



From David Feikes, The Shepherd's Work

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On Friday July 18, 2025, we held the first day-camp for intellectually disabled adults at the Santa Familia Monastery in Santa Elena. The day camp was led by me and Christy Livergood, a board member of The Shepherd's Work. We had several amazing volunteers including Lieve, Kirsten, Jenny, Heidi, Sofia, and Sharinni. We had four attendees, Luis who had lost both legs to diabetes, and was blind from a Glaucoma surgery that went wrong; Emil who was paralyzed from a gunshot wound and is in the military and his girlfriend Melissa, George who is on the autism spectrum and his mother Iris, and Jeslyn, who was also in a wheelchair and how had difficulty communicating along with her mother Jyselle. I love the mother and daughter's names, Jeslyn and Jyselle.



Iris and George

Jeslyn and Me



Luis and Christie



Melissa and Emil

The day can only be described as miraculous! First, it is miraculous that I am in Belize conducting the day camp and building a residential facility for the intellectually disabled. A multitude of what I first thought of as random events led me to this point. Ten years ago, I could have never imagined myself in Belize building a residential facility for intellectually disabled adults and conducting a day camp. I have been blessed to have Ryan Shockey enter my life and introduce me to Belize, to have met Bill Harmon and been introduced to intellectually disabled adults, and one of the most devastating blows of my life, getting divorced. These three events or people have shaped the course of my life, and that is why I am in Belize today. God works in mysterious ways!

The day camp was amazing, but the ironic part is none of the four attendees would have likely qualified for Sharing Meadows. Two were physically disabled and had their full mental capacities, the other two were not independent and relied on the support of a family member.

It was an adventure just getting them to the day camp. Google maps did not work for two participants, and I was not sure how to help Luis in and out of the car and his wheelchair. Alfonso, our missionary friend and board member in Belize picked up George and Sofia, a board member, picked up Emil.



We started with my reading some bible versus on friendship. I am out of my comfort zone talking about my faith, but overall, I thought it went well as many participated in the discussion. One of our main activities was going to be a tour of the Monastery but, it was not going to be possible with three in wheelchairs and it started pouring down rain. Needless to say, we finished early!

I was able to talk with the attendees but a highlight for me was seeing the youth volunteers bond with them as well. During the course of the day they got George, who was pretty noncommutative to sing at lunch. Jyselle got her husband to face time me and he offered to help with the plumbing on the next building. They were engaged with the crafts and the games we played. Christy did a wonderful job of leading them. Luis bonded with Christy and Lieve bonded with Emil and his fiancée.

Since we had extra time, I thought I would do what I do best which is do a math activity. The math activity was in a different room and unbeknownst to me as they entered, I told Kirsten who was wheeling Luis to turn his wheelchair toward the board so he could see, even though he was blind. After another activity I told them all to stand up and three were in wheelchairs. I did not remember saying these things, but I was assured by the youth volunteers that I did. I think this shows our humanity, we all make mistakes, but we can all show and share in God's love with one another. I relate the last two incidents because we all mess up. It is only through God's Grace that we are saved and find salvation. I am fine with being the object of the youth's humor

as long as it helps them see that we are all fallible and only succeed through God's will.



I was thrilled to get four participants. I only had one application completed at the time of the workshop and phone numbers from the others. I believe that it is like the story of the grains of rice doubling each day. The rice will keep doubling each day until you have more than you can store. Next year my goal is 8 participants and the year after 16, and so on. [It will surprise no one that I slipped some math into the newsletter!]

Two other events happened on this trip that have secured a place in my heart that I will never forget. First, I encouraged Christy Livergood to come on this trip and help with the day camp. She is a former college student of mine and worked for me for three years as the academic advisor at Purdue North Central. I knew she had a passion for supporting the mentally ill and Ryan Shockey often talks about the mental health issues he deals with as pastor with the youth. I thought Christy with her passion for mental health would be a good person to go on the mission trip. One night she spoke to the youth about her mental health journey. That evening several of the youth opened up about their own personal struggles. She was an inspiration to them and to me.

On each mission trip the group takes one day, fun excursion. I was not going to attend but was going to work on the Shepherd's Work property. After hearing about the trip, I decided to attend, I also wanted the youth to know that I was there to support them. We took a boat ride on a beautiful reservoir nestled between the mountains. We stopped in front of a waterfall and four

members of the group decided to be baptized and one of them was Christy. She asked me to help with the baptism. I walked into the water with her and Ryan and another leader, who is now a good friend, Danny Evans, and I held one side of her as we submersed her in the lake. It was an honor and a blessing to be participate in the ceremony!



Each night of the mission trip we have a group meeting. On the last night, to conclude the meeting, Ryan had the group lay hands on me and pray for me. I have never been prayed for like this before. It was an honor and a blessing, but I felt unworthy of their prays. I shared my feelings with two people close to me, Bill Harmon the Director of Sharing Meadows and my son Andrew, both pointed out that we are all unworthy of God's Grace, but He gives it freely to each of us. If you do one thing for The Shepherd's Work please pray for me, the work is very hard, and as I like to tell my workers, Hareson and Abel, "I am old"; AND pray for the mission of the Shepherd's Work that we might be able to help the intellectually disabled in Belize.



Mission Team in front of the Waterfall

His unworthy servant,

David Feikes

Todos son bienvenidos a La Obra del Pastor!

All are welcome at The Shepherd's Work!

Thank you for reading!

David Feikes

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