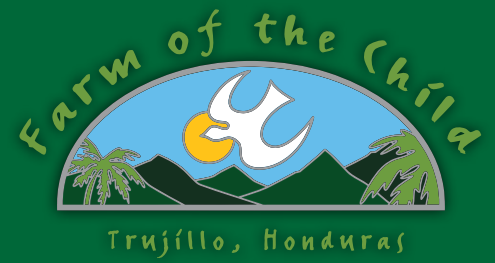


FRIENDS OF THE FARM

A NEWSLETTER FOR OUR SUPPORTERS



HOLIDAYS 2010

The Next Chapter: Two of the Farm's First Kids Graduate from High School

By Jennie Maria Motto,
Adolescent Boys House Volunteer

This weekend is an exciting one for us at the Farm, as Saúl and Héctor (Ismael) will be graduating from high school. These young men were two of the first to arrive at the Farm of the Child, and this weekend gives us a chance to reflect on all of the things they have written on their formerly blank pages, on all of the things they have written on our own lives, and on all they hope to write in the future.

José Saúl Castillo López arrived at the Farm almost fourteen years ago as a quiet 4 year old, falling between his older sister Suyapa and his younger brother Arturo. He lived in two different houses at the Farm and with almost half a dozen sets of house parents during his time there; he then moved to La Ceiba to study at the Instituto María Regina, one of the most prestigious high schools in Honduras, and will be graduating with a degree in Science and Letters. Saúl plans to study agricultural engineering in the coming years at the National Autonomous University of Honduras.

He says what he misses most about the Farm is the structure of the place: how the church, the school, and the houses are so close to one another.

Héctor Ismael Martínez Dueñas joined the Farm family with his four older siblings before the physical structures at the Farm were even built, living with Zulena Pescatore and her children in a house near the airstrip in Trujillo before moving to the Farm proper.



In the last fifteen years, Héctor has lived in two houses at the Farm and three in La Ceiba, learning from and sharing with three sets of house parents and four volunteer mentors.

He will graduate from the Instituto San Isidro with a degree in Commerce and Public Accounting; the longer three-year program that he is completing prepares him to enter the working world as a professional, but Héctor plans to study architecture at one

of the universities in La Ceiba over the next five years. When asked about his time at the Farm, he vividly describes the hurricane evacuations as the craziest part of living at the Farm: one minute everything is calm and the next, volunteers are running to each of the houses waving suitcases to be packed!

It's hard for those of us here now to imagine these two young men as the little kids they once were, running around the

Farm, falling asleep in their kindergarten classes, learning how to cook and clean, belting out hymns in the church, and knocking on the door of the volunteer house to borrow board games. At the same time, we know that the little ones living at the Farm now will be adolescents in La Ceiba before we know it, writing memories and quotes (like the one above, which is one of Héctor's favorites) on the pages of our lives as they continue to write their own stories.

*"La vida es una hoja en blanco,
que de cada uno de nosotros
depende lo que queremos
escribir en ella."*

*"Life is a blank page, and it is
up to each of us to write what
we want on it."*

**\$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

**\$90,000 raised
to date**

SPIRITUALITY

SERVICE

COMMUNITY

SIMPLICITY

What is the Best Thing that has Happened at the Finca this Year?



“The new fence”



“The arrival of Ysmary”



“Five Quinceañeros”



“Sending two kids to college in Mexico”

“Having Zulena come visit.”



“The chicken coops”



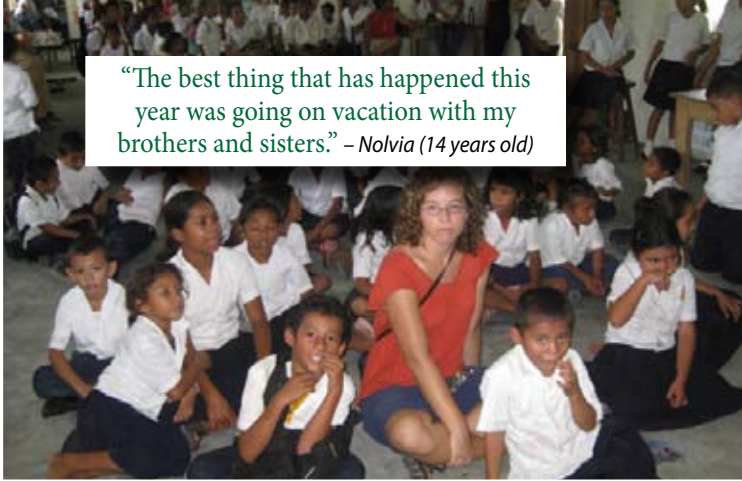
“Mango season”



“November 3 – Chicken Pot Pie”



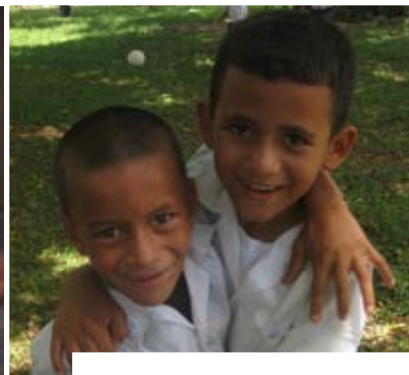
“Four new kids”



“The best thing that has happened this year was going on vacation with my brothers and sisters.” – *Nolvia (14 years old)*



“The best thing about this year has been doing my chores.”
– *Cati (5 years old)*



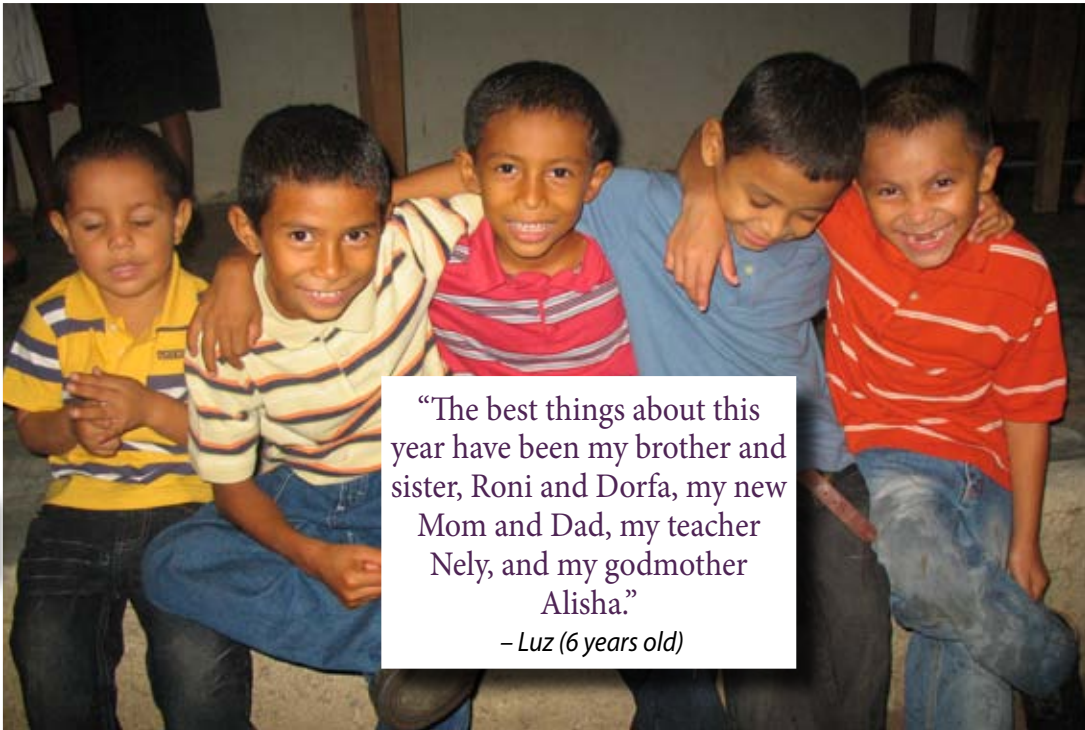
“The best thing about this year has been playing with the younger kids.”
– *Sigri (17 years old)*



“The best thing about this year has been playing!” – *Seidy (6 years old)*



“The best things that have happened this year have been doing puzzles and swimming in the ocean.”
– *Rosita (6 years old)*



“The best things about this year have been my brother and sister, Roni and Dorfa, my new Mom and Dad, my teacher Nely, and my godmother Alisha.”
– *Luz (6 years old)*



The Impact of Our Volunteers is Truly Immeasurable

With both joy and sadness we celebrate another all-star volunteer class that will be leaving the Farm community in December, after two years of dedicated service. We celebrate all they have done and all they have been for the Farm in their time here, and pray that God will be with them as they transition into the next phase of their journey.

Ryan Murphy served for the past two years as the first and second grade teacher. He was also the boys soccer coach and Scout leader. Through his dedication and service Ryan became a positive male role model, guiding and equipping the children with important lessons both inside and outside the classroom. He has seen his experience here as a great privilege and blessing from God.

The Finca was privileged to have **Elizabeth Quinn** work at the school for the past two years. Her first year she taught Math, Computers, and Health for seventh through ninth grades. This past year she was the Sub-Director of the school, provided computer maintenance, and assisted administratively in the adolescent transitional program. Through her work at the school Elizabeth was blessed by being in relationship not only with the Farm children, but with over 70 neighbor students as well.

Beth Lavalley's primary service for the past 27 months has been as the nurse for the Finca and the surrounding communities. She has treated everything from scraped knees and stomach aches to machete wounds, malaria, and parasites. Besides holding hours in the Clinic on the Farm, she has assisted with medical missions and made many home visits to neighbors – via foot, vehicle, or horseback. She also enjoyed spending her free time helping the children with their homework, participating in the women's group for the neighbors, or taking children to the local swimming holes. Through the challenges of serving at the Farm, Beth has been



Peter, Dan, Ryan, Sara, Beth and Quinn. Inset: Jennie and Sayda

blessed with invaluable lessons in humility, patience, selflessness, and what it means to love.

Sara Vogelpohl had the beautiful experience of being a social worker at the Finca for the past two years, primarily serving the two youngest girl's homes. She worked closely with the Honduran house parents and tias in helping the children to heal from their difficult pasts and grow into who they are meant to be. Sara has also found her experience of living in an intentional community very challenging and life-giving, in that every day she was able learn how to better love and be loved by each member of the Finca community.

Many volunteers joke about how crazy of a ride **Peter Toohar** has had in his two years of service at the Finca. He spent his first year as a social worker for the adolescent boys, being called to live for three of those months as the live-in "house parent" for the oldest boys, ages 14-16. After training the boys new caregiver, Peter moved into the role of sub-director, where he worked alongside the Franciscan Sisters to assist with Direction. But when Ysmar was hired a few months later, the sub-director position ceased to exist, leaving him to mold and provide vision for the new position of Volunteer Coordinator.

Through the many different missions Peter has been given at the Farm, he has faithfully answered "yes" to serve wherever he was called.

Dan O'Shea has found himself in charge of a variety of different people, children and adults alike, in his time at the Farm. Though his primary role as a volunteer was teaching science in the middle school, he has also done a fantastic job as head of security, and co-head of the adolescent transition program. In his spare time he has also helped organize and run the men's soccer group, that comes to the Finca twice a week for some neighborly competition. Dan has been a blessing to the Farm community in his strong relationships with the adolescents, his consistency and reliability, and his unbeatable sense of humor.

Though right now **Jennie Maria Motto** is playing "mom" for our two teenage boys living in La Ceiba as part of our Phase 2 program, she actually began her time in Honduras at the Farm itself serving as the accountant, and as well as buying and distributing the food for the Finca. She will be missed for her strong presence as a leader in the community, the loving support she provides for kids and volunteers alike and her willingness to listen to Michael Jackson on max volume with teenage boys for the entire afternoon.

Sayda Lagos spent her first year at the Finca working as a tia in the oldest girls' house. A year ago she became an official volunteer, moving to La Ceiba to live with the adolescent girls in Phase 2. Her kindness and enthusiasm will be missed as she leaves the Finca community to continue studying at a university in La Ceiba.

Working With the Poor is a Treasure

By Peter Tooher, Volunteer Coordinator

I remember back to when I first heard about Farm of the Child in 2005. At the time words like “discern” weren’t part of my vocabulary, but I somehow conjured up the idea – I discerned – that I sought an experience in which I would have to truly rely on my faith in God. Up until that point, life had been pretty cozy and I wondered: if my faith was ever really tested, how would it hold up?

In 2006, I came to the Farm for eight weeks as a summer volunteer. In those eight weeks, there were several moments when I fell back on this faith and found Christ in the moments of my greatest weakness as a substitute classroom teacher. And in the self-giving service that God drew out of me at the Farm, I found new joy and freedom that I’d never before experienced.

Two years later, I discerned – there’s that word again – a two-year commitment to be a volunteer missionary at the Farm. I still clung to elements of my first experience, but the joy and freedom I felt before was becoming clouded as I became wrapped up in myself, my gifts and talents, and my service.

Over these past two years, I can see how the Farm has started within me a long journey to step outside of myself. It starts with the experience of being displaced as a missionary – entering into a new language, culture, community, and call to serve in ways that are beyond our preparations. It strips away, little by little, our sense of ego and entitlement, our sense that we alone can “help” people or save them from their poverty. Most importantly, it reminds us of our own poverty – our own spiritual weakness or pride or self-dependence. Yet somehow, we encounter here a God who loves us so grandly and so uniquely. And we are able to experience His love, to place it at the center of our lives, because we realize our poverty.

Coming to know the ways in which we are poor ourselves, we also come to realize that God is especially present and attentive to the poor – to us. Just as Jesus came to call the sinners and the marginalized. Just as Mother Teresa saw the living body of Christ in her and her Sisters’ care of the destitute. Working with the poor is a treasure, as is being a missionary, not because it makes us feel good about ourselves. But rather because it opens our eyes to our own poverty, our own intimate bond with the orphan in Honduras, the leper in India, or the prisoner in Chicago. And it is then that we can more fully experience the love of our Maker, rely on that faith in Him, and grow in our witness of Christ’s love by humbly serving to bring about His Kingdom. In that way, I see now how God has been teaching me to rely on Him.

The words of our founder, Vincent Pescatore, in his first letter from the first Farm of the Child project in Guatemala capture this spirit, which I have learned to hold dear while serving as a missionary:



“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.”

Indeed God sends his servants to the poor. And at no time is this more real than Christmas time, when we celebrate the humble birth of “God with us,” Emmanuel, in a manger in Bethlehem.

PRAYERS & PETITIONS

We pray for our Franciscan Sisters, in thanksgiving for their continued service to the Farm: May God continue to bless and guide them in their selfless service to our community.

For Peter, Dan, Ryan, Beth, Sara, Quinn, Jennie, and Sayda, in thanksgiving for their compassionate service to the Farm over the past two years: May God continue to bless them wherever God’s will guides them in the future.

For all of our children here on the Farm, in thanksgiving for their loving presence: May God continue to bless them as they grow in His grace. We pray in a special way for Arturo and Marina as they transition into Phase 2 of Farm life in La Ceiba.

For all of our house parents and aunts, teachers, and all Honduran employees who serve the Farm everyday, in thanksgiving for their service: May God continue to bless them and their families.

For the continued strength and growth of our entire Farm community, that it may continue to grow in God’s love.

Amen

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

Lasting Impressions of Service

By Ysmary Trejo

Truly, it is the love of service that allows me to reflect on this time of great emotion, recognition and goodbyes during the month of December at Farm of the Child; moments that form part of the history of this project. I focus on three aspects that leave indelible footprints on our community.

First of all, I reflect on **THE GREAT WORKS OF SERVICE** and the recognition of the efforts of those who have made Farm of the Child in Honduras a reality to shelter the children and adolescents of this country who are in most need. I take this opportunity to emphasize the unconditional support given by the Franciscan Sisters of the Assumption and highlight the celebration of the 10th anniversary of their integral presence within the mission of the Farm. Many are the Sisters who have left a wake of beautiful memories and lasting lessons with the members of this community, especially with our children and teens. Their Order has strengthened the pillars that define this project and helped to continue the legacy of Vincent Pescatore in this mission.

The contributions of the Franciscan Sisters are many, starting with the charism of their congregation: Love, Cooperation, and Minority (Minority as understood by the Franciscan Orders is a state of dependency, humility, and simplicity). The opportunity to share in the lives of the Sisters has been a guiding light within the Farm community. We are grateful for their presence during the joyous times and the challenging times of this project. Regardless of the adversities that have presented themselves, the Sisters have dedicated themselves unconditionally, all for their great love of serving the Lord.

Secondly, I reflect on **THE CALL TO SERVE** of the men and women who have come from afar to commit themselves to the mission of Farm of the Child, such as that of our volunteer missionaries. This group has deposited their grain of sand; they heard God's call to reach out and build the Kingdom of God beyond their own borders and boundaries. They have sowed the seeds of hope for a better world for Honduran children and teens. They are special men and women with a sensitivity to the poor, for victims of social injustice, and for those in need of assistance. This sensitivity is combined with their faith, honesty, fairness, responsibility, humility, citizenship, authenticity, solidarity, gratitude, and social intelligence. But above all, it is combined with their capacity to love and be loved. These men and women, who leave behind their personal belongings and emotional commitments, come to share their gifts during some of the most important developmental moments in the lives of those who form the Farm of the Child community.

I congratulate them and I thank them, as much to those who are leaving us this December as to those who will remain in service to the mission. To the group of volunteers who are departing, I say "Hasta luego"; the Farm remains in their hearts, in the certainty that they will return to visit us someday and will continue sharing our mission wherever they may go. To the group of volunteers who remain and to those who have just recently arrived, I encourage them to keep sowing hope—hope, who is a companion without measure and a joy without limit. I extend this encouragement to all of our Board members, supporters, donors, and friends.

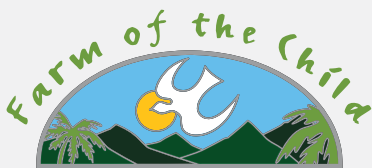


Ysmary Trejo

Lastly, I reflect on **THE FRUITS OF SERVICE**. Many of those who are part of the sowing and watering process are no longer here to see the products of their labors of love. These fruits are borne in the lives of our adolescents as they integrate themselves into a life of independence. As much so on the day they step forth, as they day they arrived, these young men and women show us the rewards of the services provided in this project.

In a special way, I make mention of Hector Ismael and José Saul, two of the very first children to arrive at Farm of the Child. Today they are taking their first steps of self-actualization as grown men. I wish to emphasize the example that they are to the children and teens that continue living at the Farm and hope that they will always be remembered as brothers who offer good counsel.

These are some of the many reasons that this month of December at Farm of the Child is very special and unique. It is a month that reminds us of that which unites us as a community— to continue our act of service, of sharing love with each other. It is an invitation to reflect on all that this passing year has done to focus us on our mission with conviction, commitment, and faithfulness. It is those special moments that sustain us.



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Feliz Navidad from the Farm of the Child

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



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