



God's Love and Hope

Life in an orphanage can seem kind of grim, kind of dead-end. Not so at the SHIP orphanage in El Salvador. Life is good, love is abundant, and there is hope.

After a 2008 summer mission trip to El Salvador, one of the team members came home with her own mission: To send the four high school graduates on to the university. She found sponsors for these four, David, Loyda, Gaby, and Richard. They've been at the university for a year now; and scattered throughout the newsletter, you'll find their thoughts about the opportunity that they have been given.

You'll see that, regardless of who you are or where you live, God loves and cares about you individually; and with Him, there's always hope.

Loyda

First thing, I give thanks to God for the opportunity to study and for the people that make this dream a reality. The university is an opportunity that very few have, but thanks to God we have this opportunity. In the beginning, it was difficult to adapt to this new level, but I made adjustments and am trying to make good grades. As



they say: "All good things cost"; realizing this has helped me to be a prepared person because the future is uncertain. Psychology is very interesting and important, but at the same time very challenging! With the help of God I know I will go on achieving.

Gaby

Hi, I hope that the Lord is pouring rich and abundant blessings into your lives! I am



glad to be able to study in the university since it is a great opportunity to develop myself in life. It is an especially joyful thing for me because it has not been easy to come this far. There were negative thoughts of whether I should continue to study or to give up, but God has been faithful to me and has given me that strength to continue ahead. Also, my (orphanage) parents always gave me courage to fight for my dreams. This is an opportunity that many people desire, but God in His mercy has chosen me, and I am super grateful! I have the responsibility to study hard and do well in school, but above all to learn and be better each day.



"Let us not love with words or tongue, but with actions and in truth."

1 John 3:18

"May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else."

1 Thess. 3:12



On the cover: Erin Cleveland, a Senior at Texas A&M, created this heart on canvas after going to El Salvador last Spring Break. It will hang in the new orphanage.

Josh Wesley: Hole-digger, Hug-giver

This past year, I have been to El Salvador twice. In the spring, I heard about an organization called SHIP, Shelter the Homeless International Projects, that was taking a team to work in an orphanage in Central America. I applied to go on the trip and after a few short meetings with the team and many questions from my parents, found myself on a plane headed to San Salvador. Our team was a wonderful mix of people, from college students to retirees, creating an interesting dynamic. It was a rewarding experience to work alongside people from different walks in life but with a similar passion to help others in the name of Jesus.

When we first arrived at the orphanage, it was hard to fathom what we were witnessing. Thirty-six children were living in a 1500 square foot cinder block building without fans, air conditioning, hot water, or reliable water for that matter. SHIP had recently bought twelve acres of land outside of the city with hopes of building a much larger orphanage, which could easily house all of these children and their brothers and sisters who still had nowhere to live.

During our week in El Salvador, we spent our mornings and afternoons at the new property clearing land in preparation for construction. While construction was one goal of the trip, the most rewarding time was in the evenings when we returned to the orphanage and spent time with the kids. We colored pictures, played soccer (poorly), gave hundreds of piggyback rides, and gave each child as much attention as possible. These children were the reason we went.

Christ loves these kids and they need Him just like we do. Hopefully through our actions, meager Spanish and poor soccer abilities, we were able to share the love of Christ.

At the end of the week, I knew that I wanted to go back. Before we left, several team members and I began planning our return trip in the summer. The Lord provided funds and time, and I was able to spend the month of July living at the orphanage with six other students.

God also provided SHIP with the resources to begin construction on the new facility and when we arrived, construction was well under way and we found plenty to do at the worksite. We chopped down countless trees, dug a ten-foot by twelve-foot by ten-foot hole for a septic tank, dug several water drainage trenches and helped the construction crew with whatever they needed. It was tiring work, but every evening as I returned to see the kids I had come to know so well, I was reminded why God had placed me there.

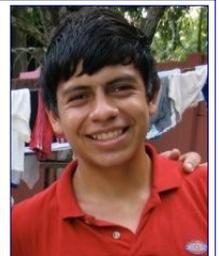
While my summer in El Salvador was one of the most challenging experiences of my life, both physically and spiritually, I would go back without a second thought. I learned and grew in so many ways and still cannot grasp the entire effect this trip had on my life.

Two people who were radically inspiring to me are Jhonny and Elena, the couple who started and still run the orphanage. They exhibit faith, not only with their words (which I couldn't understand) but also by their actions. For example, in the common area of the orphan-

age, there is an old, tattered hammock, faded and falling apart, in desperate need of retirement. The couple had saved up money, purchased a new hammock and were in the process of hanging it up when they heard that a member of their church had injured his back. Due to his injury, he was unable to sleep in a bed and needed a hammock to get some rest. Without a second thought, Jhonny and Elena took their brand new hammock down without ever using it and gave it to the man. This is just a small example of the trust and generosity they exhibited with their lives. It was difficult for me to fathom the faith they have to run this orphanage, with little consistent resources or funds. God has blessed them for their faith and is using them to bless others, including myself.

Josh Wesley is a Senior Nutrition Major at Texas A&M University. He will be attending the Texas Tech School of Medicine in the Fall.

Richard



Well, I just want to say that in college I feel

great and thank God I'm improving. I know that He will help me, and I like architecture very much! Right now I am doing pretty well, and I'm confident that I will continue to improve because I do like it so much. I want to be a good architect and to serve God in that way.

Thank you

SHIP thanks the following people for their generous gifts to SHIP:

- Aggieland Rotary of Bryan College Station—\$5,000 grant will be used to purchase school uniforms, shoes, books and supplies for the children. And they will also help purchase fresh fruits and vegetables for the next year.
- Friendship Sunday School Class at Central Baptist Church—Cookware, toiletries, and 40 sets of bedding for the new orphanage!
- The Bridge Bible Study—20 sets of sheets.
- The Carey Family—40 pair of brand new New Balance sport shoes for the children

David

For me to be able to go to the university is a great opportunity that I know many do not have, but God in His mercy has given it to me. Studying to be a lawyer is an opportunity to serve the church and the orphanage, helping in different ways. I am grateful to God because He has a purpose for me. In offering me this opportunity He has shown me that He has a plan for me, and that I also have a responsibility to give thanks to God for the people that He has placed on my path, to make His plans a reality in my life.



UPCOMING EVENTS

SPRING BREAK mission trip to El Salvador: March 13-20, 2010. Projects include painting the new building and working with the children. Cost: \$ 600 + airfare

FUNDRAISER coming soon!
Please keep an eye out for information about our SHIP Fundraiser

SUMMER trip to El Salvador
We will be taking a one-week trip to El Salvador during the summer. There are also opportunities for extended mission opportunities

If you would like more information or to sign-up for any of these great upcoming events with SHIP, please contact Maegen Thomas at maegen2010@yahoo.com!!

STATE OF THE BUILDING REPORT

SHIP began construction on the new El Salvador orphanage last May. It is an extremely gratifying experience to see the walls rising out of the jungle and know that soon children who have come from abuse, neglect, and abject poverty, will be living in the comfort and safety of the new buildings.

At this writing all walls are standing and some of the roofing has begun. But much still needs to be done before the dream can be realized.

As with any project, the greatest need right now is funding. SHIP needs \$150,000 to complete the work. Please prayerfully consider how you can partner with SHIP to help these children.

SHIP is incorporated in the State of Texas as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

Your contributions—however large or small—are fully tax deductible for federal income tax purposes.



In a cost saving measure, SHIP moved out of its old location. This move allows us to put those funds to better use elsewhere—like El Salvador! You can still easily contact us at... ☎979-260-7447 ✉contact@shipinternational.org



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