



# Worldwide Heart to Heart Ministries



Organization: P.O. Box 372, Carson, WA 98610, 509.427.8585  
website: <http://wwh2h.org>; email: [maryf@wwh2h.org](mailto:maryf@wwh2h.org)

Orphanage: Children's Village, Tegucigalpa, Honduras  
Oscar & Amy Serrano, Honduras National Directors

NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2008

## Children's Village: Victims of Mental Illness

by Amy Serrano

This month I want to bring you up close and personal with three children who have recently joined our family. We will call them Rose (11), Carl (9) and Ike (4). It is difficult for adults to deal with mental illness, but it is even worse for children. This is their story.

Rose, Carl, and Ike are from Puerto Cortes. They are all very beautiful children. The youngest, Ike, has severe Down Syndrome. They were raised by a single mother and did not attend school.

We received a call from Dr. Nelly, a friend of our ministry and our children's local doctor. She said that she was concerned about a mother and four children who came to see her at the hospital. The children looked very scared and neglected. The mother told Dr. Nelly that, because her son

has Down Syndrome, she has been rejected by her family who wanted her to "get rid of the child."

Dr. Nelly was concerned and contacted us. She warned us that, while she did not have a lot of time with the family, she thought the mother might be dealing with mental health issues. Dr. Nelly invited her to give us a call.

Two days later, the mother called us. She said she was very poor and could no longer take care of her three children. We told her that Dr. Nelly had said there were four children. She said "No, only three." She wanted us to take the kids and give them what they needed. She said her mother was crazy (the grandmother) and she was afraid for the children. After talking with the mother, Oscar thought that

something seemed off about her, too. As the children's safety was in peril due to the mental instability of the mother, and possibly the grandmother, we decided to take the children.

As with all our children, we got custody papers from the court for these three to stay with us. The kids started school. Rose is a bright and beautiful young girl. Ike is so precious. He is teaching us much about how to care for the special needs of a child with severe Down Syndrome.

With Carl, though, we could immediately tell that something was not right. He showed signs of mental instability that were not extreme in any way, but nonetheless noticeable.

We were soon about to find out just how strange the mother really was. She showed up one day at the Village and said that she wanted to take her kids back. She acted as though we had stolen them from her, and as if she had no clue how they got there. We told her that the kids



*continued on page 2*

**Volunteers from Oregon, Washington, and Colorado worked to sort, repair, and build. The girls surprised Allison and Meegan with cake, signs and piñatas for their birthday.**



## Children's Village

*continued from page 1*

were now with us by court order and that she would have to work this out with the judge. She responded by saying that she had already been to the court and they said that we had better give her children back. We told her we could only release the kids to representatives of the court with signed documents. She went away.

About three weeks later, the mother showed up with a man dressed in medical scrubs. She said that he was a representative of the court to take the children. It turns out it was her nephew, a medical assistant at the local hospital. He said that she asked him to come because we wanted all of the kids to have a medical exam. She insisted that the kids be given back. We assured her that unless proper

procedure was followed, the kids would not leave.

The mother began to come to church each Sunday to visit with the kids. She brought them treats and told them to pack their bags when they got back to the Village, because she was coming to get them. She always came with a little girl. Rose said it was their little sister. For the child's protection, we have requested the court to have her brought to us as well.

Their grandmother came to the Village one day. This woman was not mentally disturbed. She told us that the family never rejected her daughter because of her son's Down Syndrome. The family had battled her daughter's mental illness, many times trying to take the children from her. The grandmother was very angry with us and told us that she was

working with the court to get custody of the kids—something the court has told us "is not going to happen." The children all seem to be afraid of the grandmother.

In the meantime, we are learning all that we can about Ike's condition. We are also working to see how pronounced Carl's mental illness issues are and how to help him. He is a great kid and seems to be stabilizing in this new sane environment.

This situation has been a very difficult one. The kids have grown up in a distorted mental environment and are just now experiencing life in stability. They stick together as a family and seem to have very strong ties to each other. They have also blended into their new family. We ask you to pray for them, as the Lord is doing something wonderfully new in their lives. —Amy

## Village Report for August

by Amy Serrano  
Honduras National Co-Director

Greetings once again in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ! It is so good to be writing to you again about all the Lord is doing here in Honduras.

### Health Problems

We had a real battle with health issues last month, not only with the children but with our volunteers as well. We have had to deal with a very rare type of fly bite that deposits larva in the skin. We have also dealt with colds and stomach problems. Praise the Lord, we are all getting healthy again.

### Day at the Beach

The heat this time of year is pretty unbearable. One way to beat the heat is to head to the beach. Last Saturday, we loaded up all of the children in the bus and went swimming. They spent



**A day at the beach helps with the intense summer heat and humidity! Jackson Geraci joins in the fun.**

most of the day enjoying a beautiful pristine beach in the middle of the tropics that we had all to ourselves. You gotta love Honduras!

### Local Honduras Presentation

We had our first WWH2H presentation in Honduras. We presented the ministry in Hotel Villa del Sol owned by our good friend Claudia Wong. Few came, but those who did responded very positively! All things considered, we believe that night was a huge success. We have many more plans to make the ministry known here in Honduras. Please keep that in your prayers.

### House Painting

The kids have been really busy doing some painting. Lesley Geraci, one of our onsite volunteers from Colorado, has been working with the children painting their homes. There are now flowers, cars, suns, moons and stars on every building. The kids did their own paintings and some of them are, how do I put it... a little less than professional, but I love them! It adds so much to the atmosphere because they're expressions of the kids themselves.

### Annual Fun Day

We had our annual fun day at the village on the 16th of August. It included soccer games, sack races, and relay races. We invited kids from the neighborhood and other churches. It was wonderful!!

### Chelsea and Bernadette

Chelsea Swedberg and Bernadette Campbell returned to the states on the 20th of August. Bernadette has

*continued on page 3*



## Village Report

*continued from page 2*



**Chelsea Swedberg (left) and Bernadette Campbell (right) were long-term volunteers.**

been here since March and Chelsea came in May. We want to thank all of our volunteers. You have been such a blessing and we hope to have you all back in the very near future.

### Brittany Roy

This month Brittany Roy from Colorado, a 19-year-old Hispanic studies major at Oregon State University, came to help for a week. She speaks fluent Spanish and was such a blessing to the children. She

and the Geracis headed back to the states together in mid August.

### Church Opening

The WWH2H Church has been pushing forward with all of our heart. August 24th was our first Sunday service in the new building. The construction continues, however. We still lack doors and windows, flooring and ceiling, electrical work, and a few other details, but, by the grace of God, we are moving forward.

### Nothing is Impossible for God

Each day that goes by, God is showing Himself strong, stronger than all of the abuse, poverty and sorrow that can be found in a third world country such as Honduras. All of our children are living proof that there is nothing impossible for God.

**Oscar Serrano inspects the new facade and roof supports for the WWH2H Church.**



### You are Making a Difference

We want to thank you so much for standing beside us in the fight, with your prayers and support. Hand in hand, heart to heart, we are making a difference one child at a time! - Amy

## VBS Benefit Luau a Big Success

On August 21, over 100 folks came together at Rock Creek Center in Stevenson, Washington, to help raise funds for the VBS team going to Honduras over Thanksgiving. They enjoyed roast pig, hula dancers, and the good humor of local performer and good friend, Bryce McCollum.

Thank you to everyone who made this evening possible and especially, to team member Karen Douglass for leading the pack!!

Please keep this team in your prayers as they continue to raise funds for this mission trip. Thank you!!



**Kevin Geraci coaches the boys in how to play baseball. His wife, Lesley, laughed so hard at the antics, that she said the practice looked like something out of the classic "Bad News Bears" movie.**

# VBS Benefit Concert!!

Sunday, September 28  
6:00 p.m.

## Faith Tabernacle Open Bible Church

12 Vancouver Avenue  
Stevenson, WA

*You are cordially invited to a VBS Benefit Concert sponsored by the Faith Tabernacle Worship Team. All proceeds will go to the WWH2H November VBS team to Honduras to help defray the costs for them to minister to the children of Honduras.*

*Team members are from several local area churches. Invite your friends, and join us for a night of great music and fun!!*



## A Most Memorable Vacation

by Lesley Geraci

We could hardly contain our excitement as we rolled into the lush green eight-acre property. Framed by reaching green palm trees and a quiet mountain range in the distance, Children's Village sits beneath a low lying canopy of misty white clouds and a big blue sky.

Just barely out of the car door, we were besieged by a multitude of beaming smiley faces and wide open arms that greeted us with exuberance and warmth. We had arrived!

On top of hours of unbridled play and happy loud laughter, our first week was full of learning. Familiarizing ourselves with kids' names, as well as putting them together with their siblings, was a sport we quickly mastered. Determining a workable method of communication became a fast priority. We achieved a language of mutual understanding which consisted of broken Spanish and comical charades which we now call "Sparades." We adjusted to the unrelenting heat, humidity, and frequent power and water outages.

In time, we moved into service phase as we began to identify the needs at the Village. Along with a number of fellow volunteers, we worked at organizing a shipment of donated items that got sorted and disseminated to the kids who were thrilled to enjoy new clothes, toys, and toothbrushes.

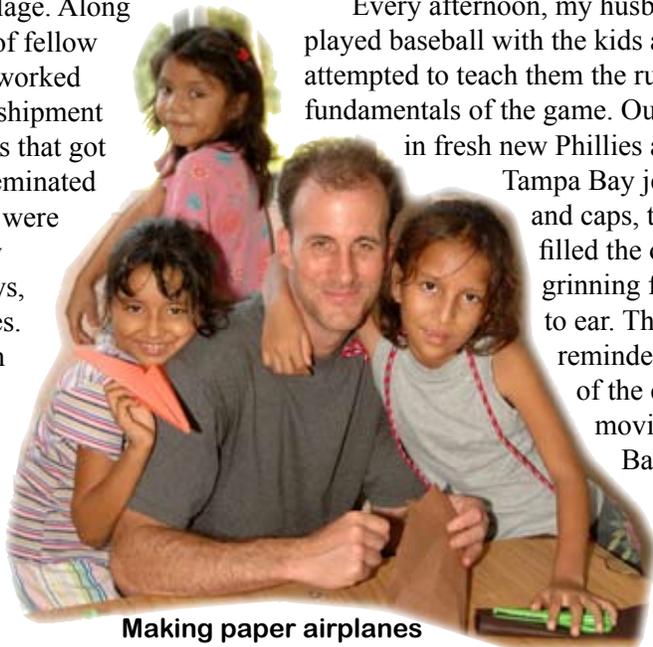
With a team of girls at our side, we built a vegetable garden filled with rich black soil that we hoed and pick axed under the scorching hot sun. I had never perspired quite like I did, and yet I felt completely fulfilled and invigorated. Our boys often read stories to the babies in the Baby House and had fun with flash cards as they attempted to impart English language skills to their new friends.

We all got enthusiastic about decorating the exterior of the buildings. The kids relished the opportunity to paint brightly colored flowers and happy sunny skies beneath a friendly "bienvenidos" banner welcoming all who come to visit.

While carpentry isn't one of my husband's many strengths, he succeeded in adjusting the many skewed swollen doors at the Girls' House and helped with the installation of locks

and other hardware. He no longer faults me for insisting that he join me while watching the latest decorating and home improvement TV shows.

Every afternoon, my husband played baseball with the kids and attempted to teach them the rules and fundamentals of the game. Outfitted in fresh new Phillie Phanats and Tampa Bay jerseys and caps, the kids filled the outfield, grinning from ear to ear. The follies reminded me of the classic movie "The Bad News Bears."



Making paper airplanes in the Girls' Home

It wasn't the projects or

the lifestyle differences that stuck with us, however. It was our time, interaction, and relationships with the kids that we will forever remember. We experienced frequent acts of love, kindness, generosity, and selflessness consistently. Seeing the gentle care and attention 10-year-old Carlos paid to his four-year-old brother with Down Syndrome was poignant and brought tears to my eyes. The gifts of marbles several boys offered to my sons when they owned so little was remarkable. Katherine who patiently taught my husband to read in Spanish, and others who enthusiastically taught our boys the Honduran version of hand games. Ilcy who offered me the only photo of herself so that I'd remember her when I left. Denis who took my husband's hand and led him to the dinner table where he asked to be joined in prayer. These small acts of love and friendship are extraordinary examples by which to live.



Suns, moons, flowers, and many more of the children's painted artwork adorn the walls of Children's Village

See **Vacation**  
continued on page 5



## Vacation

*continued from page 4*

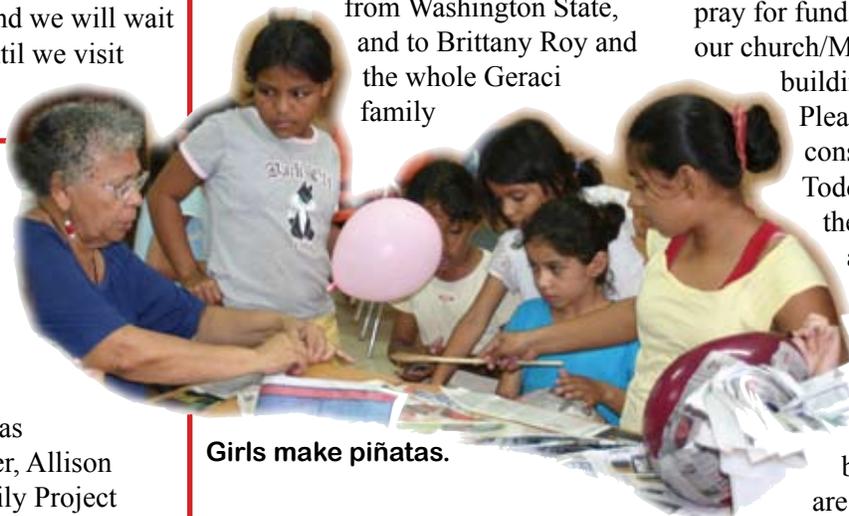
It is not the service projects we set out to accomplish that we will remember most. Rather, it is the new friendships we forged with a group of kids who demonstrate resiliency in the face of adversity and raise the bar for living life as God intends. Our visit to the Children's Village has been a blessing and it provided perspective on what is truly important. Our time was very powerful and we feel that we have received more than we gave.

We will draw inspiration from our new Honduran friends and our hearts will be full of warmth and smiles as we embrace the gifts of joy and love and blessings the kids have bestowed upon me and my family. Our thoughts and prayers will be with our friends at the Children's Village and we will wait in happy anticipation until we visit again. —Lesley

## Eternal Family Project

Directed by Honduras WWH2H Board Member, Allison Alexander, Eternal Family Project (EFP) is a ministry to young women and girls in Honduras. Visit [www.eternalfamilyproject.org](http://www.eternalfamilyproject.org) to see the wonderful blessings God is providing to her children through her ministry.

Since EFP is not incorporated as an nonprofit organization (NPO) in Honduras yet, she works under the legal umbrella of ASOCORA, the NPO designation for WWH2H in Honduras. However, all her funding is raised independently. She is an amazing woman of God who has devoted her life to helping these young women and girls.



**Girls make piñatas.**

from Colorado, for their love and devotion to our kids over the last several weeks and months.

### September Teams

My husband, Lyle and I will be leaving soon with the first of three teams that will be blessing our kids in September. I am excited to see all our children and to meet the new additions to our growing family.

### A Divine Encounter

And always, God is on the move, connecting us up with each other to accomplish His will. I hope to have

## From the President

by Mary Frenter

God has blessed us with a kaleidoscope of weather here in Washington and in Honduras. Not sure if it is spring with the rains, summer with the record breaking heat, or fall with the cool temps and turning leaves. Some of our volunteers have returned home, the Crusade/Look and See team, the MRI Dental team and the Estacada Construction team are all preparing to leave for the Village in September to minister to His kids.

### Thanks to Volunteers

Huge thank yous to The Rock construction team, Bernadette Campbell, and Chelsea Swedberg, from Washington State, and to Brittany Roy and the whole Geraci family

wonderful news for you next month regarding one of the recent divine appointments He arranged one Sunday between me and another of His children. Please keep this unspoken prayer in mind over the next several weeks.

### Prayers Requested

Please pray for funds and workers to finish our church/Meals from the Heart building in Puerto Cortes. Please pray for funding and construction teams for the Toddler/Nursery building at the Village. Please pray for all the teams traveling to Honduras to help this month. And most importantly, please pray for our children, the Serranos, and our board in Honduras, who are on the front lines of this ministry 24/7. Thank you each one of you for your unfailing love and support to this profound work God is doing for His kids in Honduras.

—Mary



**New toys are fun to play with!**



**New friends are made on every trip!**



## Merchandise Fund Raiser

Paula Barr, our newsletter editor and one of our website developers, is project manager for raising \$3,500 for security lights at the Children's Village. She designed the "My Heart is in Honduras" full-color logo to promote WWH2H on merchandise in a variety of fabric colors and sizes.

Email paulabarr@comcast.net and she'll email you an order form complete with sizes and colors. All proceeds benefit WWH2H!!



My heart is in Honduras

Duffel/gym bag can be used as a carry on bag for your next trip to Honduras!



- Youth crew neck T-shirt ..... \$12
- Women's V-neck T-shirt..... \$22
- Women's scoopneck T-shirt ..... \$22
- Men's crew neck T-shirt..... \$15
- Women's polo shirt ..... \$32
- Men's polo shirt ..... \$32
- Youth hooded sweatshirts ..... \$30
- Adult hooded sweatshirts..... \$42
- Duffel/gym bag ..... \$28

*Note: Plus sizes are a little more than the cost listed.*

## Our Financial Promise

We view contributions as a sacred trust, accountable to God and to you for their use.

We use all contributions as designated by our donors, and return or transfer monies to a related fund if a project is over-funded.

We use contributions to support the Children's Village home and mission outreach activities in Honduras.

A very small percentage of money is used for printing and postage costs.

Staff in Honduras receive salary and benefits. All U.S. board members and staff are volunteers.

We send year-end tax statements to donors for all monetary gifts given to WWH2H.

Please visit our website for more information about the children we serve, our history, and our mission. Thanks!

*2 Corinthians 1:3-5*  
Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God. For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows.

wwh2h.org  
Heart to Heart  
WORLDWIDE  
MINISTRIES



P.O. Box 372  
Carson, WA 98610  
USA 509.427.8585  
Mary Fenter  
President

NON-PROFIT  
US POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
PERMIT #99  
LONGVIEW  
WA  
98632