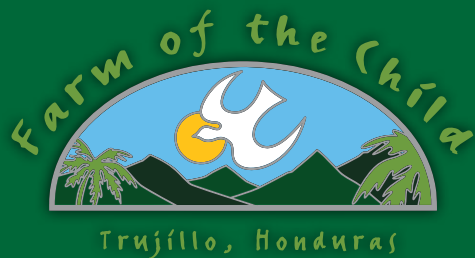


FRIENDS OF THE FARM

A NEWSLETTER FOR OUR SUPPORTERS

S U M M E R 2 0 1 0



Our newest little brother

By Francesca Pennino, Volunteer

Here at the Farm we see a lot of “new,” day in and day out. Everything from new people and toys to new roofs and fences; even the beach looks different day to day. This is a place that is in a constant state of change. I imagine that most of us have been new at some point in our lives: new student, new worker, new friend, new neighbor. So, we know the feelings that go along with this state of being: perhaps fear, intimidation, excitement, loneliness, maybe even sadness for the “old” that had to make way for this “new.” Keeping this in mind, I try and picture what it must be like for our children here at the Farm when they arrive as our “new kids.” Just a month ago, I had the gift of experiencing such an event with the coming of Brayan Stanly Romero, our “newest” Finca kid.

Imagine it: you are seven years old, taken from the streets of Trujillo which you have been roaming by yourself for days. The local police find you and tell you they have a home for you, with lots of other children and adults. You pull up to a gate and enter, greeted by a beautiful church, a soccer field, and lots of different buildings, all the same color. Your little legs climb out of the pick-up truck in which you have arrived. You are greeted by a few smiling gringas attempting to greet you with the Spanish that awkwardly bounces from their mouths into your ears. What do you think? One of them takes you by the hand and leads you somewhere, “To your new home!” she tells you in her funny accent. You approach a house full of five boys, wide-eyed and sitting on the porch with another woman, this one Honduran. Cautiously, you approach the scene, still holding the hand of the gringa. “Chicos, I’d like you all to meet your new housemate, Brayan!” All the boys remain silent, captured by the newness of your person. Slowly, one by one,



Brayan was found roaming in the streets

they begin to introduce themselves. In the end, you are wrapped up in the hug of the Honduran woman, learning that she is the tía or caretaker of the home. You have just experienced your first few moments at Farm of the Child.

What am I trying to describe by telling you all this? That newness is scary and confusing, perhaps overwhelming. But this state of being “new” or foreign has also brought out the deep, inner beauty that is the Farm. Watching as our entire community prepared itself for the arrival of Brayan was a tangible act of love that has forever moved me. Without a second thought, every member of our community plunged into action to make way for our little friend. The clinic got together all the medical tests he would need, the school analyzed the best ways he could fit in to either first or second grade, his teachers graciously accepted him into the classroom, the house tía prepared the boys for the big change in the house, gave him a bed, food, and a safe environment. The volunteers have incorporated Brayan into our day-to-day activities, taking him swimming, playing games,

coloring, and spending time with him and his housemates. Brayan’s arrival gave birth to a renewed vision of the Farm, allowing us to remember that this place, although not perfect, is a place of refuge, of grace, of a Christ-like love. His arrival gives life to the “newness” we find in our lives, wherever it may be.

Since that first day, Brayan has charmed us all into falling in love with him. He is a spunky, stocky little guy with a love for soccer games, eating mangoes, and sitting near and receiving hugs from any person that walks by. His transition has been for the most part very calm and beautiful to watch. His housemates have embraced him as their newest “brother” teaching him the rules of the Farm, helping him to catch up in school (he is in first grade with three other boys in the house), and playing lots and lots of fútbol. Of course, no transition is perfect and everyone must go through their adjustment period, but Brayan is taking his with stride and energy. He brings some street roughness, not to mention a mouth that would shock anyone. But everyone of us brings those things in which we must improve, and Brayan’s new community is doing an amazing job at helping him to learn, grow, and just be a seven year old child, without fear of where his next meal will come from or from whom he will need to protect himself.

We believe, as the words of our founder Vincente Pescatore say, that:

“God has graciously imbued us with more than enough love to suffice. Our children are poor, we are poor, and our families will be poor – but the poor never forget the poor, and God has blessed and sent His servants to the poor. We will teach our children to be proud simply because God has loved them.”

SPIRITUALITY

SERVICE

COMMUNITY

SIMPLICITY

TO SERVE IS TO PLEASE THE LORD

By Scarleth Arce, Volunteer Psychologist

God, when He speaks, does so, making clear His will, and He was clear with me when He called me to serve Him.



During my youth I always felt the desire to serve, but I did not understand how I could do it, and then one day God spoke to me and said: "Whoever gives his life for my sake will find me." Without expecting it, God brought me to Farm of the Child. It was a time that brought much light and, above all, much peace, to my life. It is when the desire to serve as a volunteer psychologist was born deep within me. I discovered God's plan. I had always wanted to study psychology to help others, and it was then that I understood what God wanted for me.

I went through a discernment process, and in the end, I understood that God wanted a service from my life. I arrived at Farm of the Child in January 2010, the Farm received me with a positive attitude, giving my work value as a psychologist for the children, and that makes me feel valued.

Beyond that, the children fill me with love, and I can see in each one of their smiles Jesus telling me how much He loves me.

I can help the children in each suffering and emotional pain or psychological problem that presents in their lives. The experience of service is of great value, because every day it leaves an

indelible print that I am sure will last for the rest of my life.

For me, to serve means to sow good seeds in order to reap a lasting harvest, it is to give from the soul, to give affection, kindness, and moral support. My service has been to give happiness, instill faith, esteem, admiration, respect, gratitude, sincerity, hope, honesty, and confidence, it has been to give my time and my abilities in a free manner without expectation of anything in return. The Farm has given meaning to my life, it has helped me to find myself, and above all,

to find God, to understand that God must be the center of my life. And by the measure of which I give myself to others, Jesus compensates me with His love and goodness.

My experience would not be the same without taking into account the basic principles of life at the Farm:

spirituality, service, community and simplicity. Each pillar is a goal, a goal for which I must strive each day, that upon reaching, fills my work with more satisfaction, and motivation to continue working for the Kingdom of God. And in my moments of sadness or weakness, in just seeing the face of a child, I am given the strength to carry on because I am reminded that my mission in that moment is to serve them with love and self-giving.

To serve is to give of myself with all my heart, as Jesus gave of himself for me before the cross.

Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it, Whoever leaves his father or mother for me, will find me, Do not fear, I am here, and I know whom I have chosen."

— Matthew 10:39

PRAYERS & PETITIONS

We pray for the Church; that Christians everywhere may be attentive to the call of Jesus in their hearts and respond with courage and faith...

We pray for our world; that people of good-will might continue to work tirelessly for peace and justice in troubled lands...

We pray for the government of Honduras; that those in positions of leadership might use their influence for the common good, especially on behalf of those who are marginalized and oppressed...

We pray for the children of the Farm, especially our newest child, Brayan; that he and all of the Farm children might come to trust in the presence of a good and loving God who is made manifest through the hands, feet, tears, and laughter of those around them...

We pray in gratitude for all of our donors, especially for the work of Espiritu Santo parish; that they might be richly blessed for their generosity and kindness, and that much fruit will be borne from the seeds they have planted at the Farm.

Amen.

How the Farm is Changing Lives

By Tiffany Ross, *Espiritu Santo Missionary*

I came as a guest to the Finca for a week with Espiritu Santo Catholic Church once again this summer. Our hosts were nothing but open arms and, while the children were shy at first, they quickly remembered us and the playful games began.

It is remarkable to me how these children have endured so much pain and hurt they want to forget, and yet they trust so easily when they know they are loved.

Looking in from an outsider's perspective, I got the chance to see how this truly blessed place is changing lives no matter who they are or where they come from. On both sides of the spectrum, there is something you find there that is so peaceful, so loving, so intoxicating that you can never forget. It may be the atmosphere of love, or all the lives daily set around Christ, or even the pain and brokenness every child is bearing with volunteers who support them and will help them, for they are not alone. One thing I am sure of. You will not leave this place an unchanged soul.

Our personal mission began as a project to put the electricity for the most important areas on campus underground. This meant digging trenches, whether it was through unforgiving soil, never-ending weaves of roots, or mounds of fire ants. We started the first day attempting to cross the soccer field thinking we knew what we were in for.

The Honduran sun quickly taught us a few lessons of endurance, but the young boys taught us more. As soon as school was out, they headed home and stopped by to see what we were doing to their beloved soccer field. The high school kids in our group attempted to use what they had learned in school to explain. Whatever they said in their gringo Spanish seemed to make the Finca boys laugh. They grabbed some shovels, slipped off their shoes, and got to work with us.

It was a great experience being able to watch those relationships unfold and friendships grow between the kids in my group and all the children of the Finca. Not even language barriers can stop children from relating to children I suppose. An everyday break consisted of tree climbing for mamonas, soccer and tag, swimming in the ocean, and chasing the girls around with a crab or a hose. This is how it is for the kids living there every day. It was nice for the young people in our group to see that. It allowed them to be children again and to indulge in the fun children's games of our adolescence that the American culture forces you out of at such a young age.

Later on in the week, the Volunteers warmly welcomed me to stay a night with them while my group hiked up to Buena Vista for the night. It was a very enlightening experience for me because I finally got to see what their responsibility to the Finca really consists of. Every Wednesday night they have a theme night they call "Tema." They explore all sorts of trying situations that the kids may go through day to day in order to teach them the virtuous way of life. That particular night

they were teaching them how to say no when they really want to say yes and how important the act of discipline is. Each house got to put on a skit showing what they would normally do when confronted by a house mother to do their chores and then what



they should do. It was a very exciting and funny to watch. Reflecting back on seeing all the Volunteers, the Sisters, house parents, children, and even the dogs in the library celebrating the good life together makes me only long to return.

You can't help but miss all of the joy and excitement of giving a child wings to be successful and righteous with the life they've been given.

I hope that by next year the Finca has raised enough money to finish that beautiful and strong fence around the whole campus. It is sad not knowing if they will be safe until that project is complete. However, trust in God is one thing you leave this place even more certain of. I have no doubt He won't leave this project incomplete for very long.

Thank you Espiritu Santo!

The Espiritu Santo parish of Safety Harbor, Florida sent it's largest group yet to the Farm of the Child this June: a two-week, fifty-four person group. The group's tasks were two major construction projects: changing the roof of the house where our youngest boys live and re-laying hundreds of feet of electrical cable as a part of a larger and much-needed electrical system upgrade.

In just two weeks, we realized the common humanity that unites a stateside parish and a family-style children's home on the northern coast of Honduras. Mil gracias for the compassionate service of Espiritu Santo and all of our wonderful visiting groups this year!

The benefit of such projects can not be underestimated, but to focus only on the "work" of the week would be to miss much of the beauty and the meaning that really took place here. The Farm community and surrounding village received bursts of spiritual energy with additional Masses from Fr. Gilberto and a lively bilingual choir. Affirmations and mutual support abounded as volunteers and visiting missionaries marveled at each other's energy and love of the children of Honduras.

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

Faith in Action

By Ysmary Trejo

I have returned to Honduras after a nine year absence. During my time in this country from 1999 to 2001, my work was to support marginalized communities, with the International Organization for Migration in post-hurricane Mitch reconstruction. It was during this time that I heard God's call to focus my talents, abilities and professional capacities on those whose fundamental human rights had been wounded. I received a call to accompany, serve, dignify, capacitate, share with and give hope through the light of Faith to those people immersed in situations of great pain and struggle. It is for this reason that I dedicated myself, during the intervening years, to work for and support social development organizations and intergovernmental bodies in Latin America, but always with the great desire to return to Honduras, the country that had remained in my heart since returning to my homeland, Venezuela.

On March 10, 2010, I arrived at Farm of the Child as the new Program Director, with a desire and deep commitment to serve this project, to direct and strengthen the integral assistance provided here with a systematic focus – the faith and spirituality of the children and adolescents, those who have been subjected to the vulnerability of their fundamental rights, joining efforts with the Franciscan Sisters, volunteers, foster parents and tías of each of the homes in this beautiful community.

Farm of the Child differentiates itself from other organizations by the faith that is lived out daily, that feeds the heart and the life of all of us who participate in this

great community. It is the expression of solidarity of a community of life, communion and service, that knows not only what to do, but also why to do it, to build the Kingdom of God.

At the Farm, I feel God's presence as it is manifested in every sharing, every look, every child's smile, in all the activities and prayer services that the Farm community shares, in nature, through the sea, in every sunrise and sunset, in the beautiful, green mountains. I see the love of God made manifest in the unconditional commitment of solidarity of the people who are integrated in this community – in each member of the Board of Directors, that carry out a great labor to continue this mission, in each Franciscan Sister that works for the well-being of the community, in each Volunteer that offers his or her time to our children, in each supporter that gives without expectation of anything in return, and in all of the people who pray to sustain and increase our desire to serve.

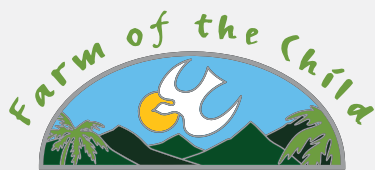
Each day I give thanks to God for hearing my prayers, for allowing me to prepare myself during the past nine years to return to this beautiful and dear country at the hand of Farm of the Child.



Ysmary Trejo

“Faith in action is love and love in action is service.”

— Mother Theresa of Calcutta



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



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