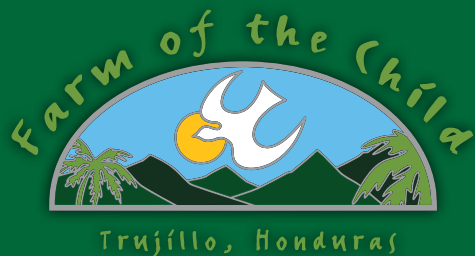


FRIENDS OF THE FARM

A NEWSLETTER FOR OUR SUPPORTERS

FALL 2010



A Chicago couple said “Yes” and began an amazing journey.

By Kathie & Tom Hacker



Abandoned in a basket by the river, she was neglected and abused. Nelsy was brought to the Farm as a three-year old whose exact age and birthparents were unknown. Unable to walk, malnourished, dehydrated and only weighing 12 pounds. She has flourished at the Farm of the Child.



Years ago, our good friends, Bob and Sue Riley, made us aware of a place called “Farm of the Child” and the great work they were doing with children in Honduras. Soon afterward, we began to sponsor a child. The Riley’s have long wanted us to experience the Farm as they have, by meeting the children, the volunteers and the house parents. They invited us to be part of a group that was traveling to the Farm to provide labor for projects that needed to be accomplished at the Farm. This was the year we were finally able to say “Yes” and at the end of July, fourteen of us began an amazing journey.

Neither of us had ever been to Central America before. We spoke very little Spanish and were thrilled to embark on this adventure with several returning visitors. From the very start, we discovered that group travel invites many delays. So, we used any additional time to get to know our fellow travelers. As we shared stories of how we ended up being part of “Riley’s Helping Hands” it was evident that God intended all of us to share this journey together. The common thread that tied us together was a desire to do more than we ever had done, to help those in need.

This journey was especially exciting for us both because for the first time, we were going to meet the child that we currently sponsor.

Her name is Nelsy. Her story is wonderful. As a baby, she was abandoned in a basket by the river and found by a woman. Nelsy relates the way she was found as being similar to the way Moses was found. However, during this time, Nelsy was neglected and abused. By the grace of God, she was brought to the Farm as a three-year old whose exact age and birthparents were unknown. She was unable to walk, malnourished and dehydrated, with rashes, a chest infection and only weighing 12 pounds. But she was a fighter, with a survivor’s spirit, and has flourished at the Farm.

In the weeks prior to the trip, we contacted the Executive Director, Andrea, to see if it would be appropriate to bring Nelsy a gift. She replied that it was a great idea and gave us a few gift suggestions along with clothing sizes. She also informed us that Nelsy would be celebrating her tenth birthday soon. What better way to meet someone for the first time

– continued inside, page 3

Greetings from Our New Volunteers

We are all here in Antigua, Guatemala getting to know one another and the Spanish language. As a group, we can already tell that we each bring distinct gifts and experiences that are forming a cohesive group. There is also a strong sense that each person is meant to be here and belongs in a special way. We are very much looking forward to getting to the Farm, meeting the larger community, and settling into our specific roles.

As a community, we are lucky enough to have a central meeting place at the Hurst’s apartment and we have also spent time exploring the local flavors of Guatemalan cafes under the guise of “doing homework.” It is a welcome transition to finally be here and to get to know the group because the last few steps in the journey have been so detailed oriented. After figuring out what to bring and how to get here, the reason why we are here is coming back into focus. In a recent community night, held in one of our Guatemalan host-homes, a quote was read by Deirdre on Jesus’ question for Peter, repeated three times, “Do you love me?” As we perfect our broken Spanglish and learn about each other, it is increasingly clear that we are not here solely to sharpen our skills and to form a new community, but most importantly to love and be loved by Christ. This is why we are here. We look forward with great excitement to share a life of service together at the Farm!



Back row: Mary Kate Battle, Phillip Longbrake, Nils Ringo, Betsy Grace, Jacob Hurst
Middle row: Tami Jimenez, Liliana Almanza-Raya, Deirdre Fleming, Amanda Dixon, Rachel Hurst.
Front row: Isaac Hurst, Jonah Hurst, Ruben Hurst

SPIRITUALITY

SERVICE

COMMUNITY

SIMPLICITY

A LITTLE PIECE OF HEAVEN ON EARTH

By Jeanette Dipman

Riley's Helping Hands Mission 2010

The small Chapel of the Holy Family resounded in beauty at the presentation of each family during Adoration. The mystery of the Holy Spirit was evident and very alive that warm, humid night. The Spirit overwhelmed me with joy, an adoptive mother myself. The house parents and their foster children had a moment in front of all to say, "We are family. We are loved and cared for, we have the Holy Spirit in common, we hug, kiss, we eat together, and love all the same. There are no outsiders, no more abandonment, no more grave loneliness."

The Farm of the Child cares for children who may not have a biological family that is able to care for them. I have to say I have been immensely touched by my week on the Farm. The only way I could leave was to promise myself I would return some day. To me, the week was a deeper reminder of God's presence on Earth. I went into my time at Farm of the Child as a week to connect with children who are in need. I left understanding how intense God's presence is on Earth. Witnessing the house parents treat their foster children as their own was powerful. Having the pleasure of seeing the volunteers teach was a gift. Many of the volunteers have no background in education. This did not stop the teachers from putting all their energy and creativity to work. They are on fire with the Holy Spirit. Being a special educator in Chicago, I was able to share some suggestions with them. I have never been met with such openness and appreciation. It was so powerful to watch them want to learn and know more and share with the kids. I could not believe that they did not realize

how much and how well they were doing. The children responded so well to their consistent unconditional love and creative lessons. This is what makes the difference. This is what love is and what the children need. The Farm is an exemplary witness to love and possibilities.



When I was thinking about the Farm this past week, this story came to mind:

St. Peter, at the gates of heaven, was asked once the difference between Heaven and Hell. He took the questioning man to a window. The view inside the window was of a feast with candles, and a beautiful spread of the most colorful mangoes, the saltiest plaintain chips, chocolate dripped from fountains, the finest wines filled glasses, Salva Vida beer was chilled to perfection. Rich cheeses, seafood, and meats adorned the table like a table cloth. But strangely enough, the men and women

at the table stared at the food. No one ate a morsel. St. Peter told the man to look closely. The men and women did not have elbows. After trying many times to feed themselves they failed, so they decided not to eat. *This was Hell.*

The man quickly asked St. Peter to show him Heaven. St. Peter brought him to the next window. The feast was exactly the same, the chocolate, the wine, etc. But in this case everyone was eating in celebration and laughter. The man quickly assumed that these people must have elbows. Peter looked into the man's eyes and said, "No, the people in heaven have no elbows either. You must look closely. So the man looked for another explanation.

He realized that the difference between Heaven and Hell was that in Heaven they fed each other.

So that, to me, is Heaven, love, God. I love this story and let it come into my life when it needs to, when I forget how much love there is to be given. Being in that chapel and spending time with the children on the Farm spoke volumes to me on love and God. You just do it. You take care of the kids, you feed them until there are no more that need to be fed. You take them into the ocean, you share your banana soda with them. You put their uniforms on, you help them with their homework. You love them. That is all there is to it. You love unconditionally; that is what we are called to do. That is what the Farm of the Child reminded me to do. So I am very grateful to the Farm and all the people I met. I hope to return over Holy Week this coming Easter to share again in this little piece of Heaven on Earth.

Prayer Intentions - Fall 2010

We pray through the intercession of St. Therese of Liseiux, patron saint of missionaries, for our ten new volunteers who will be arriving to the Farm of the Child on October 1st; that God may bless their preparations and transition to life at the Farm, teaching them the same "little way" of love and service to others that St. Therese embraced in her own life.

We pray for Hector and Saúl, the two Farm youth who will be graduating from high school in November and embarking on their independent adult lives and continuing education; that God may continue to show His great love for them in their lives, keep them close to their "family" at the Farm, and accompany them always.

We pray in thanksgiving for all of the Farm's generous benefactors, supporters, and prayer partners, without whom it would truly be impossible for our mission to flourish and grow.

We join with the Catholic Church of Honduras to remember and pray for all migrants who seek a better life for themselves and their families, asking God to protect them and keep them safe on their journeys.

We pray for justice and greater economic opportunities for the poor of Latin America, that they may find the means to support their families and children without having to endure the hazards and sacrifices of undocumented migration.

Amen

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

than by helping them celebrate their birthday!

After a day and a half of travel, we were finally at the front gate of the Farm. We had seen pictures of the Farm but seeing it with our own eyes was so wonderful. As we began to drive slowly through the grounds, we began to hear children shouting with glee. You see, one of the people traveling with us, Erin, was a former volunteer at the Farm, and has visited often since that time, now as a member of the Board. The children became aware that she was in our van and were running to see her. The sparkle in their eyes and the looks on their little faces, and on Erin's, is our first memory of the Farm. It can all be summed up in one word "Love." Nelsy was one of those children and Erin was able to introduce us. We were very excited and so was Nelsy. That same sparkle in her eyes when she looked at Erin was also there when she looked at us. This is our second memory of the Farm. Hard to believe that it could get any better, but it does.

The following day, Erin gained permission for Nelsy and her house sister, Jenny, to drive into the town of Trujillo with us. Both girls would be celebrating their birthdays soon and we wanted to celebrate with them. Thank God for Erin! Fluent in Spanish, and loved by the children, she became the link between us and these beautiful little girls. We began with lunch and learned what the girls like to do, how they like school, favorite color, etc. They tried to teach me a hand game. I wasn't very good, and we all had a good laugh together. We sang Happy Birthday to the girls and headed to the ice cream shop and the cotton candy stand. We shared the treats and took pictures. It was fantastic.



Happy Birthday, Nelsy!

Monday was our first 'work' day. The children were already in school and we were able to accomplish a lot. Later that afternoon we could hear in the distance a voice calling "Cati! Ton!" Nelsy had caught sight of us and was excitedly calling to get our attention. From that moment on, everyone called us Cati and Ton. We loved it! All the volunteers were invited to have lunch with a family one day and we were invited by Nelsy's family. Erin joined us and we were treated to wonderful meal of soup and tortillas. Nelsy lives with her house parents, their two birth daughters and five other house sisters who are orphans just like her. We thoroughly enjoyed being with them as they shared with each other, helped each other, giggled with each other and eagerly completed their chores together. We were dining with a 'family,' a loving family.

During our week, one afternoon, after work was done, we went swimming with Nelsy and her house sisters. This was an absolute blast! There were no language barriers when we were playing, just lots of fun and laughter. We were exhausted by the time they returned home. This experience ranks as one of our fondest memories. Our entire visit we were experiencing something so wonderful. This little ten year old girl is a miracle. A miracle made possible by God and

everyone at the Farm. Nelsy is full of energy. Her eyes sparkle and her smile melts your heart. She can run like the wind and swim like a fish. She loves to sing and play soccer. She can read and write and knows her multiplication tables up to six (earning her a Coke for her house). Nelsy is a trusting, loving and giving child. She is beautiful, wonderful and happy. Needless to say, we fell in love, not only with her, but also with all the children at the Farm. These children are all examples of the miracles that happen at Farm of the Child.

Yes. We have no doubt that we are correct in using the word "miracle." The definition of miracle is a supernatural event or happening regarded as an act of God. The volunteers at the Farm are college graduates that have delayed their careers and have committed to giving two and a half years of their lives so that miracles can happen for these children. They are young men and women who come from all over the United States and Central America. It was wonderful spending time with them and listening to the events that had happened in each of their lives, leading them to the Farm. Each of them has said "Yes" to the call God placed on their hearts. They accept living simply, just as the Hondurans, leaving behind the luxuries of stoves, dishwashers, hot showers, air conditioning,

comfortable beds and considerably fewer bugs. They give of themselves 24/7 to the children, the house parents and fellow volunteers. They work together and pray together. They are successful in their teamwork because they accept each other and the life they have chosen. Watching them in all that they do, it was so clear to us, we weren't merely witnessing men and women giving of themselves, we were actually witnessing men and women allowing Christ to work through them. We are truly humbled by being so near to Christ in action, so near to miracles.

It was very hard to leave. We had become part of "The Farm's Family." As with any family visit that is far away, saying goodbye is difficult and sad. You're not sure when you will return, but you know that someday, you will.

We traveled to a faraway place called the "Farm of the Child" with the desire to help and give of ourselves. Little did we know how much we would receive and how blessed we would be.

*Reflections from Child Sponsor
especially for all who give to
Farm of the Child*

I have been to a place where
heaven meets earth
And miracles fill each day
Where orphans are fed and
given a bed
And every tear wiped away
Where fear is no more and
hope is restored
With the kindness and love
they are given
All join in prayer and
knowledge is shared
I'm certain that this is heaven

Not all can journey to this
far away place
But we can all be a part
When we give even the
smallest of gifts
We'll be there in each of
their hearts

It's heaven I've seen in eyes
big and wide
Each life so much better,
each face has a smile
It's Christ who's alive and
He's working inside
All who give to
The Farm of the Child

— *Con nuestra gratitud más sincera,*
Kathie & Tom Hacker

**\$350,000 must be raised
by June to keep
all program services
running at current levels**

\$350,000



Please help us reach
the goal and continue
serving the children
and families of
the Farm of the Child

**\$35,600 raised as
of 9/30/2010**

Farm of the Child: Community of Faith, Living the Sacraments

Each morning, upon awaking and opening my eyes, I give thanks to God to be awakening at Farm of the Child, for the blessing of living and growing in my spirit and faith, and for being an instrument to bring to fulfillment this mission.

The heart of the Farm is our beautiful chapel, surrounded by leafy trees and flowers, beautiful mountains and the vast sea, where each morning, from Monday to Friday, the bell sounds the 5:45am announcement that it is time to prepare for our daily prayer which begins at 6:00am. Upon exiting my front door, which is near the chapel, I see the children, their energy and their smiles, the house parents and tías from each house, the volunteers, the Franciscan Sisters,

"One body and one Spirit, as you were also called to the one hope of your call: one Lord, one faith, one baptism: one God and Father of all."

—Ephesians 4: 4-5

and I am reaffirmed as to why God has brought me here, to fulfill my own life's mission.

Our mornings begin with Lauds or Communion Service, receiving Jesus in the sacrament of the Bread of Life. It brings me joy to watch as the children grow with a foundation in life that is the faith and extensive love that is God, consciously knowing that we depend on Him alone. Upon leaving the chapel and watching from the top of

the small rise, I observe the beautiful mountains and contemplate the children and the rest of the community returning to their houses as the soft breeze caresses my face, and I feel Christ's presence saying, "I am here, with you..."

We culminate our daily journey with different evening activities including Holy Hour, with the Blessed Sacrament exposed for an hour, contemplating His love and asking Him to increase His grace within us, so that we may better serve Him. We pray the Holy Rosary on Tuesday evenings and share in community formation on Wednesdays, to increase our faith and enrich our spirituality.

From the moment that I first arrived at the Farm, I have observed that there is a complete sacramental formation, starting with the primary foundation of Baptism, in which we inherit the Kingdom of God. I have witnessed how content the children are in the knowledge that,

in Baptism, they now have a great Father. In their formation for Confession they experience God's infinite mercy, and amongst smiles and nerves, there is a great joy and happiness as

they receive their First Communion and relive the grace of sharing in the true Bread of Life. The preparation continues as our own children reaffirmed their faith in the experience of sharing the celebration of Holy Matrimony of three of the couples serving as house parents at the Farm, a community event where we shared happiness and hope with our neighbors from the Mojaguay village, converting this event into an example of

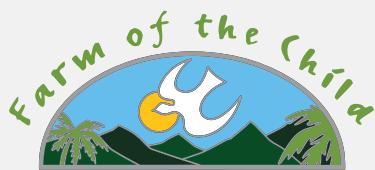
Christian sacramental living, not only for our children and adolescents, but also for our neighbors. All of our celebrations are led by our dear diocesan priests, who celebrate with great heart and openness, including our Bishop of Trujillo, Monsignor Luis Solé. And of course, I cannot forget my gratitude for those who are the bridge and great example for our children and adolescents, as are the Franciscan Sisters.

The Farm of the Child puts into practice that which the Gospel of St. John tells us: To enrich the Kingdom of God in a complete and integral way, and the most beautiful part is that we all live in these moments together, because we know that we depend on God alone, and we are all his subjects.

Every night I go to bed convinced that I hear one voice, and it says to me, "I am here...." Who? My Jesus. I continue to be blessed and grateful to augment my love, my hope, my spirit, to grow beside these children and adolescents in total faith with God and our Mother, Mary.

Your Sister in Christ,

Ysmary Trejo
Program Director
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.



Printed On
Recycled Paper

The production and printing of this newsletter is completely donated.
Farm of the Child is an IRS 501(c)3 organization.