

Connections

SEPTEMBER-NOVEMBER 2007

VOL. XIX - NO. 2

A PUBLICATION OF INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS IN MISSION



FORGING CONNECTIONS THE HOPE OF CHILDREN

PAGE 2

Inside:
Kids Connections

Highlights from our Project Partners in China, Colombia, El Salvador, Kenya, Lebanon, and the United States

FORGING CONNECTIONS THE HOPE OF CHILDREN

In late October I had the honor of accompanying my colleague Sonya Dias to El Salvador for IPM's first-ever Regional Conference among our Latin American & Caribbean partners. Almost 30 of us came together—from Bolivia, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and the USA—to share our experiences, meet new friends, and learn from one another (see related photos page 3 and 9). Sessions focused on the plight of children, women, and youth throughout the region; how to build more effective and sustainable community-based organizations; the role of IPM's Project Partners in our Strategic Planning Process; and, how to deepen the experiences of northern and southern hemisphere residents through IPM's Immersion Experience Program. Time and again, we came back to our work with and on behalf of children... and, we came back to hope.

The 20th century American saint, Dorothy Day, once commented that, "No one has a right to sit down and feel hopeless. There is too much work to do." The spirit in our meeting room was contagious—and far from hopeless! Despite remarkable odds, IPM's Project Partners around the world continue to make a difference when others would have given in long ago. Our local staff of Julieta, Magda, Sofia, and Gustavo did a remarkable job of brining everyone together and making everyone feel at home. The children who joined us with dancing, cultural celebration, and prayer, reminded us of how much more we have to do.

Last year I wrote in *Connections* that every 30 seconds a children dies of malaria in Sub-Saharan Africa and that every 8 seconds a child somewhere around the world dies of hunger and related causes. In the year since not much has changed... According to UNICEF, more than 1 billion children continue to "suffer from one or more forms of extreme deprivation in adequate nutrition, safe drinking water, decent sanitation facilities, health-care services, shelter, education, and information," (*The State of the World's*



Sandra leading Lidia Coggiola kids in song

Children, 2006). This issue of *Connections* highlights IPM Project Partners work among children who otherwise would remain, for many of us, "excluded and invisible."

Children are far from excluded and invisible at *Patronato Lidia Coggiola* in El Zaité, El Salvador. Reflecting the spirit and energy they bring to their daily work at *Lidia Coggiola*, Carlos Diaz and Sandra Peña, were two of the most active Regional Conference participants. Carlos was inspired to found *Lidia Coggiola* after years of working with refugee and internally displaced children during El Salvador's horrific civil war. Sandra's story, like that of so many Salvadorans, was born of the war. Separated from her family for years on end, she literally grew up at *Lidia Coggiola* and now serves as teacher and role model for the program's children.

Named in honor of an Italian benefactor and friend, *Lidia Coggiola's* experience establishing a pre-Kindergarten program in one of El Salvador's most impoverished communities is one of struggle and sacrifice. Most of the children come from families still suffering from the aftershocks of war—excessive violence, family break-up, alcohol dependency, etc. but Carlos and his team have found a way to inspire and directly involve local parents in the education of their children through their evening "parent's school." They raise the children's awareness of environmental degradation through special tree-planting programs in honor of the martyred Archbishop Oscar Romero and small community gardening. And, they keep the pre-K kids on track as they move on to primary



Carlos with a recent IPM Family Immersion Experience Delegation to El Salvador

school through a comprehensive tutoring program that emphasizes each child and parent's role in ensuring that their education isn't only about the 3 R's of reading, writing, and arithmetic but grounded in how they can build a future for their country centered on justice and peace.

From my first visit to *Lidia Coggiola* in 2003 to the countless times I have journeyed to El Zaité in the subsequent years on my own and with IPM friends as disparate as the leadership team of Hyland Software to my daughter Francesca's soccer buddies: the work of Carlos, Sandra, Ivan (Tutoring Program Coordinator), and Martita (pre-K Instructor), continues to inspire me. Their selfless dedication to the *niñas y niños* (girls & boys) of El Zaité mirrors the efforts of IPM Partners in China, Cleveland, Colombia, Kenya, Lebanon, and around the globe. Carlos proudly speaks of program participants who have gone on to become doctors, teachers, lawyers, and notably even more level-headed police. Frankly, I'm always "more impressed" that Sandra and Martita struggled against insurmountable odds not only to make it through school with *Lidia Coggiola's* support, but that they are now the very teachers a whole new generation of El Zaité children admires.

They say that change begins with one step. For our world's children, change comes by stepping into the footprints of those who have gone before them unwilling to find solace in hopelessness but who willingly sit down among children on a cold cement floor on a rainy morning in El Salvador because they know there is still too much work to do.

Thank you for your partnership with the children of IPM! On behalf of the entire IPM Family, best wishes for a joyful and peaceful Holiday Season!!!

Joseph F. Cistone
jfcistone@ipmconnect.org

BOARD OF DIRECTORS – KIM McELANEY

Background:

I was born in Boston and am a true-blue New Englander. The oldest of five sisters, I graduated from College of the Holy Cross in 1976 and spent a year in the Jesuit Volunteer Corps in DeSmet, Idaho on the Coeur D'Alene Reservation and in Spokane, WA at a Jesuit parish. Following JVC, I studied at Weston School of Theology in Cambridge, MA where I earned an M.Div. I began my career in full-time, professional ministry as a Chaplain at Fairfield University where I met my husband, Tim Cox, and returned to Holy Cross in a similar capacity in the mid-80s. In 1992, I was appointed as Director of the Office of College Chaplains. I have been involved in work that I *love* and about which I am passionate for more than 25 years: ministry with and on behalf of 18-22 years olds in a college setting. Tim and I have been married for just about 25 years. He has taught me everything I know about care for the earth and sustainability. We live in a little town in central MA that has lots of wildlife and lots of quiet!

Life statement/mission:

At the center of my life is a deep, abiding faith in a loving God who is active throughout history, who desires a just and compassionate world, and who calls each person to bring about that world. I try to live my life out of this conviction. In my work at Holy Cross, our "mission" in the Chaplains' Office is "evangelization: to proclaim that faith which is operative in love of others and to promote justice which is indispensable to it." I have



IPM Project Partner Susanna of the Kandula Village Project (in red) with Kim McElaney and Joe Cistone.

been shaped greatly by the Society of Jesus (the Jesuits) which is the religious order that founded and continues to lead Holy Cross. The current superior of the Jesuits, Fr. Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, speaks of the mission of Jesuit education to inculcate in our students a "well-educated solidarity." This resonates deeply in me.

Skills/interests I bring to IPM:

In addition to my work in ministry, I am an experienced spiritual director and a group facilitator. I have lead immersion trips to Mexico for the past 23 years. I am interested in feminism, Ignatian spirituality and the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius Loyola, retreat work, and education,

Uniqueness of IPM:

IPM is a wonderful organization. What makes it utterly distinctive I think, is that, in an age where cross-cultural immersion

trips/programs are sprouting up everywhere, IPM's immersion program exists because of the partnerships it has formed in developing communities. The relationships IPM has with people and communities are authentic, real relationships. They do not exist to serve the immersion programs. Rather, the immersion programs give participants a window into the heart of IPM. They invite the participant to be a part of something great.

Where IPM should be heading:

I am hugely impressed with IPM's growth over the past several years. Joe Cistone and the IPM staff around the world have done a remarkable job! I do believe that the immersion programs have enhanced our ability to connect people beyond what we may even imagine. One of the challenges in the future will be to consider how to keep the immersion programs fresh and dynamic without exhausting the small communities with which we partner.

Hope for IPM:

I would like to see IPM deepen its emphasis on faith and reflection as an essential component of the immersion experience. I would also like to see us think about ways to involve and "develop" young people as life-long partners with IPM

Family and hobbies:

I love organic gardening, reading, "home-making," and quilting/sewing and now knitting. And, yes, I am a die-hard Boston Red Sox fan. Go Sox!

FORGING CONNECTIONS *(continued)*



Project Partners and staff at the Regional Conference for Latin America & the Caribbean

Memorial & Tribute Giving

We remain grateful to our supporters for donations made as memorials or tributes. During the past five months, gifts have been received in recognition of:

Honorary Gifts

Hank & Mary Doll on their 40th anniversary
Ilze Fender on her 50th birthday

Memorial Gifts

Dr. Walter Bartling
Norma Hopfer
Paul Nelson
Peris Mokeira Onger
Rose Perretta
Edna Streufert
Curt Vogel

New Monthly Partners in Mission

(Donors committing to a monthly donation that is deducted from their credit card.)

Diane Obringer

Major & Special Gifts Recently Received

Chess Financial Corp.
College of the Holy Cross
Hank & Mary Doll
Experitex
Eldon & Peggy Heck
Info USA Inc.
Barbara Klingsick
Garnetta Kramer Charitable Foundation
Lindberg Foundation
The Lutheran Community Foundation
Alice & Tim McCarthy
McDonald Hopkins LLC
The Ostara Foundation of the Jewish
Community Federation of Cleveland
Princeton Association of Northern Ohio
The Dudley & Barbara Sheffler Foundation
Betty & Edward Sloat Foundation
St. Noel Church

DONOR

Paul Danheim Nelson Endowment Fund

Paul Danheim Nelson died on September 10 of this year. In his will, Paul established a fund benefiting International Partners in Mission through the Lutheran Community Foundation. Upon establishment of the fund, IPM Executive Director, Joe Cistone, said, "Paul is a remarkable man of faith who worked hard his whole life and always made philanthropy a priority, as is his challenge now to the IPM family. We are profoundly grateful for this commitment from Paul and know that it is support like this that will allow IPM to continue to live out our mission in the world."



Joe Cistone was invited to share some remarks at the memorial service for Paul Nelson. Reverend Kendra Nolde officiated the service, and gave the following reflection as a tribute to Paul's life and work:

During this past week, I sat in my office and considered what scripture texts to use today, prayerfully considering Paul's life. I considered Psalm 18: "The Lord is my rock, my fortress, and my deliverer, my God, my rock in whom I take refuge; The Lord lives! Blessed be my rock and exalted be the God of my salvation." After all, Paul was a geologist and at the heart of every geologist is a love of rocks.

I considered 2 Chronicles, chapter 3, the description of Solomon's Temple: "These are the measurements for building the house of God: the length, in cubits of the old standard, was sixty cubits, and the width twenty cubits..." Can you help but hear that description and not think of Paul's meticulous, hand-drawn diagrams and charts—of everything from the building here at Gethsemane, to (in recent years) his daily blood sugar and blood pressure readings. Paul would have had a field day charting and drawing diagrams for the temple! (and maybe that's how God will put him to work in heaven!)

But more than either of these two passages came the words back from the very beginning, from Genesis, chapter 1. Words of the Great Love and Grace which began all that there is; words that said "Let there be!" and there was! They are words that speak of the goodness and beauty of creation, of the dignity of every human being, made in the image of God. I have to admit, Paul might have wanted to take out the words "Be fruitful and multiply" because of

his concern about overpopulation. But these are also words that speak of humanity's role to be stewards and caretakers of all that God has made—words that too often we have misinterpreted as giving us domination over, rather than dominion with the earth. Yet as important as that message, that prophetic word is, we are gathered there this morning to give thanks, to claim, to celebrate that there is a resource that is not finite, there is one resource that will not ever run out. In her story "Babette's Feast," Isak Dinesen writes: "We have all of us been told that grace is to be found in the universe. But in our human foolishness and short-sightedness we imagine divine grace to be finite... But the moment comes when our eyes are opened, and we see and realize that grace is infinite."

But the moment comes when our eyes are opened, and we see and realize that grace is infinite. During Paul's last days, his eyes remained open—and I would like to believe that in some deep way beyond our human knowing, he was seeing and realizing that grace is infinite. Infinite grace meets our human limitations, our human sinfulness, failures and brokenness, meets the power of death itself and proclaims victory, rises and brings new life, a new heaven and a new earth where God will dwell with God's creation and death will be no more. In the waters of baptism, Paul was washed with the promise of that infinite grace. And that same promise is there for you, for me. In the days ahead, when perhaps you wonder "will there be enough"—enough strength, enough hope, enough forgiveness, enough peace, enough courage, God promises to open your eyes to infinite grace. Infinite, amazing grace that will lead us all home.

CONNECTIONS

UPDATE

IPM Celebrates 3 Match Campaigns

In 2007, IPM has been the grateful recipient of four match challenges. Three have been successfully completed and another challenge remains open through year-end.

The first match was once again provided by the 2005 recipients of the Reverend Richard E. Sering Award: Hank & Mary Doll. Hank & Mary challenged IPM to raise \$15,000 in new commitments in support of IPM's *ad hoc* Strategic Initiatives Committee which is working to help IPM secure funding for our Project Partners and Regional Program Development in Africa, India, and Latin America. With the support of the Garnetta Kramer Charitable Trust (IL), The George Lindberg Foundation (IL), Ostara—a supporting foundation of the Jewish Community Foundation (Cleveland), the Singing for Change Foundation (SC), and others, the Challenge was a remarkable success.

The second and third match campaigns were announced at IPM's International Board meeting in St. Louis this past May. Two anonymous donors from the Board and Staff challenged their IPM colleagues with 50 cents on the U.S. dollar

for every new dollar raised. Thanks to the remarkable generosity of IPM Board & Staff, the match challenges were successfully completed in September.

The final match challenge of 2007 was initiated by Alice and Tim McCarthy, long-time friends of IPM and 2006 Richard E. Sering Award winners. Alice and Tim have committed 50 cents on the U.S. dollar for new gifts to the Annual Fund. As of November 1st, this Campaign had raised over \$93,000 in new commitments to IPM! As part of this challenge IPM is planning a special Immersion Experience Kenya in late April 2008 to focused upon Social Entrepreneurship. For information on this unique opportunity to attend seminars at the University of Nairobi & Hekima College, meet with IPM Partners, and visit the world-renown Maasai Mara contact Meagan Chuckran at: mchuckran@ipmconnect.org.

Thank you to Hank & Mary, Alice & Tim, and all those who so graciously continue to help IPM expand our programs and services around the world!



Alice & Tim McCarthy at the 2006 Annual Luncheon

5TH ANNUAL LUNCHEON

On Friday, November 16, 2007, IPM hosted its 5th Annual Luncheon.

The keynote speaker at this year's luncheon is Ms. Zoraida Soza. Zoraida is the current coordinator for *Mujer y Comunidad*, IPM's Project Partner in San Francisco Libre, NICARAGUA. The organization works for and with women in rural Nicaragua, particularly on issues of women's and family health. Zoraida has worked adamantly in the fight for women's equality and as an advocate against the oppression of women worldwide. Under Zoraida's leadership, the women of *Mujer y Comunidad* have worked to improve the quality of healthcare to women and children by producing and selling natural medicines and educating women about basic healthcare for themselves and their families.

IPM is extremely pleased to honor National City Corporation's Joanne Clark, as well as the Fatima Family Center with this year's Rev. Richard E. Sering Award. This award is presented annually to those who foster same dedication to promoting justice, peace, and hope around the world as Rev. Sering did for over thirty years as a friend and supporter of IPM. Past recipients of this award are Tim & Alice McCarthy, Dr. Ralph Brody, the Singing for Change Foundation, Hank & Mary Doll, Goldie K. Alvis formerly of the Cleveland Foundation, and Rev. Richard E. Sering (received post humously by Susan Sering).

The Fatima Family Center, a program of Catholic Charities, is a "multi-purpose neighborhood center serving the Hough-Central area." (www.clevelandcatholiccharities.org). The Center has done amazing work in its dedication to justice and international education. IPM and the Fatima Family Center have partnered together on two trips to Kenya in the last two years, demonstrating not only the Center's dedication to its students, but also its strong belief in furthering cross-cultural understanding. Ms. LaJean Ray McNair, a member of IPM's Northeast Ohio Advisory Council and the Center's Director, will accept the award.

CONNECTIONS FOCUS: Children

CHILDREN PROJECT: *Back to School, CHINA*

For a child previously unable to attend school, the work of the *Back to School* project can mean the world. Its goals are both practical and hopeful: meeting the immediate material needs of education as well as maintaining confidence in the ability of education to foster the development of children with strong futures. Student Li Meng is just one of the many who has benefited from this project.

Li Meng was unable to attend school after her father died in a construction accident. In a recent thank-you letter to IPM, Li Meng wrote, "Your loving hearts brought spring to me, gave me a pair of wings of hope, rainbow of dreams, I thank you and my family thanks you very much. Dear uncles and aunts, I will never let you down. With your love, care, and support, I will study even harder, and to be a person like you who will be very useful to society and others."

This letter is just one piece of evidence of the profoundly important work that *Back to School* does in China. The project seeks to provide stipends for rural children to attend school as part of a nationwide humanitarian effort coordinated by China's Department of Education to educate all elementary-aged children. Funds cover school fees, supplies, transportation, as well as financial support to families.

IPM has supported *Back to School* for five years. Each year, IPM covers the school fees



Students in a busy classroom in China

of thirty schoolchildren. As project coordinator, Rev. Chen Tianyuan reports, "This project always has a positive impact on children... because they live in a very poor environment and experience unfortunate circumstances."

As news of China's economic boom has pervaded the media over the past decade, those who are still in need are even more at risk of being neglected as success stories are highlighted to the global community. For students like Li Meng, and others in the western provinces, the cost of education would be simply too great, despite the growth of the country's economy. *Back to School* seeks to prevent these children from being among the faceless who are left to find their way without the benefit of education.



Chinese elementary school students between classes

Project Coordinator: Rev. Chen Tianyuan

Project Goal: \$3,000

Project Location: Anhui, China

Project Focus: To subsidize the education of youths in China so they may obtain a brighter future.

Indicators of Note:

- With a population of 1.3 billion, China is the most populated country in the world.
- The proportion of the poor in the western provinces increased from less than half of all China's rural poor in 1988 to more than two thirds in 1996 because poverty reduction efforts have not been as successful in these regions (UN).
- 9 years of elementary education is mandated by the Chinese government, but implementation is not universal.

Project Action Steps:

- Provide support for thirty rural elementary school children to attend school by covering the cost of supplies and uniforms.

How to Partner with this Project:

- Learn more about this project and education in China by contacting our Projects department at the IPM office at tel. +1.216.932.4082.
- Donate towards *Back to School's* \$3,000 development goal.

CONNECTIONS FOCUS: Children

CHILDREN PROJECT: *Niños Trabajadores*, COLOMBIA

The experience of childhood differs greatly from culture to culture. For many children living in poverty in Colombia, their childhood experience is marked by an emphasis on work over education. However, the goals of *Niños Trabajadores* (Spanish for “working children”) work within this poverty stricken country to recognize the needs of both children and families as important to the future of Colombia.

This past year for *Niños Trabajadores* has been especially formative in attempting to restore a sense of safety and self-worth to children who work in the marketplace. By restoring an emphasis on the value of education, *Niños Trabajadores* has been able to create an environment in which childhood is understood by the children themselves as a time for personal growth and learning. For these children living in extreme poverty, this simple shift in outlook and attitude becomes an indispensable tool as they are equipped to redefine themselves as more valuable than society would have them believe that they are.

In the case of Marcela, age 12, the work of *Niños Trabajadores* has encouraged her to have a better relationship with her mother. As part of a project designed to encourage communication within families, Marcela has developed a healthy sense of comfort and openness in talking to her mother. Her mother noted that, “she has seen her grow into a



Students enjoying a snack during the day at Niños Trabajadores



A student from Niños Trabajadores in the marketplace

loving and respectful person who is dedicated to her studies.” It is this dedication to family and self-respect that has brought about such transformative experiences for the children involved in this project.

The project works with both children and parents in an attempt to address the reality of the problem in Colombia: that children have to work because of their family’s economic reality. By involving families in the education process, *Niños Trabajadores* successfully works within the parameters of the needs of families to transform attitudes towards education. Workshops and classes on violence and drug use also are part of the work of the project in the hopes that children involved in the program are able to find alternatives to the type of lifestyle that often typifies children who grow up in similar situations.

Perhaps one of the most significant aspects of the program, in addition to family and child education, is the opportunity for students to interact with other children who have had similar experiences, allowing them to find a supportive community within a harsh reality. As the project continues to grow, this community will be able to expand, fostering healthy friendships and positive role models for all those involved in the project.

Project Coordinator: Ed Gemerchak

Project Goal: \$4,000

Project Location: Cleveland, OH, USA

Project Focus: *IHN*’s mission is to provide compassionate care to homeless families, alleviate the trauma of homelessness and assist families in securing a stable income.

Indicators of Note:

- According to the Census Bureau, Cleveland is the poorest major city in America, with nearly a third of the city’s residents living in poverty.
- Cleveland (city proper) has a population of 478,403, making in the 33rd largest city in the US.

Project Action Steps:

- Provide temporary shelter and necessities for the homeless.
- Provide educational and enrichment activities for children.
- Host Poverty Conferences on why Cleveland has such a high poverty rate and what can be done to combat it.

How to Partner with this Project:

- Visit www.ihncleveland.org for more information on this Project Partner and their needs.
- Donate towards *IHN*’s \$4000 goal.



An volunteer caring for a young child at an IHN site

CONNECTIONS FOCUS: Children

CHILDREN PROJECT: *Interfaith Hospitality Network, OHIO, USA*

The city of Cleveland, Ohio is the site of an increasing large homeless population, and the highest poverty rate in the country. The need in Cleveland is great, but the mission of the *Interfaith Hospitality Network* is one that seeks to answer that need in a manner marked by compassion and respect.

The mission of *IHN* is to provide hospitality, meals, and support to homeless families in the Greater Cleveland area through a network of religious congregations. *IHN* recognizes the extreme challenges of homelessness, as both a living condition and a period of emotional upheaval. In understanding this, *IHN* seeks to accomplish its mission by providing a caring, dignified environment of overnight hospitality in church and synagogue facilities. It also dedicates itself to renewing a family's independence by providing supportive services aimed at increasing self-sufficiency.

William McDonald is one of those that have benefited from *IHN*. "It wasn't about being homeless, it was all about the fellowship with other people," he explains, evidence of the devotion that *IHN* has to taking care of the whole person, providing for both their physical and emotional needs.

IHN works with over 60 congregations and has 3,000 active volunteers. It is unique in its work to keep homeless families (parents and children) together throughout their tumultuous period of homelessness. In contrast to the many organizations that are able to support only women and children, or only men, *IHN* makes a commitment to whole and healthy families. This past year, *IHN* supported over 130 homeless individuals, 85 of which were children, from approximately 40 families.



A young child playing at one of the IHN sites

As part of its dedication to not only serving the immediate problem of homelessness, but also seeking out ways to proactively curb the growth of poverty, *IHN* sponsors the HOPE program, which provides educational and enrichment activities for kids. It also hosts conferences debating effective methods to combat poverty.

IPM supports *IHN's* mission to keep all children who are guests of *IHN* enrolled at their home school, and provides financial support to defray the costs of transporting the children from churches (where families sleep while guests of *IHN*) to school each day. *IHN* has recently launched "enrichment hours" to provide homework assistance, tutoring, and reading time after school for members.

As *IHN* continues to expand, its goals include an interfaith advocacy project to encourage congregations and their members to advocate on behalf of the poor and to establish a homeless family welcome center to provide emotional support.

Project Coordinator: Martha Cecelia Arroyave Arbelaez

Project Goal: \$2,500

Project Location: Ibagué, COLOMBIA

Project Focus: To provide education, skill development, and recreation opportunities for children who work in the marketplace.

Indicators of Note:

- According to World Bank statistics, 64% of the population of Colombia lives below the poverty line.
- The per capita annual income in Colombia is just \$2,290 US dollars.
- In Colombia, approximately 2.5 million children work to help support their families.

Project Action Steps:

- Continue to strengthen partnerships with other organizations doing similar work, to continue to make parents and community members more sensitive to the topic of child labor.
- Create new opportunities for children to participate, interact, communicate, and become leaders within the community.

How to Partner with this Project:

- Contact the IPM Projects Department to learn more about this and other Project Partners that work with children at +1.216.932.4082
- Donate to *Niños Trabajadores* and contribute to their \$2,500 goal.

Additional Children Project Partners

LEBANON (Beirut):

ASTUHA provides resources and financial support to autistic children and their families.

EL SALVADOR (Zaragoza):

Lidia Coggiola is a school which promotes the character and well-being of the community's children through education, workshops, and scholarship opportunities.

KENYA (Unyolo):

Unyolo Village Improvement Project supports children orphaned by the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Kenya through education and community assistance.

MALAWI (Blantyre):

Project Peanut Butter provides nutrition to malnourished children by providing them with fortified peanut butter after they have been treated for malnutrition at the hospital.

USA (Fort Washakie, WY)

Eastern Shoshone Youth conducts peer tutoring, community discussions, and summer outdoor retreats on the Wind River Reservation.

USA (St. Louis, MO)

Youth Enrichment Program provides year-round educational programs and activities for youth on the academic sidelines in connection with CWAH (Community Women Against Hardship).

MY FAITH

MY JOURNEY

JOHN C. LENTZ, JR., PASTOR,
FOREST HILL CHURCH, PRESBYTERIAN

This past June, I went with a team of 12 members from the Forest Hill Church, Presbyterian in Cleveland Heights, to Nicaragua. It was an unforgettable journey in a land of physical beauty and poverty, boundless joy, hope and hospitality.

Everyone on the trip was moved by how much people can do with so little. We all returned realizing how wasteful we were and our culture is. We all came home wanting to do more with less. Furthermore, we all shared the realization that we had gone to Nicaragua to share our "wealth" with poor people and that deep down everyone wants to be Americans, like us. What we discovered, however, was that the people of the barrios, small villages, and rural projects offer so much more to us than we could ever offer to them. There was one young woman who was very bright, energetic and able. She lived in a very poor rural encampment off a road that wasn't paved. I asked her if she had visions of moving to the city, or traveling to other countries, of going to college. She said very confidently, "No. I will stay here and become a leader in this community."

I am a doer, I want to help. To spend a week, sitting and listening and seeing, enjoy the

hospitality, being witnesses to, instead of doing the witnessing is a profound turning of the tables, such as is celebrated in the Magnificat of Mary, and the Beatitudes of Jesus.

I have been on mission trips before. The experiences shared above I have felt before. It is good to be reminded again and again the lessons of simplicity and hospitality. However, my most profound epiphany (revelation) concerned the deep connection between faith and politics.

Certainly in America, the partisan way we do politics and religion, makes me embarrassed, at times, to call myself a "Christian."

Furthermore, the way that some seek to exclude citizens in this country because of a narrow interpretation of a few scripture passages make me support the separation of Church and State in a very broad way: Don't tell me what I have to believe.

And yet, faith is political. The conviction that the poor must organize in order to gain the power for self-expression is biblical and at the heart of our faith traditions. Faith is power and power is not a bad word. Power means the "ability to act." Power is the ability to organize people and organize money to move a society



Pastor John Lentz on his recent trip to Nicaragua

towards fairness and equity. The power of compassion and hope liberates the oppressed and sets the blind to see. It is the power of the gospel that holds the secular authorities and principalities accountable. This faith I saw, heard, felt in Nicaragua this past summer.

This is how my life was changed in a course of a week. Worshiping with believers in a barrio, sensing the pride and power of women taking control of their own health and the health of their communities, introducing myself to children and young adults who braved the most dangerous neighborhoods so that they could come to night school – this is faith, powerful, political faith that will move mountains, create opportunity and set the table for all within the kingdom of God.

This was my journey. This is my faith.



Sonya Dias (far right) with Project Partners at the recent Latin America & the Caribbean Regional Conference

Who's Who

Staff Transitions

The North American Summer and Autumn at IPM's International Headquarters in Cleveland have been marked by staff transition. IPM is very excited about the new skills and talents that the new staff members will bring, and we wish all the best for those who have moved on. Jean Ann Sekerak, Education & Outreach Coordinator has returned to Notre Dame to pursue her Masters in Divinity. Laurel Domanski Diaz, Director of Development, took a new position to be closer to her son. Sonya Dias, Director of Programs &

Partnerships, will join her spouse, Peter Dias in Houston, Texas this November.

IPM welcomes Laurie Rodney and Meagan Chuckran in Education & Outreach, Anita Brannan and Yolanda Long in Development, and John Paul Coughlin as the Director of Programs & Partnerships, to its United States offices.

In our regional offices, we are happy to begin working with Margaret Kikuvu, Regional Coordinator of Latin America & the Caribbean; Magda Lanuza, Strategic Consultant for Latin America & the Caribbean; and Zoe Mauki Omoni, Regional Associate for Uganda & Tanzania."

THE JOURNEY OF A LIFETIME:

IPM'S IMMERSION EXPERIENCE PROGRAM

Now in its fifth year, IPM's Immersion Experience Program provides opportunities for both adults and students to understand better the realities of poverty and injustice around the world—crossing boundaries of faith, culture, and economic privilege.

I Breathe Out Kenya by Lindsay Williams

I breathe out Kenya. A breath, the main way of surviving life, ultimately has become my way of living out my transforming ten-day experience in Kenya. The simplicity of a breath relates to the daily simplicity of life in traditional Kenya. Imagine a lifestyle without running water, electricity, stores, or basic necessities. Instead, one relies on the extended networking of his or her family and friends, the beauty of nature, the appreciation of rain, the art of dance, and the rhythm of music. In the Unyolo Village, 40% of members are affected by the AIDS epidemic, and Malaria runs rampant. Yet, the clarity of the stars in the night sky, the smiles of the children, and the affectionate hugs from village women make me thankful that I traded five days of not showering for this experience.

At the *Bride Rescue Project* at Kaijaido School, I breathed out Kenya as I heard the tragic stories of abuse, mutilation, and forced marriages. Through appreciation of teachers and a strong value in education, these girls overcome their struggles amid cramped dormitories, dirt floors, and old textbooks. Instead of depending on the harsh realities of their lives, the girls rely on their dreams of becoming doctors, lawyers, teachers, and pilots.

In the slums of Dandora, outside the capital city of Nairobi, I breathed out Kenya amongst the awful smells of sewage throughout the area. In the orphanage, one could not help but

notice the agony of pain in the child's eyes as he told the story of how AIDS, gangs, and violence destroyed his family.

Throughout the trip, each experience left me breathless. Even through the Mara sunset, the devastation of a trash dump the size of four football fields, and the outstretched hand of a youngster yearning for a "sweet," took my breath away, these experiences also slowly allowed me to breathe Kenya, while developing a passion for the country.

A fourteen-year-old girl who I met in Kenya told me, "Have faith and put your trust in God for He will bring you through anything." As I looked into her big brown eyes, I could not turn away for a second. She told me about the devastating loss of her parents, as well as her hopes to become a doctor. The faith, trust, and the strength of this one young girl is a small glimpse of the larger picture of my trip to Kenya.

In order to survive, we need to breathe. In order to survive, we do not need fancy cars, large bank accounts, or tropical vacations. Kenyans not only lack the extras in life, but sometimes the necessities as well. They never, however, fail to truly experience living. Even in hard times, they simply survive on their wills to live and dream. Despite all of the horrible experiences in their lives, these people believe in God, because after all, God gave us the first breath of life.



Lindsay Williams on her Immersion Experience in Kenya

KIDS CONNECTIONS



November
2007
Vol. XIX
No. 2

Communities Around the World

Josera Street Children,
Nakuru, KENYA

Unyolo Village Improvement Project,
Unyolo Village, KENYA

ASTUHA, Beirut, LEBANON

ACTIVITY PAGE

Communities Around the World

Many times in other countries around the world, children grow up surrounded by their entire family and friends in one town or village. Other times, because of sickness or poverty, this is different. Kids might instead grow up surrounded only other kids their own age who have had the same kinds of things happen in their life, and a few adults. This is just a different way of having the kind of support and love they might have if they grew up around their family.



IPM works with projects that help to create communities for kids. In Kenya, more than two million kids don't live with their families. About half of those kids are orphans because of AIDS. In a country where many people are sick or die from AIDS, communities have to change to help families and kids who have had people they know die from this disease.

Projects have to think about a lot of different things when creating community for kids without parents. School, food, work, health, and friends are just a few of the things that a community gives to a child. Especially in places where illnesses like AIDS are common, the health of children in the town or at the project is very important. In Kenya, 150,000 children under 17 years old have HIV, which is the virus that comes before AIDS. Also in Kenya, less than half of the kids are able to go to high school. IPM's project partners in Kenya work hard to help get all the children in their projects to go to school.

In another project that IPM works with called *ASTUHA* is in the country of Lebanon. This project works to bring together kids who have autism, which is a disorder that affects the brain and makes it hard for people to communicate. This is another way that people find ways to form community and make something good come out of a tough situation.

Look for more information about different types of communities for kids around the world in this issue of *Kids Connections*.

Josera Street Children, Nakuru, KENYA

The *Josera Street Children* project in Nakuru, KENYA is a group that works with kids who don't live with their parents and don't go to school, either because of sickness, death, violence at home, or because their families are very poor. This project helps these kids so that they do not continue their life in poverty, sickness, or violence.



One of the parts of the *Josera Street Children* project is to teach older kids to help out the younger kids in their community. This helps children in the project make new friends, while also giving the younger kids a role model to look up to. Many times, the best person to understand the life of a child who has struggled a lot in life is another child who has lived through the same experience. Building relationships from similar life experiences is just one of the ways that *Josera Street Children* works to create better lives for children in Kenya.

The project also teaches children about HIV/AIDS so that the disease can be prevented in the future. For kids who may be having a hard time emotionally, there are adult counselors who can talk to them and help them find ways to stay happy and healthy in their new home. Education and counseling is very important so that when these children grow up and have their own kids, they have a better chance at having a safe and happy childhood.

FACT:

AIDS is considered a "pandemic." A pandemic is when a disease is spread across a large region.

Unyolo Village Improvement Project, Unyolo Village, KENYA

In the village of Unyolo, many children's parents have died from HIV/AIDS. This is very difficult for both the kids and for the village, but the *Unyolo Village Improvement Project*, known as UVIP, works to help these kids and the village. They work with almost 140 kids at different schools and in Unyolo Village.

UVIP has a nursery so that kids can come together and make friends with people their own age. This helps kids to find support in one another. UVIP also works to teach kids about health issues to stop HIV/AIDS from spreading. A doctor comes to visit the village, and the project is trying to train a nurse to work in the village.

One girl, Esther, received help from UVIP after her father died. UVIP helped her to go to school, and now she helps other kids in the village by working as a nurse. The project made a huge difference in her life, and helped her work to change things in her village.



ASTUHA, Beirut, LEBANON

In Beirut, LEBANON, the project *ASTUHA* works with kids who have a disorder called autism. Autism makes it difficult for people to communicate, and those with autism struggle to have normal social lives. This can be a very difficult disorder for a child, and for their family. Because of this, the work of *ASTUHA* is very important.



ASTUHA works with families, teaching them how to care for children with autism. They also teach them about autism so that they understand it better. For the children, *ASTUHA* has programs to take care of them and help them to work through their challenges.

This project helped one family, of a woman named Madame Souad. Her husband has autism, but he was able to work with *ASTUHA*. He then learned to communicate better with his family, and learned social skills from the *ASTUHA* community. This is just one of the many people who have been helped by this project.



Get Involved

Looking for ways to connect with kids involved in these projects? Try some of these ideas.

- Write a letter or draw a picture for a child at one of these projects and send it to IPM.
- Start a fundraiser at your school or in your town for one of these projects
- Talk to your family and friends about the issues you read about in “Kids’ Connections”— sharing with others is sometimes the best way to help!
- Write an article or draw a picture for the next issue of “Kids’ Connections”



Activity Page

WORD SEARCH

J N T Z V Z K J A R V R J L R
 X Q C M W R K P F O E Q D E E
 T O L C E D U C A T I O N B R
 P N A M K D U B U C S I B A P
 M D N N S Q I N C O K Y Q N X
 X I O T X I Y C X D T L M O V
 L V I I K O T G I I W A F N P
 P M T N L W R U N N M J Y Z E
 T W A O J C D U A R E S O J J
 I E N I X F M A O E Z G J K Q
 N E R K Q M Y A X M S W V Y X
 U S E N O U Y Q F H Y B N S U
 I H T C Y N S D S M Z V Y W S
 Z T N Z E G Y I L W O T S W J
 G T I K N H Z E O L T N W Q E

Words can be horizontal, vertical, diagonal, forward or backward.

AUTISM COMMUNITY DOCTOR EDUCATION
 INTERNATIONAL JOSERA KENYA
 LEBANON MEDICINE UNYOLO



MATCHING

Match the project name from this entire issue of *Connections* with the country it is in.

Projects:

Josera Street Children

ASTUHA

Niños Trabajadores

Back to School

Interfaith Hospitality Network

Countries:

China

United States

Lebanon

Kenya

Colombia

FILL IN THE BLANK

Read the article in this issue of *Kids Connections* and use the information to complete these sentences.

1. UVIP works to teach kids about _____.
2. _____ is the project that helps families affected by Autism.
3. A _____ is when a disease spreads across a large region.
4. Lebanon is located in the region called the _____.
5. The *Josera Street Children* project is located in the country of _____.

2007 PROJECT PARTNERS

DIRECT SUPPORT

Where Needed Most provides unrestricted funds to IPM.

Services and Programs of the IPM Office provides IPM staff with technical assistance and education.

Emergency Needs Around the World enables IPM to provide rapid response in emergency situations.

The Indigenous Leadership Program provides technical assistance to Project Partners through local IPM staff.

CHILDREN

CHILDREN GENERAL FUND

Donations to this category support the personal, physical and spiritual development of children throughout the world.

CHINA (Anhui Province)

The *Back to School* program allows children from impoverished Chinese families to attend school. Project Goal: \$3,000

COLOMBIA (Ibague)

Niños Trabajadores (Working Children) provides an alternative to violence and drug abuse for children who work in the marketplace. Project Goal: \$2,500

EL SALVADOR (Zaragoza)

Lidia Coggiola promotes the character and well-being of the community's children through creative workshops, activities and scholarship opportunities. Project Goal: \$2,500

KENYA (Machakos)

Kandula Village Project seeks to address development issues in their community around water, sanitation and child education in Kandula village. This project is located in the district of Makueni. Project Goal: \$2,500

KENYA (Nakuru)

Josera Street Children Project provides intervention to street children in an effort to improve their well-being. The project protects these vulnerable children from the dangers they face while living in the streets, the project will seek to provide their mental, physical, emotional and spiritual needs. Project Goal: \$2,500

KENYA (Unyolo Village)

The *Unyolo Village Project* works with children orphaned by HIV/AIDS promoting village-based, income-generating programs supporting the children's holistic development. Project Goal: \$4,200

LEBANON (Beirut)

ASTUHA (Association des Tuteurs des Handicapés) helps children with disabilities, especially autism and cerebral palsy, reach physical and occupational autonomy. Project Goal: \$3,000

MALAWI (Blantyre)

Project Peanut Butter uses fortified peanut butter to treat children suffering from chronic malnutrition. Project Goal: \$3,000

USA (Cleveland, OH)

The Interfaith Hospitality Network of Greater Cleveland is a collaborative effort of congregations to provide shelter, meals and support to homeless families. Project Goal: \$4,000

YOUTH

YOUTH GENERAL FUND

Donations to this category support the personal, physical and spiritual development of young people throughout the world.

EL SALVADOR (Puerto de La Libertad)

Artistic and Cultural Development Center works to provide cultural education and opportunities for the community of Puerto de la Libertad. Project Goal: \$2,500

EL SALVADOR (Zaragoza)

Fundación Aragon promotes comprehensive education among youth whose families are involved in gangs. This program also allows the youth to eat three full meals a day. Project Goal: \$2,500

KENYA (Kajaido)

Bride Rescue Project rescues young girls from forced early marriages and harmful cultural practices. Project Goal: \$2,500

NICARAGUA (Managua)

Teen Night School provides remedial education for young adults who must work days to support their families. Project Goal: \$10,000

WOMEN

WOMEN GENERAL FUND

IPM supports projects devised by women to address their unique needs and to ensure their personal dignity.

BOLIVIA (Tarija)

Centro de Estudios Regionales para el Desarrollo de Tarija (CER-DET) helps the native Guarani through arts and crafts production, preparation of traditional medicine, and participation in sociopolitical life of Bolivia. Project Goal: \$4,000

COLOMBIA (Ibague)

Women's Community Project provides micro-enterprise opportunities for low-income mothers of Ibague. Project Goal: \$2,500

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC (Hondo Valle)

El Cercado mobilizes the community and works on health and sanitation projects. Project Goal: \$3,000

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC (El Cercado)

The women of *Women's Nutritional Program* produce nutritional products to be readily available to low-income or undernourished community members. Project Goal: \$2,500

EL SALVADOR (Armenia)

FUSAMIDJ is a holistic developmental program for women named in honor of the four martyred U.S. churchwomen. Project Goal: \$2,500

EL SALVADOR (Zaragoza)

Mujer y Comunidad focuses on improving their community through the creation of handicrafts such as sewing and embroidery, folklore traditions, and native dance. Project Goal: \$5,500

EL SALVADOR (San Salvador)

Programa de Soya San Ramon provides low-income families with soy products to supplement their daily nutrition. Project Goal: \$5,000

INDIA (Ahmadabad)

HUM provides micro-enterprise opportunities to women, focusing on building interfaith relationships. Project Goal: \$2,500

INDIA (Nagercoil)

Mary Jenkins Hospice Center provides treatment and loving care for the terminally ill. Project Goal: \$5,000

INDIA (Nagercoil)

Low income women in Nagercoil receive nurse training and computer skill training through *Women's Community Project*. Project Goal: \$5,000

UGANDA (Gulu)

St. Monica's Tailoring Co-op provides sustainable income for young women who have been victims of political violence in northern Uganda. Project Goal: \$5,000

USA (Fort Washakie, WY)

Eastern Shoshone Youth conducts peer tutoring, community discussions and summer outdoor retreats on the Wind River Reservation. Project Goal: \$4,500

USA (Missouri Boot Heel, MO)

Shining Scholars program provides rural students a \$30 monthly stipend as an incentive to stay in school. Project Goal: \$4,000

USA (Ogala, SD)

Project Lakota addresses the significant housing problem for the Lakota people living on the Pine Ridge Reservation by purchasing building supplies and organizing volunteers. Project Goal: \$2,500

USA (St. Louis, MO)

Youth Enrichment Program provides year-round educational programs and activities for youth on the academic sidelines in connection with CWAH (Community Women Against Hardship). Project Goal: \$2,500

INDIA (Vaniyakudy)

Women's Community Project provides yearlong courses in computer training and nursing for young women. Project Goal: \$2,500

ISRAEL (Jerusalem)

The Peace Center for the Blind teaches non-sighted and visually handicapped Palestinian women skills and self-reliance. Project Goal: \$6,500

ITALY (Castel Volturno)

Speranza II: Saying No to Prostitution, Yes to Life provides a safe haven and skills training for African women rescued from trafficking for sexual exploitation. Project Goal: \$5,000

KENYA (Dandora)

Dandora Women's Forum coordinates income-generating activities for its members. It also promotes gender equality through training and legal counseling. Project Goal: \$2,000

KENYA (Unyolo Village)

Riete Agricultural Training provides training in sustainable agriculture for low income families and individuals of Unyolo. Project Goal: \$2,500

NEPAL (Golphubhanjyang)

OUEST supports several local project partners involved in education, agro-forestry, health care, women's issues and the environment. Project Goal: \$7,000

NICARAGUA (Managua)

CEPROSI (Salud Comunitaria con Medicina Natural y Nutricion) works to improve the nutrition and health of the community and to develop sustainable economic opportunities. Project Goal: \$2,500

NICARAGUA (San Francisco Libre)

Mujer y Comunidad trains women in six villages to be health promoters, reducing leprosy and the effects of poverty. Project Goal: \$5,000

PANAMA (Chiriqui Province)

Ngobé Outreach empowers women in health care, nutrition and food production. Project Goal: \$3,000

TANZANIA (Arusha)

Zinduka Women's Center aims to bring the best out of women and to make them self-reliant through Self Help Groups. Through individual savings, internal loans, and vocational training, the women can improve their standard of living. Project Goal: \$2,500

USA (Cleveland, OH)

Esperanza Threads is an organic clothing cooperative emphasizing fair wages for workers from the field to final product. Project Goal: \$2,500

INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS IN MISSION (IPM)

is the successor organization to Partners in Mission, founded by Lutheran missionaries Jim Mayer, Paul Strege and others in 1974.

IPM works across borders of faith and culture on behalf of children, women, and youth to create partnerships that build justice, peace, and hope.

Join us as we work to provide a sustainable, effective and personal way to participate in projects promoting justice, peace and hope around the world.



Connections

A PUBLICATION OF INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS IN MISSION

Connections shares experiences and stories about people of faith working in partnerships to promote change. *Connections* is mailed to 6,000 donors and friends worldwide. If you are interested in receiving *Connections* or would like us to add a friend, family member, congregation or organization to our mailing list, please contact us at INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS IN MISSION, 3091 Mayfield Road, Suite 320, Cleveland Heights, OH 44118, USA, telephone +1.216.932.4082, or via email at abranan@ipmconnect.org.

Executive Committee: Flo Saeger, Chair, St. Louis, MO • Sharon Milligan, Immediate Past Chair, Cleveland, OH • Christine Henry, Vice Chair, Cleveland Heights, OH • Caroline Mills, Fort Washakie, WY • Rufina Simiyu, Nairobi, KENYA • Elizabeth Reichard, Secretary, New York, NY • Michael Mayor, Treasurer, Rocky River, OH • David Westcott, Assistant Treasurer, Cleveland, OH • Joseph F. Cistone, Executive Director (*ex officio*)

Directors: J. Mathew Carter, Astoria, OR • Beth Damsgaard-Rodriguez, St. Louis, MO • Tony Dowell, Rome, ITALY • Nadine Hopwood Feighan, Lakewood, OH • Carol Findling, Carol Stream, IL • Leah Gary, Cleveland, OH • Douglas Horner, Cleveland, OH • Sammy Mayer, St. Louis, MO • Kimberly McCarthy, Shaker Heights, OH • Amanda McCoy, Cleveland, OH • Kim McElaney, Douglas, MA • Mark G. Schulte, St. Louis, MO • Lawrence Sehy, Niles, MI • Mahesh Upadhyaya, Ahmadabad, INDIA

International Advisory Council: Paul Strege, Honorary Chair

IPM International Staff: Gustavo Ayala • Sophia Baires • Julieta Borja • Anita Branan • Meagan Chuckran • Joseph F. Cistone • Sonya Dias • Ilze Fender • Lietta Haenel • Helen Jacob • Margaret Kikuvu • Magda Lanuza • Mary LaPorte • Yolanda Long • Zoe Mauki • Jared Odhiambo • Laurie Rodney

Student Interns: Kim Darcy • DaShaun Jones • Sarah Shick • Dana Vaughn-Mgunda

Connections: Graphic Design: Academy Graphic Communication

Connections

INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS IN MISSION

3091 Mayfield Road, Suite 320

Cleveland Hts., OH 44118, USA

www.ipmconnect.org

NON PROFIT ORG.
US POSTAGE
PAID
Cleveland OH
PERMIT #1995