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Genesis Yamileth, daughter of Amaya Ana Gabriela, recently had her first cleft palate surgery at Operation Smile Clinic in the city of Tegucigalpa. She was born with a cleft lip and palate problem. Keilyn Abigail, Maria Abigail Garcia's daughter is receiving physical therapy at Telethon Clinic in Tegucigalpa as well.

All the girls at "Buen Pastor" crochet during their free time; they know how to make handbags, scarves, and hats. Dania Yamileth Rita and Paola are taking a course in tailoring and can make skirts, blouses, and dresses. The girls are moving forward in their devotions and God has provided a lot for us this year.

At Casa Misericordia the girls had to be given medicine for colds, but they are doing better now. This year went well, some received their diplomas, Nubia Xiomara had a nice closure, she was very involved in dance and other events in her school this year. The other girls at Grandpa Jerry's school like to participate in different activities as well. This year we had the opportunity to go out with all the girls to various places and they were able to get out of the "Hogar" and get to know other places, like water parks and other parks. They have also received visits from young missionaries on Wednesdays and Fridays, where they do devotions, share the word of God, and play with them. The kids were glad to help with decorating the "Hogar" with Christmas decorations and do it with much joy as their hope to receive when Santa Claus arrives.

In the Divine Providence Project, the boys and girls are busy studying hard to pass their classes, almost not coming home at all because they are devoting themselves to study for their finals before classes let out for Christmas.

Dear sponsors, friends, benefactors, and board, I am grateful for the great work you do to raise funds for the benefit of our children and youth. Thank you so much; God bless you and keep you.

All of the homes wish you a Merry Christmas and a

Happy New Year full of joy.

God bless you, Hogar Nazareth

All God's Children

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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

BOARD BULLETS - December 2013

- Jan Kamp and Dyan Lagestee are the new directors of the sponsorship program. The Board and all of AGC gives its sincere thanks to Cheryl Deckinga for her leadership, devotion and organization of this important part of the AGC ministry. Well done Cheryl !
- After completing the ESL program (English for international students) Juan Francisco is now enrolled in the undergraduate school at Dominican University in the Chicago area. Other Hogar students may be considered for studying in the same ESL program.
- The Board gave approval to a proposal from the Kala Project for the production of a feature video of the individual AGC ministries and the stories behind them. This will be used to raise support and awareness of AGC.
- The Board reviewed the first draft of a Ministry Partnership Agreement, a document intended to identify the mutual goals, values and separate responsibilities between the AGC Board and the Hogar Nazareth Board of Directors.
- Individual Board members will be leading several work teams visiting Hogar in January through March.
- The audited 2012 Financial Statements were received from Evenhouse & Co accountants and were reviewed.
- The women and children of Buen Pastor have settled into the apartments at Casa Esperanza. Some modifications have been made in the building to allow for group meals and other activities.



News of the Niños

Comayagua, Honduras

Winter 2013

Dear Sponsors, Friends, Benefactors, and Board of Directors of AGC,

Receive my warmest greetings, wishing God's abundant blessing upon you. Here at the Hogar, the girls are doing very well. They are very cheerful and glad because they are on vacation, enjoying the Nativity decor and Christmas tree, and they are very happy that Christmas is coming for them. They have begun rehearsing the songs for the posadas, which start on December 14 and end on December 22, and they're also thrilled that they will receive gifts from Santa Claus.

The girls and boys were very happy with the visit of the Chicago Fellowship group of men led by Mr. Allen Heerema who were with us from December 4th- 8th. They painted our buildings and left them looking brand new; thanks. They also treated many boys and girls who graduated this year with a delicious luncheon, all were very happy to have shared this time with the group. Thank you for the gifts, luncheon, and for having taken kids shopping, all the boys and girls shared a God blessed time.

The girls' graduation took place on December 7, and they are happily making plans to go to college. The graduates were Glenda Xiomara Benitez Espinal, Jenny Cristina Sanchez, and Mildrid Johana Ramos. We are very excited that these young girls have successfully completed their secondary education.

On November 20 we took in three girls from the Mosquitia, they are Hiliari Valeska Mejia Gonzales 8 years old, Maida Yohary Mejia Gonzales 7 years old, and Zaily Magaly Guerra Mejia 1 year old; on November 29 we had 3 girls leave us, they are: Pamela Roxana Acosta Bonilla, Rosa Acosta Bonilla Angelica and Nancy Vanessa Acosta Bonilla. They were required to return home by order of INHFA.

This year we have seen much spiritual fruit happen within the Church; on Sunday, November 24 11 girls made their first communion, they completed catechetical courses after a year. Also, 14 teens aged 15 years old had their confirmation on Saturday, November 30th. It was a very special day for them, when they received the sacrament of confirmation from the church; they were glowing and very glad.

The boys' graduations from the *granja* took place on November 30th; they were very pleased with having achieved their proposed goal of graduating and are now prepared for the big challenge of going on to college. They will achieve it because these guys are fighters. Their names are Brian Raúl Hernández, Henry Fabricio Romero García, José Luis García, Jaime Antonio Ávila Ramírez, and Eliab Vasny Navas Channels. We are very happy for the success these young men have shared.

The guys are happy to have finished their classes and are very busy playing soccer on their vacation. They have also been busy preparing to celebrate the Nativity, and they helped decorate the Christmas tree. The boys have 3 pigs ready for the New Year's Eve activity. They also have a good production of cassava and have had a good harvest in all of their crops.

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

In The Likeness Of God

Sitting in my office early Sunday morning, I see a magnificent sunrise out the window. This is a thank you Jesus moment for me. It is a wonderful "God sighting". My wife Gert has helped me over the years to see God's hand in all of nature. No matter what the experience, an incredible castle built hundreds of years ago, the interior of an ornately decorated church, fabulous architecture, Gert reminded me that nothing beats God's creation. I heard those words, but I didn't really understand them to her depth. Perhaps it was in Honduras where we become more aware of our dependence on God, where we sometimes become desperate to see God's hand that I was able to make the transition of seeing God in nature. Maybe it was on a bus ride seeing the mountains, or the beautiful valleys that they create. Maybe it was getting a glimpse of a waterfall, rows of pineapples growing, the variety of flowers and flowering trees. Maybe it was the blue sky and sunshine, or perhaps the clouds just hanging afloat in the sky, or better yet the sunshine streaming through those clouds. God is revealed to us in all of creation, we call it God's "general revelation" as Romans 1:20 explains. Creation wins every time. May God be praised.

A very important part of having a "God sighting" in nature while in Honduras is knowing that the author and creator of all of nature, the one who knows and places the stars in their place, is also mindful of us and the children. They estimate there are as many stars in the sky as there are grains of sand on all the beaches in the world, and God put them in place, and knows them by name. Ok Allen rest easy, He also knows the group by name and called them to this place. More importantly He knows the children by name and has called us to be His hands and feet to them. You can't buy the kind of comfort that knowledge brings, nor can you find it anywhere else but from God.

My awareness of God's hand in all of creation has recently been brought to a whole new level. Especially how it relates to the analogy Paul uses in 1 Corinthians 12, where he compares the church of Christ to the human body, not one part being more important than the next. Let me attempt to explain. Dr. Paul Brand, a world-renowned hand surgeon and leprosy specialist and author Philip Yancey coauthored a book "In the Likeness of God". In the book Brand tells of how our bodies are made of many cells, not one being more important than the rest.

"Chemically our cells are almost alike, but visually and functionally they are as different as the animals in a zoo. Red blood cells, discs resembling Life Saver candies, voyage through our blood loaded with oxygen to feed the other cells. Muscle cells, which absorb so much of that nourishment, are sleek and supple, full of coiled energy. Cartilage cells with shiny black nuclei look like bunches of black-eyed peas glued together for strength. Fat cells seem lazy and laden, like bulging white plastic garbage bags jammed together."

For me, Dr. Brand's most astounding descriptions were about the cells taken from the heart of an ostrich. "Under the microscope the individual cells appear as long, spindly cylinders, crisscrossed like sections of railroad tracks. Their destiny is to throb, and they persist even having been placed in a saline solution a world apart from the body. Each cell continues to beat out an incessant rhythm-pitiful and useless palpitations when isolated from the chick.

Unlinked by a pacemaker, the cells beat irregularly, spasmodically, each tapping out a rhythm approximate to the 350 beats a minute normal to a chick. But as the observer watches, over a period of hours an astonishing phenomenon occurs. Instead of five independent hearts cell contracting at their own pace, first two, then three, and then all the cells pulse in unison. There are no longer five beats, but one."

I don't know about you, but for me just hearing about the different cells is a major league God sighting. The passage from Psalm 139: 13-14 "For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made" brings on a whole new meaning. God is good, I mean really really good.

For me the genius of Brands' book is his "grasp of the Spiritual metaphors found in the body." For instance Brand rewrites 1 Corinthians 12 in part like this. "The body is one unit, though it is made up of many cells, and though all its cells are many, they form one body..." He saw a direct comparison from the cells that make up our bodies, to all the people who make up the body of Christ, the church. Brand goes on to talk about the importance of each cell and how they are all desperately needed for the body to be whole. All the cells working together in harmony, one not more important than the next.

I recently heard someone speak on this passage and he talked about the way our society would look at the position of janitor. Not paid very well, easily replaced, and perhaps could be thought of as a dime a dozen. It certainly is not viewed as overly important by worldly standards, or in building a team, or in this case the body of Christ. Yet when you look at it from Dr. Brand's position, the janitor becomes the kidney, same type of work but a whole new level of importance. Of course you can't do without your kidneys, and of course each member of the body of Christ is important also.

What about the orphans? Being an orphan in any society is a difficult lot in life. How about the orphans in a third world country like Honduras, where do they fit into the Body of Christ? James 1:27 makes it clear for us that, "Religion that is pure and faultless is to look after orphans". Everybody that is part of the All God's Children team understands this, we are like the heart cells of an ostrich firing on the same beat. These children are God's Children, they are made in the image of God and they are part of the body of Christ. The support we receive from all of you for Mama Carmen, Arvil and Mariam, Nelly and the children they represent is truly another major league God sighting that often times leaves us in tears. Thank you.

I was recently at the garbage dump in Tegucigalpa, and it was a frightening place to be. There are hundreds of people going through the garbage trying to eke out a living. There are families living in cardboard boxes and young children digging for food and plastic.

Young girls with their babies doing the best they can to earn enough for a meal. Don't even dream of going in the dump unless you have police and a lot of food to hand out. They are the bottom feeders in a third world country, and they don't want to be looked at as if they were animals in a zoo. What about these people, are they part the body of Christ? Certainly they have been created in the image of God. Are they part of the equation?

The majority of my work life prior to AGC was as a garbage man, (maybe just below the status of janitor) and landfill owner. I was born in a place where working in the garbage industry was not looked down on. I could be proud to be part of the so called "Dutch Mafia". The monetary rewards were significant! The children of Hogar know that if I see a garbage truck in Honduras I tell them that it smells like money.

Those words are a bit haunting now that I have seen the landfill in Tegucigalpa. Why was I born in a place that could look at the garbage industry so differently? Why was I blessed as I was in a stinking garbage business? Why were any of us born where we were, and blessed as we have been? And now what does God expect from us? I hope that this can be something for us all to ponder in this Christmas season and New Year.

Serving Together,
Allen Heerema for the Board of AGC

