

AGC GOLF OUTING

The recent AGC annual golf outing wasn't quite The Masters, but it had some similarities: beautiful weather, challenging holes, stunning landscapes, lightning fast greens, elite golfers (well ok, let's just say 72 golfers). But what makes this recent event special in its own right is the cause of Hogar de Ninos that it promotes, and the many disadvantaged children it helps support. It was an enjoyable day for all who participated.

This ninth annual golf outing, like all of the previous, was not the product of an AGC golf committee. Nor was it brought about by any particular Board activity. Rather, each outing has come about almost exclusively through the stellar work of Michael Alch, who has chosen this event as one of the ways to demonstrate his devotion to the cause of the Hogar ninos. As Mike mentioned at the outing, "Many of us stateside have been blessed to be able to hold these children's hands for only a short time, given the typically brief duration of our visits to Comayagua. Nonetheless we hold their hearts forever."

So the thankless jobs of lining up dates and courses, signing up golfers, organizing foursomes, recruiting sponsors and donations, arranging for food and beverages, to mention only a few of the countless details, are all overseen by Mike, with able assistance from his wife Debbie, and other volunteers.

This year's event raised over \$25,000 for AGC. Thanks to all who participated, all those who volunteered their time, hole sponsors, those who donated prizes or items for auction. A special treat was a short address from Hogar grad Juan Franciso (see the related article by Mike Jones) who thanked AGC for its support and thanked God for the 200 brothers and sisters he has been blessed with. He also summed up his first golfing experience with the comment "I thought this was going to be easy, but it's really hard. I like soccer."

Thanks Michael for another great event and for funds that will be utilized for the wellbeing of the Hogar children and staff. Next year's outing is scheduled for September 26, 2014 at Pine Meadow, so reserve the date and start grooming your game now. And Mike as long as you're planning for next year, we thought the pin placements on holes 5 and 13 were a little unfair, the mayo on those turkey wraps for lunch was a bit heavy....



Mike Alch

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For sponsorship opportunities, the history of Hogar de Niños and more information about AGC visit our Web site:
www.agcltd.org



Fall 2013

Comayagua, Honduras

Dear sponsors, friends and members of the Board of Directors of AGC.

Receive a respectful greeting from Association of Hogar Nazareth, we hope God blesses you abundantly.

Dear Sponsors, friends, benefactors and AGC Board; First we want to thank you for your love for our children and youth, for the unconditional support we have always received from you, for your prayers, for your blessings, for your perseverance and great desire to continue sharing the joys and sorrows of our Nazareth family, thank you. We also thank God for having the commitment of each one of you so these children, young girls can get an education, decent shelter and basic food and medical services. Thanks to you and God's divine providence that has not left us out of His hand and despite the difficulties and setbacks we have moved on, looking up to God, and hoping for the promised reward to us if we accomplish His will of helping those in need.

We are pleased inform you that on August 10 the girls were taken to the military base Palmerola, and were able to enjoy a full day of recreation where we had prepared several surprises (movies, swimming pools and games). They were happy with the trip.

In the month of July we had the visit of Mr. Allen Heerema, and we were very happy to have him here with us. He came with a group of friends. We thank this group for taking all children to buy shoes. They are very grateful and the timing was perfect because their school shoes were already worn out. It is in these times when we see God's mercy that waits for the right time when it is needed. Thank you.

On August 17 there was an ophthalmologist brigade in Hogar Nazareth, free exams, and lenses at half price. Those who needed to wear glasses were 7 girls and 6 boys, so we thank our benefactors for the purchase of these lenses that children were in need, and also to Mr. Allen that authorized the purchase of such lenses. Thank you.

The children are well. This month of September we had many parties and friends who have visited to celebrate on different dates the Children's Day. All these experiences have helped them a lot. Our children and youth had piñatas, organized games, clowns, and enjoyed a snack together with pizza, soda, cake and lots of candy.

After that came the Independence celebrations of September 15, where there were parades of the kindergartens, schools and colleges. Our children and youth participated and played with great joy and enthusiasm wearing their uniforms and costumes related to the parades. The girls and boys who study weekends marched at night and did so with lanterns and it was very nice.

"Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me." Mark 9:37

Both children and youth are studying very much as they are finishing the school year; they want to pass successfully so we are supporting them so they can get good grades. They do their daily responsibilities as directed by their educators.

The first week of September a Dental Brigade came to San Benito Jose Hospital, where they gave special treatment to our children, Leonardo Zuniga, Arlin Espinal, Ana Bertha Nunez, and Adelina Varela. Also they checked up all the children with special needs and they were treated with prophylaxis and fillings. The second week of September we had 3 cases of dengue confirmed, so there were 2 fumigation campaigns to prevent more dengue cases.

The girls and boys who will graduate this year have ended their professional practice (internships) and are completing their report. They are also preparing to pass their attitudinal and exam required to enter college, they are Jenny Cristina Sanchez, Xiomara Benitez, Glenda Crisanto, Johanna Ramos, José Luis García, Henry Fabricio Romero Garcia, Jaime Antonio Avila Ramirez.

At The Farm we have a new couple as the Directors, Mario Bustillo René Rodriguez and his wife Irma Lorena Zelaya. Currently they are very excited and happy to help our youth, and to understand them and make them fight to move ahead. In September the boys at the farm have had several soccer matches, the first one was in the community of San Jeronimo. It was fun for them to go to compete with other kids of the same age. The second was in the field of Atolera, and then at the granja.

On September 24 had a tardeada (party) at the futbolito in order to bond and take an afternoon to share, change the routines, open space for trust and dialogue, letting them know that they can say what they think and what

they feel and be heard, because what they want is to feel good emotionally.

At the farm we had a great harvest and they shared lots of corn with us. It has been a wonderful experience to receive this noble gesture from the granja to share their harvest with the whole Nazareth family, We cooked corn and made tamales. They were delicious. On September 13 the teacher and youth fixed the roof of a kiosk with Alucin (zinc sheets), since it was in bad condition. Now they will have a safe recreational place in this rainy season.

All children and youth attend, in their respective schedules, the activities of the church and the home. They go to church, do family devotions, and receive first communion's catechesis and confirmation. Some girls who were not baptized will be on October 06, and they are already receiving the lectures. They are Alba Esther Vallejo, Emely Maria Santos, Ana Arely Barrientos, Johana Antonia Amaya, Yolanda Yolibeth Hernández, Gabriela Gissel Granados. They all will receive the sacrament of baptism.

La Misericordia (The Mercy House)

On September 8 they were invited by the CRIC to the Villa Mar Water Park to celebrate the Children's Day. They were all were very happy enjoying the sweets and lots of food. They enjoyed the pool a lot, it was very fun and exciting.

The dental brigade from Hospital San Benito Jose served in a very special way to all the residents of Misericordia. It was a difficult job and we are very grateful to the doctors who took care of them. We are also very grateful to God that He has sent Dr. Luis Hernandez. whworks at Clinica del Valle. He has come to visit and care for our beneficiaries of Misericordia and promised to come once a month to give them medical services for free. Here is where we see the wonders of our Lord personified in the service of others.

In April Francisco spent much of a Saturday afternoon helping Margaret to plant colorful flowers around the edges of our back yard. That evening, at dinner, as we looked out the bay window over the back yard, Margaret and Francisco told us all they had done. I mentioned how beautiful it was and that with all the recent rain, the grass was now bright green adding to the color splendor.

"I know this word from class" Francisco said.

"What word?"

"Grass"

"Like out in the yard?"

"Yes, grass, out in the yard, like when it's really hard"

"I don't understand, like when what's really hard?"

"The grass, out in the yard, like when it's really hard, you know, the grass, like when it's really hard."

Actually we didn't know. And we all looked each other and smiled. What could he possibly be trying to tell us? No one could figure it out so we left it alone. Then the next morning my day started in a burst of laughter when Francisco came down and with a big silly I-know-something-I-want-to-tell-you-grin he proudly proclaimed "English grammar is very hard to grasp. It's very hard to grasp." Aaaahhh the "p", we were all missing the "p". It's not the grass that's hard, its trying to grasp something that can be hard. He loved it. I think he enjoys bringing laughter and joy to others every day.

I love my daughters but growing up in a family with brothers I always wished I had a son. One of the things I love about this experience is my time with Francisco doing things my daughters never fully embraced. On some weekends, Francisco and I will get on the bicycles and go for hours at a time exploring different trails – sometimes 30 – 40 miles. Late one afternoon in July we were coming home on the Great Western Trail riding side-by-side and I lamented how hot it was and how "I wish we were back in the shade".

"The shade? What is the shade?" he asked.

I said "Like a shadow, like when a tree blocks the sun and we are in its shadow, then its cooler" and I pointed to our shadows on the ground in front of us as we rode east late in the afternoon "like the shadow there on the ground."

"Oh, like the white bus on the ground." he said.

I smiled. I paused. I knew we were entering one of those times when I was going to have to think and we would both get a laugh after it's all over. "Like a little white bus on the ground? What are you talking about?" I said.

"The shadow on the ground, like the little white bus on the ground."

"I don't understand. There is no white bus. My shadow appears on the ground when my body blocks

the sun."

"Yes, shadow, the shadow on the ground, like the little white bus, right?"

"No, wrong." I said. And then I'm thinking what word is he confusing with bus, muss, fuss, it wasn't clicking.

"Yes, the shadow, the bus"

So I kept repeating it, "The shadow, the bus on the ground, the shadow, the little white bus, the shadow bus..... aaaahhhh the shuttle bus. Is that what you mean?"

"Yes, that's what I said"

I laughed. I explained. We both laughed. When you say it quickly the words sound the same. Learning English is difficult. I love this guy.

Francisco is still focused on ultimately returning to Honduras full time and using his English and education to get a good job so that he can help all of the others growing up at Hogar Nazareth. As he comes close to finishing the ELS program this fall, we are eager to see his final major English paper. We were surprised by his choice of thesis topic. I wonder how many other natives of Comayagua, Honduras have ever written extensively about Abraham Lincoln. We are also hopeful that he will be admitted to Dominican University full time to begin classes in January. With his admittance there, we will be pleased to have him with us a while longer as he works to complete his college degree before returning to Honduras.



Of course, while Francisco has been learning English, we have all been blessed with the opportunity to learn Spanish from him. My wife and kids have each had many years of Spanish in school and can get by without much help. When in Comayagua, I get by with my hands and sign language. But now I am learning much more. And we are blessed by his presence in so many other ways. Thank you Francisco for sharing your joy with us, for your smiles always, for your fun-loving spirit, for your dedicated academic effort in being sure that you get the most you possibly can out of your classes, for your everyday commitment to God and your faith, and for showing us how to live with joy and hope even in those times when life is difficult. Thank you also to Al Heerema and the AGC Board of Directors for all of their support in this adventure.



Babies are well, growing every day. This year in May, June, and August we celebrated the first birthday to 4 girls, Emely, Keilin, Jency and Lea. They really enjoy their birthdays parties and the games between them are so much fun. The baby Genesis Yamileth, the girl with cleft lip, will have an operation in October with Operation Smile. We ask for your prayers.

We also have a new girl whose name is Kendy. She will have a baby in late October. All the girls go to church on Sunday and we have daily devotions at home.

We thank God because the girls have been very healthy, have had some with flu but nothing severe. Girls who have appointments with the psychologist have been coming and are stabilizing each day. These therapies help a lot in their emotional state.

The Divine Providence Project (The University Home) is moving forward every day with persevering youth who are struggling to fulfill their dreams. Néstor Daniel, Christofer Antonio, Jazielle, Angie Esther, Jeni Joneyli, have started their last long period for this year. We wish that they achieve everything they have planned for themselves mainly with God's help.

Thank you very much godparents, friends, benefactors and board. We value and appreciate the work that you do to offer the children and youth what they need every day.

We ask God's great blessings for each of you and each of your families. You are all always in our prayers. Thank you.

God bless you, and receive a kiss and a hug from the children and the youth.

Sincerely,

Hogar Nazareth, La Granja, Misericordia, Casa Buen Pastor, and Divine Providence.

They are about to end their school year, with perseverance and sacrifice, moving forward a little each day despite their limitations. Inside the house they participate in group games under the supervision of an adult. This activity is done after the school tasks are completed. They have a good time laughing and playing and have fun. They are very loving with each other, have daily devotionals, readings, reflection time and prayers for our brothers and sisters in the world, friends, and benefactors.

El Buen Pastor (Good Shepherd) In August the teachers of the Bible School "Working Together with God" had a day with all students, they took them to CEDA, a convention center. There the Good Shepherd's girls had the opportunity to hear a group of young Americans who shared with them their life experiences.

It was great for them to hear that other young people have suffered and that with the help of God all wounds can be healed. They are determined in their studies and doing homework every day because they want to pass their school year successfully. They have implemented three hours of daily study, an hour and a half in the morning and another in the afternoon, and also making space to care and play with their babies. When they have a little extra time they make small crafts like bible bookmarks, scarves, paper flowers and they make recycling things.

"The grass, out in the yard, like when it's really hard, you know, the grass, like when it's really hard." My wife and I and our daughters looked at each other and tried figure out what he was trying to communicate. These kinds of moments have been among my favorite times living with Juan Francisco. The times when he makes me think – because I know we are all going to smile when we figure it out.

In March of this year Juan Francisco Sanchez left Comayagua and began living with our family as he entered the English Learning Services program offered at the nearby campus of Dominican University in River Forest, Illinois outside of Chicago. Francisco ("only my brothers and sisters get to call me Pancho") entered Hogar Nazareth when he was three days old, grew up at the Granja, and now 23 years old is working hard. For the last six months he has been in classes 6 – 8 hours every day with two or more hours of homework in the evenings and on weekends. His English, fairly good even before arriving, has improved tremendously. He has received academic awards at the end of almost every month long session at the school. But Francisco's very fluent English is now the best testament to his awesome work ethic. We are so proud of him.

"What a joy," I keep thinking. "Now I have a brother," my middle daughter exclaimed with excitement. "He pitches in (aaaahh a phrasal verb) on every household task without anyone ever asking for help," my wife marvels. From the start Margaret embraced the idea of sponsoring one or more of the kids from Comayagua to come learn English while living with us. Our three daughters were all immediate "yes". I had no doubt they would welcome the idea since for the last six years we have been traveling with many other families each August to spend time with all of our friends at the Hogar and the Granja. And I have been blessed with the opportunity to return each year with the Band of Brothers men's trip each December.

A complete stranger I met at the Chicago Fellowship retreat a year ago started the adventure for us. My new friend Mark told me how he had sponsored two young ladies from an orphanage in Juarez, Mexico to come stay with his family while learning English at an ELS program near Chicago. We talked for hours. With more of his help later, my wife and I now had a detailed road map from a Christian helper telling us how to think about something like this. Immigration, student visas, Department of Homeland Security, where to start, how to find sponsoring institutions, I-20 forms, health insurance, how to prepare for the U.S.

consulate interview, financial sponsor letters, cultural differences, what to expect after he/she arrives and much more – he laid it all out. The plan advanced further with help from Jeremy, Andy, Brett, Terry, Tim and some other men who had been in discussions about doing something like this a year earlier. Thank you God for the blessings of these men and for bringing Mark into our life. And thank you Mark.

And so the adventure began. After Francisco arrived, the beauty of his spirit began gracing our home immediately. Joy and laughter almost always emanating from behind his delighted smile. "I just love this machine," as he figured out the dishwasher. "But I love this other machine even better," - who knew that the counter-top Keurig coffee maker could be so inspiring. And the real fun began when we started to learn about learning English. All foreigners seem to agree that learning English is difficult but now we were seeing it from front row seats. My wife and I are both college educated but we had never heard of "phrasal verbs". Two words that mean one thing. Pass on, pass up, pass over, pitch in, give up, hang up and so many more including our personal favorite "hang out". If you look up these words in the dictionary you find their individual meanings but rarely will you find the many new and different meanings they take on when joined with another word. So Francisco says that when someone asked him if he wanted to "hang out", the dictionary gave him the meaning of the word "hang", and he found the word "out" so "maybe they meant that my arms would be spread out while I am hanging – aaahhh, to hang out, it's like being crucified(?)." No, not really. Yes, English is hard to learn.

I can still see my oldest daughter giggling as Francisco came home several days running and told us about his new "bocav" for the day. Finally she couldn't take it any longer and with a big smile she said "vocab, the word is vocab, vocabulary, vocab, not bocav".

"That's what I said, bocav"
"No, you said bocav, the word is vocab"
"Yes, that what I said, bocav"
And then she lost it and started laughing saying "No, its vocab, not bocav, its vocab, vocab".

He laughed back saying "Yes, bocav, it sounds the same to me, what are you trying to tell me?" We all just love his joyful, playful manner, even when there's misunderstanding and frustration. Another lesson on how hard it is to learn English. After instruction on how to form one's mouth when saying the word, a big proud smile emerged with the successful pronunciation of "Vocabulary".