

Dear Family and Friends,

“From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.”

Ephesians 4:16

What does a real estate tycoon, a crack Loan Officer/Branch Manager, a housewife who has been through a lot, a go-get-em business woman, a twenty year old, Chinese-American girl, a tough, shy do it all hand-y-man, and a sushi chief have in common. There is something that transcends everything they are, crosses all economic boundaries, and considers not your background. What was it that brought them all together in this place and at this time? The answer: they are all members of the same body.

We are so blessed to have so many wonderful groups come from the U.S. and help us build, evangelize, make needed improvements, and love and care for the children God has entrusted to us. This is the story about one such group. Two days before the group was to arrive, three children came through our gates for their first time. Several months before their arrival, their mother had given them to a woman to take care of and headed to a northern state that bordered Mexico. In time, the woman she left the children with began neglecting the boys. The oldest boy (11yrs.) was doing his best to care for his younger brothers. Soon the boy's father found out about the situation and sent a friend to get the boys and bring them to the capital city. Eventually the mother of the boys returned home to find the kids gone. She went to the government child protection authorities and filed a missing person report on her three sons. Eventually, the mother found out that the boys were with their father and traveled to the capital city to bring them back to her home. After her children returned, the mother contacted the government to tell them she wanted to deactivate the missing child report. The government said they wanted to see the children. When the mother brought the children to the government, the authorities interviewed the children and discovered the level of neglect and abandonment they had faced with their mother. The government took the three boys away from her and ordered them to Casa De Mi Padre for their care and protection.

When the boys came to Casa De Mi Padre they were very sad. The two younger boys cried a lot. The youngest cried especially at night. The older boy would wander outside the home and was distant from the other children. These patterns are not unusual with children who have been uprooted and shuffled around. But, God had something special planned for these three brothers.

Two days after the boys had arrived at Casa De Mi Padre, I picked up a team from the U.S. This team wanted their main focus to be spending time with the kids. We returned to our home the third day after the boys arrived. The children at Casa De Mi Padre did their normal welcome. At the end of the song the kids welcome team members with lots of hugs. The new boys were still new at welcoming visitors. When the kids came out to give hugs, Anderson (7yrs.) walked right up to the big burly construction worker with open arms and gave him a big hug. Next, the baby of the three, David (4 yrs.) got into the act. And of course, our other children made sure everyone received a hug or two. However, the oldest boy, Jeferson (11 yrs.) did not participate in the greeting after the welcome song. He stood back and watched. He wasn't sure what was happening. And that was fine.

After lunch it was time for the team to get to work. It was time to meet some needs. When the three little boys came, as with all our other children, they come with the clothes on their backs. We had a few Christmas and birthday extras and some hand-me-downs to put on the boys. But, they needed clothes, shoes, a church outfit or two. The team said they would love to go and buy for the boys. I said, "Lets go." So we piled into the van and went to shop till we dropped. As we went from store to store, the three boys got really excited. But, when we got to the tennis shoes, that did it. They were having a good time now. Even the oldest boy warmed up a bit. As we were trying on some church pants and shirts, little Anderson, the middle child, climbed up into his big burly construction friend's arms, rested his head on his shoulders and hung on for awhile. It was sweet. The team was so gracious, kind, and patient with the boys. It was a fun and much needed afternoon. To top it all off, the team bought the kids a few toys. Way lots more smiles after that! It was a good day.

After that first day, every time the team was at Casa De Mi Padre they were fully engaged with the kids. Playing card games, basketball, helping with homework, or just spending time tossing around a ball. One night the team made ice cream sundaes. That was a big hit. And the Super Bowl party was a smash. The team cranked out a ton of food. The kids loved it! And we cheered the Chiefs on to victory. The second morning after the team had been at the house, when we arrived the new boys ran out to greet the team. Even big Jeferson came up and gave me my first hug. I told him I loved him and was so glad he came to us.

It was incredible watching each team member use their gifts, touching the hearts of the children. Exactly as God had designed it. Remember our real estate tycoon? Her spiritual gift is to encourage others to desire to walk with God on a practical level each day.



She spent personal time with each of our grown children, giving them a spiritual checkup and encouraging them in the Lord. But, that's who Fawn is. Always looking for an opportunity to challenge others to draw closer to the Christ. It is how she lives her life. I also enjoyed watching as the young Chinese-American girl use play to engage with the children. They loved her. Maya is tender hearted, sweet and easy to be around. Her youthful joy was inspiring and so drawing to the kids. Remember our house wife? She had a compassion and mercy that became evident, especially when she prayed. The team shared many prayer times together. Lisa's prayers for our children flowed with deep conviction and genuine empathy. In our times together She shared some of the things she had been through. From those experiences, her understanding and compassion flowed. She was praying all the time we were with the children. It is the type of life Lisa lives. She is compelled to take the needs of others before the throne of God. Remember our go-get-em successful Executive Sales Director? She had an affirming, radiant joy that you could feel. Her enthusiasm for life and the Lord are contagious. When we did devotions as a team, her introspective insights helped us identify and understand what was happening and how we could make the most impact for the Lord in the lives of our kids. I had never met Robyn before, but she is a true friend of the ministry. It was wonderful to get to know her. She is the real deal.

Our crack Loan Officer/Manager has an innate sense of how to connect with people, especially young people. She is super fun and knows just how to razz you. Our kids really connected with her and love her. She makes you feel important. And everybody wants to feel important. Lacey is a go-getter and desires to live a life that matters for the Lord. She strives for excellence in every area of life. And it shows. She has been a joy to serve with. I had never met our big shy Building Contractor before. He was pretty quiet at first. I thought I would give him some ok handy-man jobs until I saw the impact he was having on our children, especially our new boys. Behind the big frame was a very sensitive and loving heart. And our kids picked up on that. Its not something you can hide or fake. His gentleness and love were a radar for our new boys. They sought him out and ate it up. Especially Anderson. He loved being in John's arms. He felt it was a safe and loving place to be.

And last but not least, remember our Sushi Chief? Roberto lives in our city and works with me to help us care for some of our older boys. He also helps take care of the groups. During one of our group's devotions, we were talking about the unity of the Body of Christ and Roberto asked, "May I speak?" Of course everyone said yes. He said, "Even though I am not from the U.S. or don't really have much, and even if I am only like one of these, (He reached to the top of his head and held up a bunch of his hair, referring to a single strain of hair), I am still part of the body of Christ and God can use me." It was a simple statement and yet true. We all agreed and felt it was a profound insight. No matter what part we play, we are all an important part of the same body, the Body of Christ.

I had gotten the rundown on the group before they had come. I didn't know what to expect or how they would work together. I had them all pigeon-holed into who I thought they might be. But when they hit the ground with our children, especially the three new boys, it was like seeing the plumage of a beautiful peacock spread out in dazzling, unbelievable color right before our eyes. Seeing those scared little boys respond so vividly, so quickly was nothing short of a miracle, especially Jeferson. I though he would be a tough nut to crack. But not for this team. What I was actually seeing was the body of Christ in living color, in action. People from different walks of life, different places, and different experiences, coming together underneath the direction of the Holy Spirit. Ultimately for the glory of God. I was honored to serve with each one of them. Thank you all for letting the Lord use you in such a magnificent way.

Upcoming Quinceañera: It is Latin tradition that girls on their 15th birthday have a special celebration marking the transition from a young girl to a young woman. It is a rite of passage for a young girl. (I call it a wedding without the boy). It includes everything a wedding does; a huge ceremony, dinner, decorations, invitations, special dress, giant cake, a tiara and lovely necklace, magic slippers and a ring. We have two girls, Lucrecia and Reyna who will celebrate this together in March. Two for one is cheaper but still not cheap. We want to bless the girls and let them know how special they are. Please pray with us for this need. A ceremony like this will be around \$2000. If anyone would like to help, send your donation with the words: "Girls Birthday" and the letters: "CR-05." Pray and maybe share this need with a friend.

Construction Update: We are so excited being so close to having casita no. 2 complete. We have purchased the tile for the entire house and the light fixtures. We still need the funds for the sub floor materials and installation - \$8,805, tile installation - \$5,410, bathroom fixtures - \$1,900. These are just some of the needs. Please pray with us that the Lord will met these needs.

It is amazing and miraculous seeing the body of Christ in action functioning properly and building itself up. We can do so much, when we work together.

Thank you all for being so faithful,

Love
Shane
Joseph Shane Sanderson

Thank you
for praying and
believing with us.
Blessings in Christ