



“Orphans are easier to ignore before you know their names....before you see their faces.....before you hold them in your arms. But once you do, everything changes.” ~ *Radical: Taking Back Your Faith From The American Dream*

Dear Friends,

I arrived back in Plano on Saturday night after spending the most rewarding 10 days of my life in Atenas, Costa Rica at Hogar de Vida Children's Home. I can't thank you enough for your financial support and most of all for your prayers. I went on this trip hoping to do whatever I could to help at the orphanage, experience a new culture and seek God's wisdom away from the hustle and bustle of city life. I came back blessed beyond anything I could have ever imagined. I could write pages and pages about my journey, but here some highlights:

Projects at Hogar de Vida

- Painted bedrooms in the homes & the exterior addition to one of the homes
- Varnished woodwork
- Built a workshop for ongoing maintenance needs which entailed:
 - cleaning and leveling the ground by hand
 - preparing and pouring a large concrete floor, which took around 250 wheelbarrows of concrete, all hauled back and forth by hand
 - welding and building the steel framework for the building, erecting the structure and putting it under roof
- Provided a craft time for the children every afternoon
- Took the children swimming, which is a huge task for the Tia's (house moms) with all those kids. Our extra hands and energy were much appreciated.

In addition to the project work that was accomplished, we were blessed to:

- Attended Sunday and Wednesday night church with the Lucas and Ezell families
- Experienced the warm and welcoming culture of the local people
- Went to the Friday market, which is a huge center of activity for the locals
- Went to the beach and did a zipline canopy tour on our day off
- Took a challenging climb down the mountainside to a waterfall
- Forged meaningful relationships with our team members
- Heard powerful testimonies of those at Hogar de Vida and how God is providing in their lives
- Completed a 40 day study called "A Hole In Our Gospel"....which was a life-changing journey in itself for me
- Were blessed us with meals fit for a gourmet prepared each day by local women and fruit and vegetables that made us feel were like living in the garden of Eden

It was easy to fall in love with the children at Hogar de Vida, and with the Tia's, their caretakers. In spite of living through abuse and neglect, and having almost no possessions to call their own these kids have more joy than I've ever seen. The kids at Hogar de Vida are thriving because of the loving, Christian care at this home. But the home is having serious financial challenges. This was made very real to us as one of our team members accompanied a Tia pulling her wagon around when the weekly farmers market had ended in hopes of food donations for the home. Can you imagine doing that to provide for your children? I'm enclosing a brochure with more about the home. I'm asking that you pray about what God might have you do to help the home continue the wonderful work they are doing. Sponsoring a child is just \$35 a month and will go a long way!

If you'd like to see more pictures from our trip, you can find them on my facebook page. If you're interested in future trips to Costa Rica, contact Ray.Young@MatrixMinistries.org. Thank you again for your support and prayers. My prayer is that by following my journey to Costa Rica you will pause to thank God for how blessed you are here in the U.S. and consider God's call in your life to help those who don't have what we take for granted!