and available for their children. It will help them be able to provide for their families.

We have so much to be thankful for this year, and a large part of what we're thankful for is approximately 80 children in El Salvador. I'm also grateful that many of these young people are coming to know the Lord, along with their parents.

We're also thankful for each of you and your interest in the work in El Salvador. Whether you've been one of our prayer warriors, gone on a mission trip to the orphanage, and/or contributed financially, we thank you for the difference you're making in the lives of these children and their families – not just for their physical needs but more importantly for their spiritual needs.

As you pray about end-of-the-year donations, we ask that you consider giving to the work being done through SHIP in El Salvador. We sincerely appreciate your financial assistance to keep this work moving forward.

Wishing you and yours a blessed Christmas season!

Robert Horton
President, SHIP