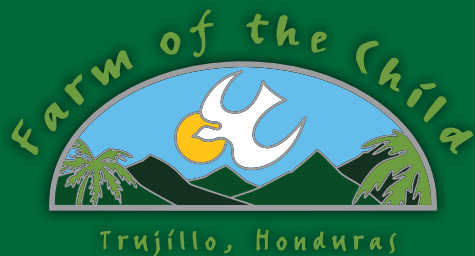


FRIENDS OF THE FARM

A NEWSLETTER FOR OUR SUPPORTERS

HOLIDAYS 2009



“The Farm is something beautiful. The people here are my friends and brothers and sisters.”

— Jose Pastor, age 6

As we begin the Holiday Season, we asked our children, houseparents and volunteers “What does the Farm of the Child mean to you?”

“The Farm is a home for children with no one to protect them. I like the Farm because of the education that it gives to the children. The Farm is full of love and friendship.”

— Riccy, age 12

“The Farm is tranquil. I like the Farm because it’s a beautiful place, and there’s the ocean, lots of trees, and fruit.”

— Maria, age 8

“The Farm is peace.”

— Magdalena, age 9

“I like winter school classes because they’re fun. I like to be with my brothers and sisters in the Farm. It is a happy and fun place.” **— Marian, age 11**

“The Farm is a great love that God has placed in front of me. It is a place that’s very beautiful in all aspects. When one decides to become a part of this place, it is then very difficult to imagine ever leaving. It is a place that helps us to grow in our faith and our love of God and others.”

— Sayda, Local Volunteer

“A beautiful place to grow in spirituality and to share with children, a place to love children who are not your own, to give love without knowing to whom you will be asked to give.”

**— Rosa, Housemother,
St. John the Baptist House**

What the Farm of the Child Means to Me

“To me, the Farm means the commitment and celebration of a family united in God’s love. It is an intentional setting aside of self for the purpose of creating a loving community in which each person is stretched and blessed to grow. It is the shared experience of that same grace which comes from singing together off key, gaining or losing a family member, playing ultimate frisbee in the hot sun, adoring the Blessed Sacrament from the chapel’s tile floor or enacting mini-skits to demonstrate why we should respect nature. The Farm helps us recognize our interdependence, showing us God’s love as we daily see it lived by others.”

*— Anne Klinkhammer, volunteer,
St. Maria Goretti House Staff*

From spellings bees to presentations about simple machines, the teachers of the Farm are challenged to create a learning environment that is creative, holistic, safe and one of the best opportunities for underprivileged children in Honduras. The Farm is a place where kids learn boundaries, break down cultural misconceptions, share responsibilities, mature, foster relationships, and are given the ability to succeed and further their education, providing many more doors to be opened for their future.

*— Theresa Conroy, volunteer,
School Administrator and
3rd/4th grade teacher*

“The Farm is a place where you can see God... in the children, in the volunteers... and in the way that each one of our lives is transformed and redeemed.”

— Lupita Galvan, volunteer, Psychologist

SPIRITUALITY

SERVICE

COMMUNITY

SIMPLICITY



“For me, the Farm means a great support to everyone and all the children, in giving them an education and caring for them until they are older.” – **Carlos, age 15**

“This is a place where we are cared for. It’s lovely, beautiful. Here, there are many who love us.” – **Sigri, age 17**

“The Farm, for me, is a really tranquil home where kind, generous people live. It’s full of peace. We’re always in prayer, and always growing in faith, when we collaborate and put forth from our own will.” – **Arturo, age 14**

“The Farm is a home where we are able to take advantage of opportunities, and more than anything, to love and appreciate what we have.” – **Nelly, age 14**

“The Farm is a place which helps children grow in their spirituality, high self esteem, and big ideas. It’s also a place of growth in a manner that tries to shape us to have unique ideas.”

– **Dalila, age 16**

“The Farm means living by the ocean, cleaning, doing chores. It’s important that we do our chores so we take care of the Farm and it looks nice for us to play. I learn about math. We share our food.”

– **Jose Isabel, age 9**

“The Farm means graduating from 6th grade, like I did just last week.”

– **Juan Carlos, age 14**

“I have learned how to fix bicycles here. Nathan teaches us. It’s good because I like to fix things and kids like to ride bikes.” – **David, age 14**



“I’m about to complete 11 years of working here. When I came, there were fewer buildings, and in the time I’ve been here there have been various changes. I remember various volunteers that have come. I think [the Farm] is a good mission; they give a home to children who don’t have one, and an education. My daughter started kindergarten here and this year is about to graduate and become a teacher. I’m grateful for this, and for all the support I’ve been given.”

– **Jorge, Maintenance Worker**

“I came here to play soccer, and I wanted to work here, and a man named Kelly told me that he was going to work on the convent. After, he told me, ‘If you are a good worker, I’d like to give you a job.’ I like working here.”

– **Wilfredo, Maintenance Worker**

“The Farm has been a very special place for the education of children. The Farm helps the community with their clinic, and we feel grateful for the work they do with the neighbors. We’re able to receive help from the Church: baptisms and confirmations. It’s a great place for the sacraments. For my part, I feel happy.”

– **Don Matilde, Project Supervisor for security fence construction**

“The Farm carefully watches over the children, and pours out on them the help they need to keep them healthy and well.”

– **Fito, Security Guard**

“The Farm is a safe place. It’s a place where everything is fair. It’s a wonderful place for children to live. The rest of the boys can tell you more.” – **Darwin, age 7**

“The Farm is a home for children... we give them love, and education, food, a roof over their heads, and health.”

- Polo, Housefather

“For me, the beautiful part is loving the children here. I see the girls in my house as my own, and I have learned how to be a better mother.” - **Claudia,**

Housemother, St. Anthony House



“The Farm is a very good place. They support us [neighbors] with work. I used to work here, washing clothes in the houses, two or three days a week. Now my son has work here, and we can receive food from the food pantry.”

- Petronila, Neighbor

“The children in my house, and everyone here, are nice.”

- Manuel, age 8

“The Farm is an organization that helps children that do not have support from their family. It helps the poor with work in the food pantry and the clinic. If someone has a headache, a fever, or something else, they don't have to go to the hospital. The Farm is valuable.”

- Maria, Neighbor, Women's group member and Food Pantry Worker



“This project is beautiful, and the truth is that God's work is done here. The Farm gives so much help to the people.”

- Don Cristobal, Security Guard

“The Farm is an important place for studies, especially for my children. It supports the local people through the food pantry and the clinic. When times have gotten hard, the Farm has given us enough support with the work that Saúl, my husband, has as a security guard.”

- Vilma, Neighbor, Women's group member



“The Farm is pairs of rough and dirty hands, day laborer's hands. Ever more apparent to me is that the Farm is not a place that appeared, or was found, but rather one built by countless humble, eager, exhausted, and capable hands. They are calloused, thick with muscle, and dark. They grip machetes that slice away roots of mahogany tree trunks, and saws that make the boards supporting the first roof. They lift shovels to mix and pour concrete made with sand raised in shoulder borne buckets from the nearby riverbed. They push away sticky red clay to securely lay a pipe that will bring cold mountain water to waiting washbasins. They are hands reaching down in the sun to harvest a yellow, fragrant, ripe pineapple and pass it to the smaller waiting hands of a learning, growing, and loved child.”

— **Nathan Conroy, volunteer, Maintenance Coordinator**

“The Farm is a place of resurrection. It's a place where our brokenness is revealed, often painfully... but a place where slowly, patiently, with ceaseless love and gentle care, we are invited to move towards healing, wholeness, and becoming more than we thought we could be. Just like the stained-glass window in our chapel... God lovingly glues together our rough, sharp, jagged-edged pieces and allows us to become something more beautiful than before – windows in which God's light can shine through.”

— **Erin Ramsey, volunteer, 5th/6th grade teacher**

“To me, the Farm of the Child is an intentional choice to live the Gospels by loving and serving ‘the orphan and the widow’ in a very real and intimate way. The beautiful and tragic thing about this project is that we who serve actually become the orphan and the widow as well. A child's moment of anger, harsh words and rejection give us a glimpse into past abandonment or neglect. A child freely splashing in the ocean elicits the same kiddish joy and playfulness in us. A child's complete trust in a houseparent or volunteer awakens within us a greater trust in God the Father. Together, we walk in this journey of faith and healing at the Farm of the Child.”

— **Peter Tooher, volunteer, Sub-director**

May you find “Posada” this Christmas Season.

By Marc Rugani
Adolescent Boys House Volunteer

Christmas in Latin America is a season with strong traditions. One of the most colorful traditions is the Posada, celebrated every evening from December 16 to 24. These celebrations commemorate Mary and Joseph’s cold and difficult journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem in search of shelter. “Posada” in Spanish, simply means lodging or shelter. It is a beautiful tradition at the Farm of the Child. The humble journey of Mary and Joseph is made vivid in our humble surroundings.

Each one of these nights before Christmas, a reenactment is held. At dusk, all the communities gather outside a home. A child dressed as an angel leads, followed by children carrying figures of Mary and Joseph. The boys and girls constitute the procession, followed by the adults. Everyone sings as they walk slowly along, carrying their lit candles. When they reach the home, the group divides in



two. One half remains outside and begs for shelter from the other half, which is inside the house. As the religious part of the celebration ends, the fun begins with games and food.



The Advent season draws us into contemplation of the Christian mystery of the Incarnation, the visit of our God among us. Jesus came into His created world not only vulnerable as a newborn, but also a stranger in a strange land. Instead of celebrating the birth of God’s son in the safety of a home in Nazareth, amidst the consolation of friends and family, Mary and Joseph traveled for days and nights to comply with laws imposed on them by a foreign regime only to find doors closed to them. No room at the inn. Seeking Posada, they eventually sheltered in the most humble of places with the most humble of people. Yet there they witnessed the miracle of God’s gift given to man.

Through trusting the grace of God and through the hospitality of the children, houseparents, tias, sisters and staff at the Farm, we find ourselves honored guests among them. We challenge our understanding of true power and find that it comes in attentive presence and communion with others. By leaving the comfort and security of the known and familiar, we open ourselves to the greater potential of “being with” and meeting “God Among Us,” Emmanuel.

Each of us at the Farm of the Child, orphan and volunteer alike, has found Posada at this place.

The Bible consistently reveals God’s preference for the vulnerable: widows, orphans, and foreigners. There are dozens of sacred passages that speak to His presence and protection of the stranger: the night visitors to Abraham in the cities of the plain, Naomi and Ruth’s mutual loyalty and love, Tobias and the journey to find his destiny in a distant land. All of these up to and beyond the pilgrimage of Mary and Joseph exemplify the challenges and subsequent blessings that are received by receiving the stranger, or even daring to be that stranger in a foreign land.

In the experience of seeking Posada we make familiar... ***become a family with...*** strangers and come to recognize the God who became a child in others and in us.

¡Feliz navidad!

Support the Farm of the Child by donating online at www.FarmoftheChild.org

The Mystery of the Nativity at Farm of the Child

By Father Gilberto Quintero, St. Cecelia Church, Clearwater, FL

With the arrival of Advent, we prepare ourselves to live the mystery of the Nativity for another year. One of the things that I remember with pleasure each year is the preaching of St. Anthony of Padua about the mystery of the Nativity. This famous saint understood the Nativity, associating it with the Parable of the Good Samaritan. For St. Anthony, the injured and abandoned man in the road represents all of humanity and the Good Samaritan, God the Father, that, upon seeing us mortally wounded, without hope, full of sin, and without grace, approaches our humanity in the form of His only son. God the Father sees our need for salvation and He sees us as only God can see us, with compassion: He is stirred to mercy and He sends us the Child Jesus.

God the Father does not look upon us with the indifference of those who passed by the man on the road, but rather He stops to dress our wounds and care for us. The Nativity reminds us each year of the compassion of God the Father.

It reminds us that we should see and approach those in need as He has seen and approached us, with compassion, with mercy, with love, and with commitment. The Nativity teaches us to stop along the road to approach the man in need and to not be passive, merely seeing the need without acting, but rather to do something for the man, paying with our money and our effort as the Good Samaritan did, as God the Father does in giving us His beloved son in the incarnation.

Farm of the Child allows us to approach those in need that God has placed along our road. Farm of the Child allows us to share our compassion and mercy, because we have first been loved by God, and that experience of feeling loved by God readies us to give from that which we have received. When we love the children at Farm of the Child, the mystery of the incarnation makes us instruments of the love and compassion of God. And that is why we can say that this love, time, activity, gesture or action that brings us closer to our children at Farm of the Child, is that of God Himself.

In your name Father, I see and I approach, I stop and I do that which you, Father, wish me to do. Amen.



Fr. Gilberto, born in Nicaragua, has been involved with the Farm of the Child since the beginning.

Lord Jesus, protector of orphans and all who depend on you, as we begin this day we turn our hearts towards You. We give thanks for the gift of Your great love and for the chance to serve You in all that we do today.

We ask that Your grace and Your mercy be poured out on our beloved Farm of the Child, on our children, on our houseparents, on our Franciscan sisters, on our volunteers past, present, and future, on our board members, on our support personnel, on our benefactors, and on all whom we serve in Honduras through our various ministries.

As a member of this community entrusted with maintaining, protecting and strengthening this mission, I ask for the following in order to better carry out my responsibilities:

A humble heart free from the desire of being esteemed,

A meek heart that bears with everyone,

A patient heart happy in the most trying circumstance,

A peaceful heart at peace with self and others,

A heart poor in spirit detached from the things of this world,

A heart full of love that finds happiness in suffering for others,

A prayerful heart that loves to be in communion with You,

A holy heart whose only desire is that God may be known and loved by everyone,

A pure heart like Mary's which seeks to love and serve God alone.

May we as a community be one in heart and mind so that we may help to bring about the Kingdom of God through Your mission, Farm of the Child.

Amen.

Angel David

By Beth Yanko, Volunteer

Angel David's life suddenly changed when he came to the Farm of the Child at only three and a half years of age. Already, David had seen so much that permanent scars had formed.



Early in life David was abandoned by his birth mother. The family she left him with would leave him neglected for days on a mat on the floor. His only source of food was his own fecal matter and the dirt on the ground. His only attention was from the dogs that he slept with in the dirt. Living this life he became malnourished and infected with parasites.

David's situation was so desperate that it was recognized by another family who then adopted him. His health started to improve, but the poor behavior that he had developed in his previous household was met with severe punishments. When he didn't chew his food well, he was hit hard and when he wet the bed, he was burned.

When these realities of David's life were discovered, once again he was passed along, but finally his luck had changed because this time he fell into the protective arms of the Farm of the Child.

David arrived into the loving arms of Jose and Myra who transformed this timid and traumatized child into a nurtured and enthusiastic spirit. His transitional months

were surprisingly unremarkable as David adapted well to his strangely nourishing and loving home. He continues to have a developmental delay, both physically and emotionally. David is very small, appearing about five years old instead of eight. His size does not reflect the amount of energy this boy brings to every situation. David is always the first to volunteer for just about anything, especially if it means spending time with someone.

Many years later after his arrival, David continues to flourish. He serves as an example of excellent behavior and honesty. In the home, he is an obedient son and compassionate brother. He searches for attention through hugs, grabbing a hand, offering his help with cleaning, cooking, or sharing a book.

During his free time, David can be found alongside his housebrothers Wilmer and Jose Luis. This inseparable trio plays marbles or cars in their backyard, and buries each other in the sand on the beach. However, during swimming lessons David leaves his two playmates swimming in his wake as this star swimmer finishes nearly every race first.

David's imagination is always running wild. He expresses his big dreams for the future such as going to high school in La Ceiba, climbing the surrounding mountains to the top or flying in an airplane. He has big wishes for the present, too. During a class discussion on wishes he announced that his biggest wish was that all of the dentists in the world would come to the Farm.

David's big, beautiful brown eyes betray him at any attempt to conceal his emotions. It is all too easy to read his sadness, joys, frustrations and triumphs. However, joy and happiness have replaced much of the sadness and sorrow in his eyes as God's love has touched his life here at the Farm.





We are a people who wait.

By Sor Ana Bueso and Peter Tooher

In Honduras and at the Farm of the Child, we enter into a world that is intensely suffering. Our children come from tragic situations of abandonment or neglect. Poverty grips women and men so fiercely that there rarely appears to be a way out. Stable families among the rural poor appear to be on the decline.

We wait for the day in which our children will be freed from the crosses of their pasts, there is an escape from poverty, and families are once again made whole. Yet our waiting is not of the passive sort. We wait for the Kingdom of God and so our enterprise is to build the Kingdom of God here on earth.

This year we've seen the arrival of nine new children to the Farm. They now have a long-term home – people and a place that are committed to their care until they are young adults who will live independently and face the real world.

The education that we provide our children and the children of the surrounding communities works against the forces of poverty to open new doors to opportunity and provide the essential moral formation that will guide them as Christian citizens.

We've continued to promote the model of the Holy Family and collaborate with committed houseparents who care for our children. Through this image, we provide hope for our children to build the same healthy, committed families that might strengthen the institution of family and spread throughout society.

All of this gives us pause in this Advent and Christmas season because we are also in a season of waiting for the birth of Jesus Christ our Savior. But just as our waiting for the Kingdom of God is an active building rather than a blindly hopeful waiting, our honoring of Christ's birth is also participatory.

Our traditions and customs in anticipation of Christmas Day – celebrating Posadas in the houses, making lots and lots of tamales, joining together in prayer at midnight on the 24th to welcome Jesus into the world – are a part of our active bringing of Christ into the world.

But we also reflect on how we can bring Jesus into the world in our daily lives by reawakening our zeal for prayer and the compassionate service of all those we meet.

Christmas blessings from the Farm of the Child family to yours – with special thanks for the ways you make Christ born through your support of us and His project at the Farm.

Dear friend of the Farm,

At Christmas, we not only remember God’s infinite love to us in His gift of His only son, but also the faithfulness of a young Mary that made that gift possible. Through the relationship between God the Father, His humble servant Mary, and His gift of the Baby Jesus, we learn of the importance of both the Giver and the Receiver in the gift of the Nativity. Mary accepted God’s gift to her, and to all of Mankind, humbly accepting the then unknown responsibility, challenge, and sacrifice that would be asked of her.

We, at Farm of the Child, are humbled not only by the great responsibility with which we have been entrusted, to nurture the children that God has placed in our care, but also by the responsibility with which we have been entrusted through the generous financial gifts from our supporters. Without your trust in our worthiness as guardians of that generosity, your gifts would not be able to serve their greatest purpose—to raise up children as witnesses to God’s infinite grace, compassion, mercy and love.

We are humbled by the importance of the task. And when faced with challenges and the call to sacrifice, especially in difficult economic times, we are inspired by Mary’s example of unconditional acceptance.

Many of the orphaned and abandoned children who arrived at the Farm of the Child suffered from malnutrition, intestinal parasites and other health problems, little or no schooling, and lack of love and affection. At the Farm, they receive a loving home, a good education, regular medical care, and ongoing instruction in the Faith.

From its beginning, the Lord has manifested His will in this project, giving us the strength to overcome all of the difficulties that presented themselves.



Arturo when he arrived at the Farm and a recent photo.

The Farm of the Child is a humble example of God’s love in action. Together with our supporters’ help, we will continue to make a huge impact in its poor community and in the lives of everyone touched by its mission. God has always provided for our needs.

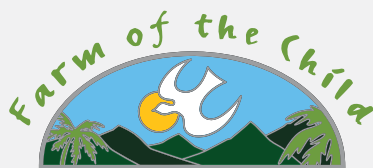
We must ask for your special consideration. With the economic turmoil in the United States, the Farm is experiencing financial difficulties. Our fundraising efforts are currently falling far below last year.

With your gift to Farm of the Child, your love is shared, nurtured, and grown into perpetual gifts in the life of our children. This Christmas we thank you for all that you continue to give as God, the ultimate Giver has given. Wishing you and yours a very joyful Christmas, filled with mystery and wonder.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Zulena Pescatore

President & Co-founder, Farm of the Child



1616 Nottingham Knoll Drive
Jacksonville, FL 32225

We exist because generous people donate money and time to help fulfill our mission – to provide for orphaned Honduran children.



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Farm of the Child is an IRS 501(c)3 organization.*