



NASHVILLE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH FIRST ADULTS F.A.I.T.H. WATCH

Faithful-Active-Involved-Trusting-Hoping

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FIRST ADULTS IN COSTA RICA

At 4 a.m. on April 5, nine First Adults (Linda Burch, Lettie Gossett, Rene' Holt, Sherry Hunter, Fred Linkenhoker, Pam Stockett, Lynne Wells, Lisa Wilson, and Larry Yarborough) gathered at the airport, ready for an adventure. We would fly to San Jose, Costa Rica. In our baggage, we carried gifts, toys, cereal, baby shampoo, and other sundries. In our hearts, we carried great hopes and questions. What would it be like? What would we be doing? Could we make a difference?



Welcome! At the airport, Charlie Doggett waited, carrying a large welcome sign. A long-time member of Nashville First Baptist, Charlie moved to Costa Rica about 3 years ago. At Fred Linkenhoker's request, he introduced us to Hogar de Vida, located in Atenas, where he makes his home. He helped make the arrangements for our stay and joined us in our week-long mission.

We also met Matt Gnuse, director and president of Hogar de Vida, (homes of life). The purpose of the ministry is to provide a safe, loving, faith-based home for "at risk" children who have been removed from their parents by the Costa Rican child welfare authorities. The grounds are beautiful and so very peaceful. There are three houses for the children who are separated by age. Other buildings include the kitchen, administrative offices, and, oh yes, two "dormitory" rooms, separated by an outdoor eating area.



Getting Started. On our first evening, we received

instructions for the coming week. In the morning, we met for devotions with the staff members and children who weren't in school. Next, we would form work teams. Our assignments included painting—interior walls in the baby house, an external wall, and even preparing trees to be painted. Other tasks included washing and sorting toys, and cleaning highchairs. Our lunch was prepared in the kitchen—local cuisine that always included beans and rice and delicious fruit. In the afternoon, once the children were up from their naps, some of us would spend time with the babies while the rest planned activities and played with the older children.

Our delicious evening meals were prepared by Matt's wife Kris. We enjoyed the company of this wonderful couple and their delightful children.

On Friday, we went to work, and yes, we worked hard. Some backs were strained and some muscles were sore, but we felt good about what we accomplished. Later, those who spent time with the babies rocked the little ones and took them out in their strollers. The older children were a bit more active. With the help of an interpreter, Lettie planned and shared Bible stories, along with games, coloring, play-dough, and

"The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." Galatians 2:20 NIV



more. The children excitedly joined in every activity, then spent time at the playground and riding big wheels. What fun! Boy, were we tired.

After dinner and clean up, there was little to do. We had been told the children live with the sun, getting up early and going to bed when the sun set. Our team did the same. At first, it was hard to go to sleep, but we soon adjusted. We found sweet time in the early hours for a cup of coffee and time to read our Bibles, pray, or take a quiet walk.

Free Days. We were at Hogar da Vida for six days, but only four days were actually spent on campus. On Sunday we visited a local church that Charlie attends. Admittedly, it was a challenge to keep alert during the three-hour service with an hour of singing and two hours of preaching—all in Spanish. We were blessed by the friendly people and we made a valiant effort to sing along and follow the Scripture in our Bibles.



After church, we traveled to Charlie's beautiful home, surrounded by flower gardens and situated on a mountain. The view was indescribable, and even more, the delicious catered meal provided by our host. Some of us took the challenge to hike up the mountain, while the rest lounged on the verandah. We could easily see why Charlie loves his home.



Our second free day. After breakfast, we piled on the van and Matt drove us to the resort areas on the coast. Our first stop was at a bridge where we looked over the side to view crocodiles. Yes, crocodiles. Later, we checked in at a beach resort. We ate breakfast, then went shopping. Next, most of us took on the challenge of zip-lining. What fun we had as we overcame our fears and let go, trusting the cables would hold us. Later, we had time to go to the beach or the pool.



Wrapping Up. On Wednesday, our final day, we tried

to savor each experience. Those of us who painted were proud of what we accomplished. We delighted in two infants who joined the baby house, and we had an especially good time with the older children. That evening, we reviewed our experience, sharing our ups and downs, but more importantly, what God had accomplished in us during the week. Some of us struggled for words, knowing that the long-term results of serving at Hogar de Vida will be revealed in the weeks and months to come.

Testimonies:

Larry: Two little new babies won my heart. One was Maria, four-months old. She had big black-brown eyes that watched me intently. Even though she was being treated for an ear infection, she made sounds of contentment as I held her in my arms. One day I was told that her uncle and aunt were adopting her, and she would join her two older brothers. The next day she was gone and part of me went with her.



The other baby, Amber, was born prematurely. Just 17 days old, she arrived at the orphanage, the day after Maria left. Most of the time I held her. She slept with her hand wrapped around two of my fingers. Watching her was seeing evidence of the miracle of life. I prayed for Amber, her birth parents, the parents who would adopt her, and the women who would care for her. On the last day, I struggled to hand Amber to her caregiver, knowing I would not be back the next day. Walking to our cabin, I prayed that someday I would see both little girls again.



Lynne: Hogar da Vida is a place where God is working and smiling at what he sees. One afternoon the shift change occurred while I was still with the babies. One of the caregivers bounced in, carrying a large bag. Two boys ran up and wrapped themselves around her legs. She put her bag down and gave them her undivided love and attention. Surely God has placed these workers there and blesses their caring for these children

Fred: I'll always remember the day I was talking with Lester, the grounds keeper. He commented to me, "I want English to learn." For two days, I had the privilege to help members of the staff with their English. On the

last day of class, Lester, the only one who had never studied English, spoke a complete sentence in correct English. What a rush!

Linda: One part of a mission trip is to observe and experience the gifts of others on the team as you work together. What a wonderful team! Pam, our leader took charge and planned well. Each member of the team used their gifts and talents to serve in unique ways. Thanks go to Charlie Doggett for being such a wonderful host. Praise be to God for this experience!

Sherry: Hogar de Vida is a wonderfully run children's home, led by a Christians who emphasize the love of Christ in all that takes place there. Before going to serve there, my prayer was that the children would



all find loving homes. After being there, my prayer is now that they will be as well loved in their future homes as they are at Hogar de Vida!

Finally. We must share an event that brought joy and reward from seeing the children respond to the love that was poured into them. Also, it points to the way God teaches us that he can work with a change of plans:

Lettie had to change her plans at the last minute. With no time to waste, she decided to have the adults pantomime the story of the Good Samaritan. As she told the story, with the help of an interpreter, Charlie played the traveler who was attacked and beaten by thieves (Lisa and Sherry). Fred had triple duty as the priest, the Levite, and the Samaritan. When he stopped to help the injured man, two little boys jumped up to help lift him to his feet. None of us who witnessed that precious moment will ever forget it.

Virtual Dementia Tour

by Rene' Holt

When Nick and I signed up to take the Virtual Dementia Tour® on April 24th, we had a vague idea what we were getting in for. We learned that vague is a good one-word description of our experience.

The Virtual Dementia Tour, sponsored by Senior Helpers, is designed to simulate the world of those living with dementia. It allows the participant to step into the world of loss: loss of vision, mobility, straight-thinking, hearing, and communication. The experience provides insight into the struggles of many of our aging loved ones.

Before the tour. We answered a few questions, such as “Do you feel capable of carrying out simple tasks?” and “Are you relaxed?” I answered yes. Then we circled characteristics that applied to us in the last ten minutes. I circled “searching for items,” then realized I hadn't looked for anything in the last ten minutes. (But yes, I am always searching for something.)

Dress the part. We were given liners to put in our shoes with little bumps in them to simulate neuropathy in the feet. Then we donned gloves—a bulky glove for the dominant hand and a lighter glove for the other. When the tour started, we were fitted with goggles that limited our vision to a tiny hole (replicating macular degeneration) and headphones that continuously blasted an annoying variety of sounds – voices, television, music, alarms. That's when I knew I was in trouble.



Ready, Set, Go. I went first. As I stepped into the darkened room, 5 tasks were spoken into my ear. What? I might have been able to remember them if I had heard them, but the noise in my ears drowned out most of it. I was told to fold and put away 2 pairs of blue pants, match 6 pairs of socks, find the electric bill and pay with a check, and take 2 pills out of three prescription bottles and place them in a cup. I could only remember something about folding blue pants and finding the electric bill. I found the pants and folded them the best I could, but I thought I was supposed to put them in a box which I couldn't find. I looked for the electric bill but didn't find it. Finally, someone came in and prompted me to find the pills.

PAM'S Corner



It seems like only yesterday it was January. The days are flying by . . . or washing away with the rain. One of my favorite quotes is, "Every sunrise make the world new again." With that thought in mind, I can't help but think not only of how God will bless me today, but also, how can I can be a blessing to others today?

I enjoyed the adventure into a mission field in Costa Rica, a time of bonding in a new way with old friends, strengthening relationships, and being reminded we all smile in the same language. The children and caregivers at Hogar da Vida have bright smiles, a sparkle in their eyes, and a genuine love for each other. I hope you will join us during prayer meeting, Wednesday, May 9th, at 6:00 p.m. as the team members and I share our reflections on the time we served in Atenas, Costa Rica. Hear how ten people came together in a special way.

God has defined this time, this place, and our group to serve His people at the corner of Seventh and Broad.

VIRTUAL DEMENTIA TOUR

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When I found them, I also found the electric bill, but didn't know what to do next. I managed to open the pill bottle and remove three pills, but again, didn't completely follow instructions. All the while, I was talking to myself and wandering around the room. It was my own version of a "house of horrors," though, thankfully, it didn't last as long.

Finally, time was up, and I was rescued. The follow-up was insightful and informational. I feel sorry for whoever has to care for me if I have dementia someday.

A Different Story. Nick's experience was quite different, but it certainly fit his stoic personality. When the tasks were read to him, he couldn't hear anything—remember the headphones?—so he moved to the center of the room, put his hands behind his back, and waited. "I was taking inventory," he explained.

I definitely recommend this tour. Yes, it was uncomfortable, but it demonstrates the discomfort of living with dementia. It promotes empathy and patience with those who suffer the isolation, confusion, and pain of losing contact with the world they once knew. Just as we would reach out to a lost child, a better understanding allows and encourages us to reach out to those who suffer with dementia.

Calendar of Events

- 5/3 National Day of Prayer
- 5/24 Second Harvest Food Bank



NASHVILLE
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

Be completely humble and gentle, be patient, bearing with one another in love.
Ephesians 4:2

In Memoriam

Vicki Turner
James Berthelot

YOUR FIRST ADULT COUNCIL

Chair: Tom Clark; Staff: Tom Crow and Pam Stockett; Newsletter: Rene Holt, Editor and Lynne Wells, Graphic Designer; Members: Linda Burch, Carol Chambers, Bill Chaney, Curtis Freed, Fred Linkenhoker, Joe Nave, Peggy Newport, James Porch, Sharon Roberts, and Katherine Stewart, Sam Talley, Coordinator of Martha's Friends: Pat Haskins **Tom Crow** Tom.Crow@firstbaptistnashville.org
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