

A Childhope Christmas

On January 1, 2017, **Latin America ChildCare** became **Childhope**. As part of the LACC Executive Leadership Team, we believe the new name more effectively communicates our mission to provide hope and transformation to poor children and youth in the Latin America and Caribbean region. For us, a Childhope Christmas symbolizes this mission from the perspective of the sponsor, the child or young person and ours as program coordinators.

If you are one of hundreds of **sponsors** of a child in Panama, your Christmas gift represents a personal connection with your child. Unfortunately, not all of our sponsors write to their children or send their child a birthday gift. But we make sure that every sponsored child receives a Christmas gift from their sponsor. We are so thankful to our sponsors that give a little extra to make this possible.

For the **child or young person**, a Childhope Christmas means that he or she will receive at least one gift for Christmas! It means that someone far away is thinking of them. The warm smiles and giggles are proof! We're reminded as we read and translate the children's thank you letters from Spanish into English, that each child's Christmas gift is received very personally. A repeated phrase in these letters is, "This is the gift that I really wanted, thank you!" Thank you, sponsor, for giving and making this personal, very significant connection possible.

For us as Childhope **coordinators**, Christmas means hours of work beginning in August, shopping for the perfect gift for each grade by gender. I (Sherry) pray for God's direction to lead me to the places where funds can be stretched to purchase the best, highest quality gift for each child, *as if he or she were my own*. God has been so faithful to orchestrate this process now for more than 20 years! It all ends in early December, hundreds of smiles later, when the last of the Christmas parties are celebrated.

Each year, in the middle of giving special gifts and receiving grateful smiles, something always seems to stand out as a new lesson for us to learn. After the Christmas party at the Las Mañanitas Good Shepherd School, we spent several minutes talking with Pastors Samuel and Mirtha Rangel and their son Samuel Jr. These dear friends were among the first pastors that we got to know as new missionaries in Panama. When we arrived to Panama in 1995 the school was in its sixth year of operation. Samuel Jr. attended the school from his first year. Today, Samuel serves as Administrator for the school, giving back to the school and a new generation of children.

In our conversation we discovered that there are now 12 students that are second generation at the school. The parents of these children attended the school in its first years, were touched by the gospel and now are keeping the tradition alive by sending their kids to same school. One of these 12 is Janeth's daughter, the little girl we sponsored for 11 years!

So, what does a Childhope Christmas really mean? It means that there are thousands of Childhope sponsors who faithfully give so that each child receives a special gift chosen just for him or her, reminding each one of God's special, personal love for them. To this blessed missionary couple, it means sharing God's love to needy children, now for multiple generations!

Thank you for helping us make a difference!

Rod and Sherry



Prayer Needs & Praise Reports
on the reverse side!

There's more on the reverse side... LARTC Construction... A Dream Come True!

LARTC Construction... A Dream Come True!

Monday, February 20th, we moved our offices into the new LARTC facilities. On Thursday, March 9th, 35 international leaders joined us for the dedication of the Phase 1 building. We have no words to describe the overwhelming satisfaction of seeing the Latin America Resource & Training Center rise... a dream come true!

We are so grateful for the 9,000 sq ft of administrative, classroom, production and library facilities we have and grateful to you and to the Lord for sacrificial giving and miracle provision. These new facilities are already helping us be more effective in our three-part vision to enable leaders, train teachers and provide resources. But as we told those gathered for the dedication, this is the beginning, not the end. There is so much work that remains. Following is a report on recent construction and future plans and challenges.

PORTLAND CHRISTIAN CENTER MAPS TEAM

A mixed team of 12 men, women and youth from Portland (OR) Christian Center (PCC) returned the end of March, giving two weeks to block the first floor of the Phase 2 housing building. In addition to a commercial kitchen, pantry, laundry and storage area, the work included 10 guestrooms, each with its own bathroom. (See the floor plan at the bottom of the right column)

Devotions and prayer each morning was a special time as the PCC team and Panamanians joined together in preparation for what the Lord had for us. The strong Panamanian crew worked alongside the PCC team, mixing mortar, cutting rebar and forming and pouring bond beams. This allowed the PCC team to focus on laying block. The team was able to complete more than three-quarters of the block work on the 10 guestrooms. The Panamanian team will continue

PRAYER NEEDS & PRAISE REPORTS

- Praise the Lord for the first floor blocking of the LARTC Phase 2 housing building by Portland Christian Center!
- Please pray for provision (offerings and teams) to finish work on the Phase 2 housing building. Work much be completed by the end of July.
- Praise the Lord for the excellent International Educational Leaders Dialogue that took place last month in Panama. Thirty-five leaders from 15 countries attended.
- Praise the Lord for the start of a new school year. We're awaiting registration reports, but we expect that the total number of students in the 36 schools will surpass 10,000 for the first time!
- Please pray for the more than 250 children who need a Childhope sponsor. If you can one of these, please visit: www.LACC4Hope.org.
- Praise the Lord for the 50,000 Bibles that have arrived to Houston, TX. Nearly 9,000 will be arriving to Panama soon for distribution to children in our schools. Thank you to all that gave to this worthy project.

for the next two weeks to finish the first-floor blocking.

Thank you Portland Christian Center MAPS Team for your hard work. You have been our anchor in this project and we couldn't do it without you! We hope to see you back next year! You can stay in the rooms you blocked this year!

[Note: This newsletter went to print during PCC's work on the Phase 2 building and we're not able to show all they accomplished in this newsletter. Please visit www.lartc.net and www.boyds.org for updated photos.]

JULY 2017 DEADLINE

The absolute priority we have right now is to finish the first floor of the two-story Phase 2 building by the end of July. Doing so will provide us with ten guestrooms for housing the 35-40 pastors and leaders who will be studying with us during the month of August.

A small "Strike Force" team, some friends and others from our home church, Calvary Christian Assembly in Seattle, will be with us in June to work on electrical for the Phase 2 building.

We will need a miracle to cover the anticipated \$75,000 expenses for the finish work for the Phase 2 building: floor tile, bathroom fixtures, cabinets, suspended ceiling, lighting, windows, doors, A/C work, furniture, water heaters, etc.

FALL 2017 AND YEAR 2018 PROJECTIONS

The Grove Church (Marysville, WA) will be with us in October. They will work on the second floor of the Phase 2 building, primarily blocking the perimeter. Before they arrive, we will need to have the roof completed.

With the perimeter blocking and roof completed, we will move on to construction of the Phase 3 Atrium building that connects the Phase 1 and Phase 2 buildings.

Please join us in "praying in" funds and teams for the LARTC. Please visit www.lartc.net and www.boyds.org for updated reports and information. And please help us at this critical time by sending your special offerings to:

Assemblies of God World Missions
LARTC Project 14295
1445 Boonville Ave.
Springfield, MO 65802

Thank you for standing with us and for being a part a long-time vision and dream finally coming true!

