

# ships

## SUMMER 2023



### *Smiles that capture our hearts*

This picture gets us every time. That sweet little guy with the gold fringe sombrero seems to be looking right at you. You can't not be taken in by his smile.

September 2023 marks nineteen years of SHIP International. Nineteen years of building homes, classrooms, and relationships.

Those nineteen years started with smiles just like the one in the picture above—the kind of excitement and potential you just can't look away from. The sort of look that lets you know that God meant for you to see it and to be moved to act.

So, for nineteen years, we've been acting on that prodding from God, listening for His voice as He guides us to move in ways we

never dreamed—to start a school that will start the next generation off on a path that can give the hope and future that God designed for them; to grow Bible studies that encourage people of all ages to grow in faith; to keep looking for ways that we can bless the people we're blessed to work with.

Nineteen years ago, we were captivated by the smiles of the children we met in El Salvador. We met them where they lived and knew that God was calling us to help.

As you read through this season's newsletter, you might find yourself similarly captivated. If you're feeling the call to become a part of this story, check out this newsletter's section about sponsorSHIP or think about joining us on a SHIP Trip.



# SUMMER HAPPENINGS



**Nineteen girls.** When we put pen to paper to start planning our 2023 quinceañera, that's the number we came up with. We hadn't been able to have a quinceañera since 2018, and since that time a lot of young ladies had turned 15. We wondered if maybe some of the girls would feel a little too grown up for a quinceañera and wouldn't want to participate.

But, no. Who doesn't want to feel celebrated? Who wouldn't want to feel a little special for just one day?

So we started planning a quinceañera for nineteen girls. The best part of our plan was asking our Luz de Jesús teachers to handle most of the planning. What we envisioned wasn't just a party; it needed to be something more. We wanted an event that acknowledged that our nineteen girls are turning into

## *A quinceañera to remember*

nineteen young ladies and captured all the joy, uncertainty, and responsibility that comes with that growth.

That is just what the evening was. It was a beautiful evening that came after weeks of preparation through Bible studies for the girls. Their families and community witnessed their beauty, but they also listened as the girls shared their favorite Bible verses, and they made promises to help these nineteen young women grow in their faith.

We celebrated the passing of time as the girls grow older. We celebrated who they are and *whose* they are, and we showed them how much we love them and how deeply they are loved by God.

## *The Lord himself goes before you...*

Mark your calendar for **Thursday, October 26**. Our annual luncheon will be here soon! We can't wait to see you there and tell you all the wonderful new things God is doing in El Salvador.

### **Want to join us for lunch? Here's how:**

Register at [shipinternational.org/fundraiser](http://shipinternational.org/fundraiser), call us at 979.260.7447, or email [contact@shipinternational.org](mailto:contact@shipinternational.org). There's no cost to attend the event.

If you're interested in **underwriting** the event, contact us via phone or email.

**You can also host a table at no cost.** We just ask that you fill a table with people who will be interested in SHIP's work. If you're interested in being a table host, email [contact@shipinternational.org](mailto:contact@shipinternational.org).

**October 26, noon-1 p.m.**

**College Station Hilton, 801 University Drive East, College Station, Texas**

## **ANNUAL LUNCHEON**





## The Three Princesses

Where did the time go? These are the kinds of photos that remind you that the days are long but the years are short. One day they're little girls playing "Queen of the Mountain," and the next they're young ladies putting on formal gowns and readying for their quinceañera.

No matter how big and grown up these three get, they will always be "The Three Princesses" to us. We will always remember them just like they are in the photo below—fearless and strong and tiny, surveying their kingdom from the top of a mountain of gravel at our property in El Salvador.

We've known these three girls—Yancy, Wanda, and Marcella—since they were even littler than they are in that picture. We've played cards with them, worked with them, and gotten to see them grow up (a little more quickly than we'd like them to). The blessing of working in the same area for so many years is that we get to be a part of lives and see the local kids grow up.

This year, the three of them celebrated turning 15 as part of our quinceañera. After they put on their formal gowns, did their hair, and put on a little makeup (not too much, because they don't need it), they really did look like princesses.

A few weeks before the quinceañera, we were in El Salvador with more dresses and shoes for the girls to try on. We got to see these three, along with our 16 other quinceañera girls, transform into princesses before our eyes.

This transformation felt like a physical manifestation of an unseen truth. These girls, whether dressed in gowns or wearing work gloves, are princesses. They are daughters of the King. Our sweet and sometimes fiery girls, from an impoverished area in the smallest Central American country, are seen, known, and loved by God.

We are just blessed to be a small part of their story and to keep pointing them back to their heavenly Father and reminding them that they are worth more than they will ever know.



## New Trip Dates

Mark your calendars! Save the date!  
The 2024 SHIP trip dates have been set!

Our trips will give you an opportunity to serve, work, and grow in new ways. We love taking first-timers and return trippers alike to share the love of Jesus in El Salvador.

**Basic Info:** The SHIP Trip cost is \$850 + airfare. That includes all transportation in El Salvador, food, lodging, and an excursion. Find out more information at [shipinternational.org](http://shipinternational.org).

2024 SHIP Trip Dates:

March 9-15	June 1-7	July 13-19	September 7-13
	June 8-14	July 20-26	

## TAKE A SHIP TRIP







## Celebrating

by Cameron Crisp, July 2023 SHIP Tripper

Psalm 145 speaks of the greatness and majesty and faithfulness of the Lord. He is gracious, merciful, and good. He is glorious, powerful, and eternal. He is loving, righteous, and near to us. This psalm also urges us to share these truths with those around us. "One generation shall commend your works to another, and shall declare your mighty acts" (Ps 145:4). Throughout the week in El Salvador, it was easy to echo this psalm in everything our group saw and heard and experienced. The Lord's goodness was evident all over.

God has used SHIP in an amazing way to build physical buildings and spaces that allow for the spiritual building of hearts and souls, starting with young children. SHIP's Christian school, Colegio La Luz de Jesús, generates opportunities to share the love of Jesus with kids in pre-K through third grade (with a new grade being added each year). Each day, if you're lucky to wake up early enough, you can greet the kids entering school at 7am with a big hug. Not much can top getting tons of hugs in the span of 5 minutes! It's amazing to see how happy these children are to be at school with their friends, learning about Jesus. Many of them have very little, yet they exude so much joy and happiness. This was a welcomed challenge: to have a heart posture of gratitude no matter our circumstances.

Many of these children also have older brothers and sisters. SHIP has created spaces for these kids to gather and hold Bible studies for young men and young women. It was encouraging to see young adults leading others to deeply consider the ways of God. It was great to see them have a safe space to discuss openly and honestly. I pray these studies continue and that these brothers and sisters can grow in their love and knowledge of the Lord. And of course, what's a Bible study in El Salvador without some fútbol afterwards! That's when the Americans were taken to school!

Next are the families and communities. SHIP has done an awesome job at reaching families and the community at large to share the message of the gospel of Christ. School assemblies are a great way to speak love to the parents (and of course a bonus is seeing the cutest little children share presentations and songs on their schoolwork). Community outreach nights mean everyone is invited to hear and experience the love and fellowship found in Christ.

These nights are full of worship, and worship we did! The loud music, the praying, and preaching were so fun to experience, but the greatest part was seeing the authentic unashamed genuine worship on each person's face. I was challenged to reflect on my own worship, and how so often I can go through the motions and miss what I'm actually doing.

SHIP has also created housing for those in need. Whether it be the teachers working at the school, young college students, or those seeking refuge from awful situations. My heart breaks for some of the situations you hear families going through, but I thank God that SHIP has a presence there and is seeking to shelter and provide safety for those in need. Ultimately though, SHIP is laying seeds for an eternal safety only found through Christ, and I pray every person coming through their doors can find that.

Speaking of doors, our team hung a few of them, which was an unexpectedly sanctifying process. SHIP is in the middle of finishing out a new building that will allow the school to continue expanding. These new classrooms needed doors, windows, lighting, paint, flooring, etc. Our team got to help in this construction work. I personally enjoy this kind of work and love being able to see visible progress being made each day. My natural tendency would be to work hard and fast to get as much accomplished as possible. Yet each day, I was reminded of the not so visible yet more important work being done, the building of relationships with people. I was thankful that amidst busy workdays, we took breaks to attend assemblies and Bible studies to remind us of our ultimate and eternal goal of making disciples.

God's goodness truly is evident. It is heard in the children singing praise songs, seen on the faces of so many worshippers, experienced as new believers come to faith. God's goodness is seen in the lush green jungle landscape with towering mango trees, heard in the heavy rainfall on tin roofs, felt in the quaking of the earth on a 3rd story balcony. God's goodness is seen in his provision, in his protection, in the hard work of physical and spiritual labor. God's goodness is even seen in the contagious laughter of locals after having witnessed multiple gringos sliding down a steep water slide resulting in the biggest of splashes. God's goodness is evident, let us continue to declare it to one another, and to all the nations.

*This summer wasn't Cameron's first trip to El Salvador, but it was the first time he'd been in almost thirteen years. Cameron and his wife, Maegen, met on a spring break SHIP Trip in 2009. They have three sweet kids and attend Central Church in Bryan.*



## sponsorSHIP

In the picture to the right, Suzy Childers helps Denyce put on her necklace in preparation for the quinceañera in June. It was a special moment for Denyce and her family and extra sweet that Suzy could be there to show her love and support! This is one example of the many opportunities that sponsors have to connect with their sponsorSHIP student.

If you aren't currently involved in our sponsorSHIP program, would you consider partnering with us? It is an incredibly personal way to be involved with our organization and provides an opportunity for you to connect directly with the neighbors that we serve.

There are 3 easy steps to get involved!

1. CONNECT with a student
2. COMMIT to provide monthly financial support
3. CHANGE lives

You will be encouraged by the relationship you build with your sponsored student!



**DYLAN C.**

Kinder-4  
July 2, 2018

We can't say enough about this little guy. **Dylan** is personality plus and is the little brother of a family of Luz de Jesús students. As the little brother, he's been going to every school event he can, even before he was a student. He brings fun wherever he goes.

**Alexia** is a sweetheart, and if you want to know what's happening in the Kinder-4 class, she's the one to ask. She loves participating in the children's ministry at her church and loves to make her classmates feel included in class activities at school.

**ALEXIA H.**

Kinder-4  
September 10, 2018



SPONSOR NOW

To sponsor one of these students or to view more students waiting for sponsorship, scan the QR code or visit us at [shipinternational.org/sponsor](http://shipinternational.org/sponsor)

SPONSOR

**\$35/mo**



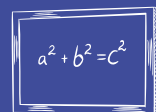
- lets you exchange letters with your sponsored child
- provides your child's school supplies and books

**\$50/mo**



- lets you exchange letters with your sponsored child
- provides your child's school supplies and books
- provides your child's tutoring

**\$100/mo**



- lets you exchange letters with your sponsored child
- provides your child's school supplies and books
- provides your child's tutoring
- pays your child's tuition





*Gospel message led by Arturo Peña, Hispanic Minister at Central Church in Bryan, Texas.*

## *What we did on our summer vacation*

We've all heard the term, "a comedy of errors." Somehow it's nearly impossible to see the comedy when you're in the middle of all the errors. That's pretty much what this summer felt like.

If anything could go wrong, it was going to go wrong.

We had canceled and delayed flights, team members arriving at all different times and sometimes from different cities than they'd originally scheduled to fly from. We had pounds of food confiscated and lost power tools in transit. Part of our wall and its attached walkway collapsed due to heavy downpours in El Salvador, and a few of our rooms took on rain due to holes in our roof.

Eventually, we would just look at each other and laugh, wondering what else could go wrong. And, to be honest, more negative stuff continued to happen.

But, that is only part of the story of SHIP's 2023 summer season. That comedy of errors isn't even the main part of the story. The main story is that God showed us how much good He can do, even in the midst of so much bad.

The things that needed to be fixed (the roof, the wall, and walkway) are things that can be fixed. The lost food was devastating, but it made us get creative and find

new, local food sources in El Salvador. The delayed and canceled flights were a logistical nightmare, but *eventually* we got all of our team members. Even better, *eventually*, our team members got all of their luggage.

And when those team members were finally in El Salvador (and had clothes to wear), the amount of work they got done was unbelievable. In just four weeks we:

- laid flooring in almost all of our second-floor classrooms;
- put on a quinceañera for nineteen young ladies and hosted their families for dinner;
- installed toilets in the classroom building bathrooms, laid flooring in them, and built bathroom stalls;
- unloaded a 40' container of supplies;
- led Bible studies for all ages;
- hosted three outreach services, reaching hundreds of our neighbors, and presented a Gospel message at our school's annual Sports Day; and
- saw several of our neighbors and about twenty of our students come to know Christ.

If we learned anything this summer (and we hope we did), it's that the difficulties aren't the whole story. They're just the part we have to fight through to see what God will do if we just stay the course.