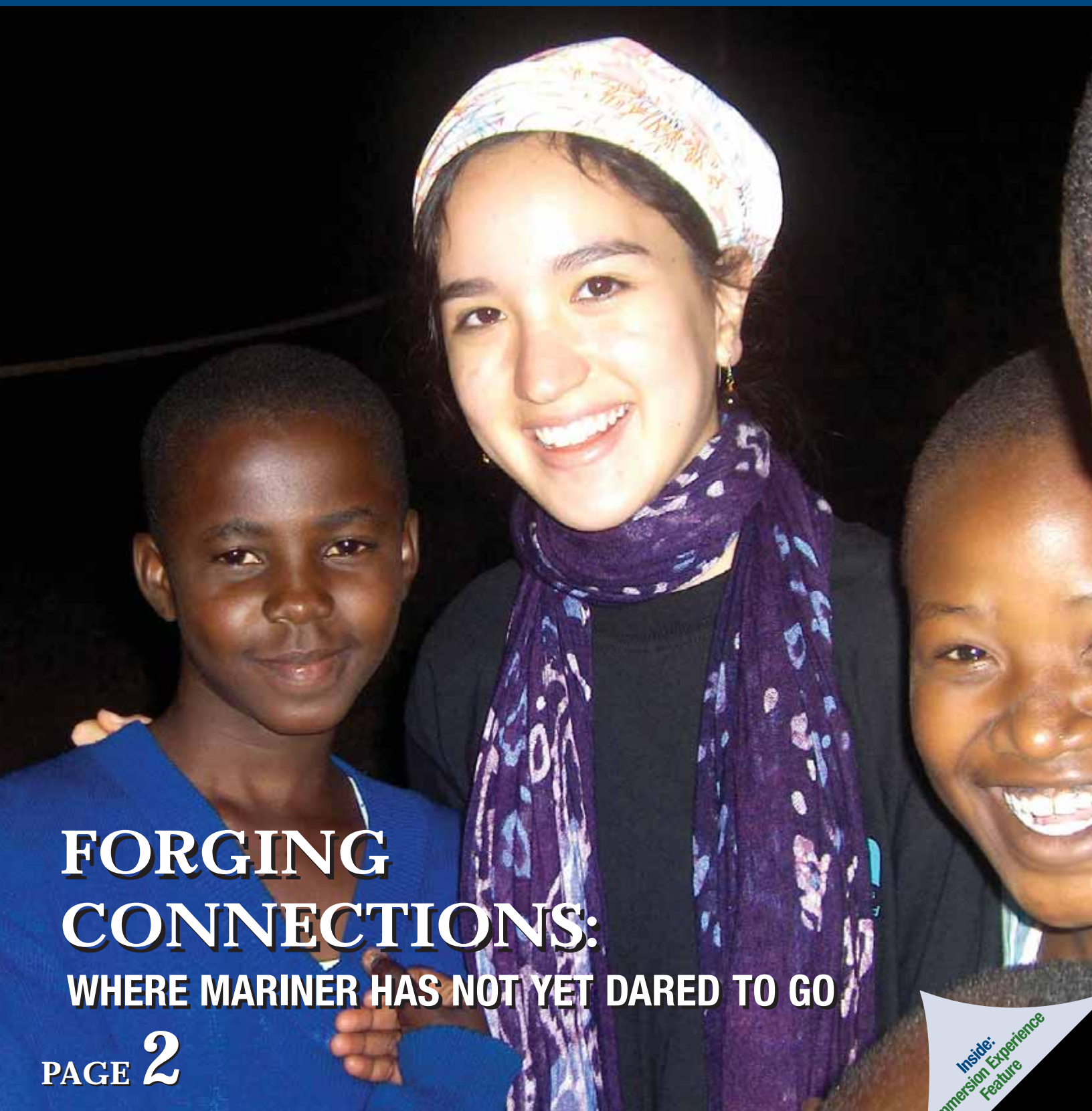


Connections

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FORGING CONNECTIONS: WHERE MARINER HAS NOT YET DARED TO GO

PAGE 2

Inside:
Immersion Experience
Feature

Reflections from our Immersion Experience Program in El Salvador, India, Kenya, and Tanzania

FORGING CONNECTIONS: WHERE MARINER HAS NOT YET DARED TO GO

**“Reckless O Soul, exploring, I with thee, and thou with me,
Sail forth, steer for the deep waters only,
For we are bound where mariner has not yet dared to go.”**

A Sea Symphony
music by Ralph Vaughn Williams
to texts from “Leaves of Grass” by Walt Whitman

In February and March I had the great joy and humble privilege to travel to Kenya, Tanzania, and India on behalf of IPM. The joy was especially clear for me as I spent a week with my daughter Francesca and her classmates from St. Stephen's School in Rome, Italy, (her friend, Sofia Orlando, is pictured on the cover from an earlier St. Stephen's Immersion Experience Program to Kenya). What a blessing it is to be able to share my life's passion with my daughter and her friends as they develop their own sense of what it means to be an engaged and committed citizen of the world. The privilege was most apparent as John Coughlin (IPM's new Director of Programs & Partnerships) and I travelled to Kenya to stand alongside our Kenyan Advisory Council and Staff, personally express our solidarity with our Project Partners, and help plan for IPM's response to the currently “resolved” political crisis which so rocked a land my family calls home.

For the past seven years I have travelled the world with IPM, often alone. When I set out on such a journey for the first time—whether it was to Rwanda in 2003 or to India via Ethiopia this past March—I am reminded of Whitman's words, quoted above, that I first read so many years ago. How joyful it was for me to attend The Cleveland Orchestra with my spouse on April 10th (thanks for the gift Mom & Dad!) and hear Whitman imbibed with such musical force through *A Sea Symphony*.

The Immersion Experience Program (IEP) of IPM was envisioned in 2001-02 as both the fulfillment of a long-term exploration of our Board and as a voyage to IPM's future. The deep waters of our founder Jim Mayer taught us that mission must be a two-way street. That it was the role of IPM to educate our donors and friends about the global realities of poverty and injustice and challenge them with a new vision of society grounded in justice in love.

This education comes in many forms, but IPM's Immersion Experiences are anchored in

one simple truth: that when we humbly enter into partnership with our brothers and sisters around the world we gain more than we can ever hope to give from our material abundance.

In early April, I had the privilege of addressing a national gathering of Campus Ministry Directors and I remarked that IPM's vision of immersion reflects that of Peter Hans Kolvenbach, who commented at Santa Clara University in 2000:

“When the heart is touched by direct experience, the mind may be challenged to change. Personal involvement with innocent suffering, with the injustice others suffer, is the catalyst of solidarity which then gives rise to intellectual inquiry and moral reflection. Students, in the course of their formation, must let the gritty reality of this world into their lives, so they can learn to feel it, think about it critically, respond to its suffering and engage it constructively.”

For Kolvenbach, Immersion Experiences provide a lens through which the formation of students, faculty, and staff is crystallized around solidarity and social engagement. For IPM, they provide not only a lens but the actual means to the end—that is, solidarity with IPM's Project Partners around the world and social engagement through IPM's mission on five continents. Our Immersion Experience Program is not the “slum voyeurism” recently decried in *The New York Times*, but rather a corrective of what has gone wrong with so many mission and work trips taken by North Americans who “should stop making a god out of their own activism and should recognize they need to listen as a starting point for making some kind of contribution.”¹

While reflecting with Francesca and her classmates, Dr. Helen Pope of St. Stephen's reminded us of a favorite quote by the ancient Roman poet, Horace, who remarked critically that those who cross the sea change their sky, but often not their minds. As you will read throughout this issue of *Connections*, for six years now IPM has offered



Immersion Experience delegation from St. Stephen's School, Rome, with participants from Australia, Italy, Ireland, Kenya, Norway, and the USA, in Tanzania with IPM Executive Director, Joe Cistone and his daughter, Francesca (bottom center)

more than a thousand of us an opportunity to cross the sea AND change our minds, our hearts, and our souls. Each of us who journeys forth can only truly answer why we go. The journey is difficult. Listening is hard work. Acknowledging that we don't have all the answers is humbling. Opening our hearts and lives to another involves risk and often leads to suffering.

But what does life mean for us as members of the IPM Family? Why do we donate our time, talent, and treasure? What moves us to hope to make a difference in the world? To believe that suffering can in fact be ameliorated; that an unimaginable crisis in Kenya can find peaceful solution; that land reform can finally take hold for the rural poor of Nicaragua; that peace can be found among the Hindu and Muslim communities of India? Why do we sail forth where others dare not go?

For me, questioning is the core of IPM's Immersion Experience Program. Openness to learning and the willingness to be humbly present without judgment among our Partners is a vital step in our shared struggle for social justice and our own self-discovery. Read on to hear the stories of those who have made an Immersion Experience with IPM and have had the courage to be reckless with their souls.

Joseph F. Cistone
jfcistone@ipmconnect.org

¹ Dana Roberts of Boston University in *USA Today*, “Christian students get immersed in lives of the poor” by G. Jeffrey MacDonald, highlighting IPM's Immersion Experience Program, March 19, 2008.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS – DONNA KWILOSZ

Background:

I was born and raised on the South Side of Chicago. We lived in the Polish Catholic neighborhood where my parents grew up, surrounded by extended family. We celebrated birthdays, weddings, and funerals together. I thought everyone lived this way, until I went away to college in Iowa. Then I lived in New York City for ten terrific years. A “late bloomer,” I went to Baltimore to pursue a PhD in Psychology at The Johns Hopkins University, and lived there until our move to Cleveland.

We recently moved to Corrales, New Mexico, a quirky little village outside of Albuquerque. This move represents “a dream come true” and a significant transition in our lives—leaving dear friends and exceptional community, and my position as Associate Director of Psychosocial Oncology at The Ireland Cancer Center at University Hospitals of Cleveland. I now work part-time as Staff Psychologist at Navitas Cancer Rehabilitation Center, and soon will coordinate the Being with Dying: Compassionate End-of-Life Care Program, at Upaya Institute and Zen Center.

Life statement/mission:

As a practicing Buddhist, my motivation is to be a good human being, and work for the benefit of other beings—or at least attempt to find out what it would be like to be such a person. I believe that we can make a difference, one person at a time. It feels even more important to me now to follow a path of compassionate action.

Skills/interests I bring to IPM:

Since I’ve not served on a board before, the first skill I bring is a Beginner’s Mind. I will try to provide presence, a capacity to listen and bear witness, and a compassionate spirit. I enjoy interdisciplinary team work and integrating/translating different perspectives. I am looking forward to participating with a group who represents diverse interests and experiences.

Uniqueness of IPM:

I was drawn to IPM by the people who work there, and participate in the organization—hard-working people with heart and integrity. The Immersion Experiences provide innovative,



Donna (far right) with Mary LaPorte, IPM COO, and Mahesh Upadhyaya, Board of Directors, on their December, 2007 Immersion Experience to India.

unique, and meaningful ways to travel and meet people from different cultures. Each time I return I feel transformed by the experience, by the people we meet with, eye to eye. The opportunity to listen, learn about their lives, work, families, ideas, and dreams, and experience their generous hospitality and interest in our lives, connects us with our commonalities, our interdependence. IPM gives the word “globalization” a good name.

Where IPM should be heading:

I still have a lot to learn about IPM. It would be valuable to expand programs in the current geographical regions, and to provide mentorship for participants in current projects to become leaders and models for new project participants. Organizing retreats for Project Partners from different parts of a geographical region could facilitate connection, exchange of ideas, generate

new projects, and reinforce participants’ sense of self-worth. Providing more opportunities for individuals from different spiritual/religious traditions, and ethnicities to meet person-to-person—the IPM way—creates possibilities for healing and transformation.

Hope for IPM:

My hope is for IPM to continue to make a difference through a relationship-centered approach to change. The need to increase our sense of interconnectedness in the world is more important than ever. By fostering relationships based on mutual respect, compassion, and motivation for understanding, IPM will continue to model a unique approach for creating possibilities for hope and transformation.

Family and hobbies:

My husband, Milton Strauss, is Emeritus Professor of Psychology at Case Western Reserve University. He is now in a “phased retirement” as a Visiting Professor at UNM, New Mexico, edits journals, and continues his commitment to Jewish study. My two stepsons, Jonathan and Matthew, and our grandchildren Eric and Sonya, live in Denver. My brother Ron lives two hours north of us, in Dixon, NM.

Some of the activities I most enjoy are horseback riding, hiking, gardening (xeriscaping in my new climate), reading, spending time with the furry members of our family, watching the mountains, and practicing doing nothing.



Editor’s Note: The young girl on the left of the cover of the September–November, 2007 issue of *Connections* was tragically killed in a bus accident. Wendy Elizabeth Pérez Rivas, born April 14, 2001, died July 25, 2007, along with her mother in El Zaité, El Salvador. Our thoughts and prayers are with Wendy’s family and all of our friends at Lidia Coggiola and the community of El Zaité.

Wendy Elizabeth Pérez Rivas (left) at the Lidia Coggiola school in Zaragoza, EL SALVADOR

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

Laura & David Abrahamson
Marybeth & Christopher Barrett
Phyllis Brody
Jaime Buehl & William Reichard
Julia and Daniel Buck
Alyne & Joseph Cistone
Kim Day
Mary & Hank Doll
Ingrid & Paul Feiertag
Marita & Robert Garbs
Lietta Haenel
Kathleen Imhoff
Gladys Kretzmann
Tony Marchetti
Jim Mayer
Peter Mayer
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Zachary Ponsky
Frances Post
Flo Saeger
Liz & Eddie Skaggs
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Paul Strege
David Westcott
Margie Wheeler
Walter Wright

Memorial Gifts

Ralph Brody
Doris Holste
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Katie Cassidy Higgins
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Bruce Horner
Tim Martin
Molly Melcher
Emily Scott O'Reilly
Joseph Roland
Dr. Janet Rosenberg
Dick Sering
Rev. and Mrs. William Smythe
Wanda A. Weber
Richard Wilke

New Monthly Partners in Mission

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

Lydia Volz
Rachel Wilson

Major & Special Gifts Recently Received

Phyllis Brody
David & Michele Camiener
Peter & Rita Carfagna
William Carson
Robert Clausen
Laura & John Cunningham
Jonathan & Suzanne Dick
Linda & Bernard Dishy
Harry Duffey
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Free Hand, Inc.
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Miriam McCreary
Louise & Richard Mensing
Dianne & Roger Neiswander
Frances Post
Patricia & William Reichard
Laura & David Sangree
Larry Sehy
Harvey Stegemoeller
Sigrid & Hans Teich
Wahli & Neal Vanstrom
Virtual Parrot Head Club
Grace Weber
Margie & John Wheeler
James & Rita Wiese
Carl Ziegler

DONOR



From left to right, Flo Saeger, Chair of IPM Board of Directors; Lietta Haenel, Award Recipient; and Joe Cistone, IPM Executive Director, at IPM's Annual Donor Appreciation Brunch in St. Louis

ST. LOUIS DONOR APPRECIATION BRUNCH

On February 10th, IPM hosted its 4th Annual Donor Appreciation Brunch on the beautiful St. Louis campus of Eden Theological Seminary. Although the temperature outside was very cold, the room was filled with warmth from friends and longtime supporters of IPM. Nearly 70 guests were in attendance for an opportunity to hear firsthand about IPM's Project Partners around the world as well as recent immersion experience travel. The program also included an update from Sofia Baires, IPM's Regional Associate from Latin America & the Caribbean and a Special Recognition Award presented to Lietta Haenel for her lifetime commitment and generous support of IPM's mission fostering justice, peace, and hope around the world.

Lietta's history with IPM traces back to our founding years when she volunteered her time and talents serving as the organization's first

secretary through 2007 when she completed her services as IPM's St. Louis Volunteer Coordinator. We are profoundly grateful to Lietta for her many years of volunteer service and remain humbled by her lifelong and continued support of IPM.

Congratulations, Lietta!



CONNECTIONS

UPDATE

5TH ANNUAL LUNCHEON

A Celebration of Partnership & Community Support



Luncheon Honoree, LaJean Ray McNair of the Fatima Family Center, and Luncheon Co-Chair, Sara Mierke, of Hawken School



Luncheon Honoree, Joanne Clark of National City Corporation with IPM Executive Director, Joe Cistone, at IPM's 5th Annual Luncheon



Keynote speaker and Project Coordinator for Mujer y Comunidad-San Francisco Libre in Nicaragua, Zoraida Soza Sanchez at IPM's 5th Annual Luncheon.

Thanks to the generous support of more than 300 community and corporate supporters, IPM's 5th Annual Luncheon held on November 16, 2007 was a wonderful success! Our keynote speaker was Ms. Zoraida Soza, 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.

IPM was extremely pleased to honor National City Corporation's Joanne Clark, as well as the Fatima Family Center as recipients of the 2007 Rev. Richard E. Sering Award. This award is presented annually to those who foster the 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 include 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 posthumously by Susan Sering).

Fosbel Ceramic Technologies in India with IPM



Long time IPM Corporate Partner, Fosbel Ceramic Technologies, sent a delegation of employees from China and the United States to India with IPM in March, 2008

Namaste!

A CULTURAL CELEBRATION

On Friday, May 2, 2008, INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS IN MISSION hosted its **6th Annual Namaste!—A Cultural Celebration** at Trinity Cathedral in downtown Cleveland from 6:00-10:00 p.m. Guests learned about IPM's Project Partners and enjoyed an amazing buffet of international cuisine, incredible music, and a fabulous silent auction. All proceeds benefited IPM's 70+ community-based Project Partners around the world.

Read more online at www.ipmconnect.org, and in the next issue of *Connections*.

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Changing the World, ONE LIP GLOSS AT A TIME



Sofia Baires, IPM Regional Associate (right), and Carlos Diaz of Lidia Coggiola

by Rachel Wilson, Immersion Experience Participant, MSASS, Case Western Reserve University

I stepped off of the plane not quite sure what to expect. I was excited about utilizing my Spanish skills and eating the native food. I had no idea, however, that my life was going to be impacted in such a major way. Throughout the Immersion Experience there was one thing that was consistent: the people that we met were so giving. There was never a time when I had a personal encounter with a Salvadoran without them wanting to make a contribution to my life. I asked myself, what drives people who have so little to give so much? Each day I realized that what inspired them to give was the feeling they got when the recipient smiled. Simply put, it was the joy that giving provided to those who selflessly gave much of themselves to people whom they've never met, knowing that they would leave a remarkable impression on their lives forever.

After a visit to IPM Project Partner, *Lidia Coggiola*, I realized that though the social issues of this community seemed to be insurmountable, there had to be something that I could do to help to enrich the lives of the children and their parents. The first goal was to tell my story. Nothing hits home more than looking into the eyes of someone and actually feeling what they are saying, and telling my story from an Immersion Experience is as close as I can come to re-creating it for others. The second goal was to contribute financially. How in the world was I supposed



Rachel Wilson at IPM Project Partner, Lidia Coggiola on her recent Immersion Experience in El Salvador

to afford making a contribution to such a worthy cause as a simple graduate student? When I asked the question, "How much will it take to provide tuition for one child?" the answer was as effortless as the question: \$25. That \$25 is the "ideal" goal for a month for each child to go to the school to engage in social/academic activities, increase parental involvement, and provide a safe place for children to engage in such activities. Just a mere \$25 could literally change the life of one child, and potentially a whole generation of children. I looked in inside of my make-up bag and counted how

many sticks of \$12 lip gloss that I owned. 1, 2, 3, 4....I counted up to 6 sticks of lip gloss. I realized that my 6 sticks of lip gloss and one compact of make-up could send 4 children to this primary school.

This is the story that I tell people when they ask me, "How was El Salvador?" and "What can we do to help?" I express how easy it is to make a difference. I express to them how little of a commitment it is to change someone's life. I tell them that I choose to change the world, one lip gloss at a time.

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

by Margaret Kikui, Regional Coordinator for Sub-Saharan Africa

Walking in Solidarity

I joined IPM on July 16, 2007 as the Regional coordinator for Sub-Saharan Africa. Since then, I have had the privilege of coordinating three Immersion groups, two of these in Kenya and the most recent in Tanzania.

Immersion Experiences provide us with a moment in which we leave our comfort zones, leave behind whatever we value and “think” defines us to find our true selves, among a people we only read and/or heard existed. During this period of immersion, I have found myself wondering who the real me is. The many things I thought were obvious to everybody become a core to the learning and sharing process. Each one of the three experiences has had a unique reawakening in me: a moment of self-discovery and shared learning.

The Immersion Experiences have such a unique way of exposing people to the realities of life that I can compare them to none. Walking in the shoes of the people we meet and sharing their aspirations, dreams, and fears provide an opportunity to see the lives of others through a lens of justice, appreciation of humanity and unity in diversity. There is so much to gain and appreciate in the gift of each other in Immersion Experiences: that no one is on earth by an accident but has a unique purpose that the creator/ultimate reality/higher being/universe had for him or her. This has been my greatest lesson: to learn to appreciate others as equal and unique.

If all of humanity could interact freely, walk in solidarity, and live in the fears and dreams of each other, then this would make the world a better place to live in. Immersion Experiences provide such an opportunity and my prayer is, that as many as possible find a chance to join the IPM Immersion Experiences and discover their true selves.

Thinking of what is happening in Kenya now, I cannot help but feel the comfort of prayers from around the world from friends made during Immersion Experiences. I will forever be grateful for the mission of IPM that established Immersion Experiences for the uplifting feeling I



IPM Regional Staff members, Margaret Kikui and Jared Odhiambo on a 2007 Immersion Experience in Kenya. Please keep Jared, Margaret, & the Project Partners in your thoughts and prayers as the situation in Kenya continues to unfold.



Two participants from Grace Lutheran Church in River Forest, Illinois at a school in Tanzania on a recent Immersion Experience

get when I am down, and a friend from an Immersion Experience writes to say, “Margaret, Kenya, you and your family are in our prayers.”

In the words of an African scholar, John S. Mbiti: “I am, because we are; since we are, therefore I am.”

By Paul LaPorte,
Immersion Experience Participant

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

In the spring of 2007, when I first started planning my Immersion trip to India one of the things I heard about the trip is that the experience would likely have a deep meaning for me. I wondered what that might mean. Was this trip going to change me? If so, how?

When the trip was several months away, my thinking on this subject still had a distance from the reality of it all. As I applied for my Indian visa, there was a question about the reason for my visit. I checked "tourism." Tourism doesn't make you think much. However, I was beginning to read about the history, politics, culture, and people of the country and I found it all to be intriguing, fascinating.

I confess: like many Americans, I hadn't known much about India. For instance, I learned more about the independence from the British in 1947 and the dreadful difficulties and suffering that came with the division of India and Pakistan. I started to understand the animosity between the Hindu and Muslim cultures. I learned about Gandhi and his philosophy and looked forward to going to the Gandhi Ashram in Ahmedabad. Maybe that's where I'd find meaning. I learned something about the politics of modern India and some of the social and gender issues.

For a while, I thought: "Maybe there will be some big meaningful breakthrough for the other members of the team, but this kind of project has been up my alley for a long time." Since I was a little kid, pooling money with other kids in my Catholic school class to help the Pagan Babies of the world, I had been "tuned in" to the needs of the underprivileged. My involvement in Rotary International has engaged me in a more adult way to World Community Service. I thought I had already found the kind of meaning that others will discover on this trip. Yup, I was all set in that department, thank you.

In Ahmedabad, we met the women of *HUM* and I began to feel some of the things I'd read about. Hearing these women talk about not being able to get state ID cards, driver's licenses, or voter registration cards, helped me better understand some of the women's issues I'd read about. Visiting the Gandhi Ashram, we all learned more about his philosophy of nonviolent resistance and how he moved people, morally and politically. Hearing about the riots in Gujarat in February of 2002, and how over 2,000 people were killed in the Hindu/Muslim conflicts, gave me a better understanding of the depth of some of the problems people of India face today—especially the women. Still, this was more of an academic learning experience, not one that had really moved me.



Paul LaPorte (top right) and the December India 2007 Immersion Experience delegation with the group from HUM (Hindus and Muslims Together) in Ahmedabad, India

In Nagercoil, I had similar connections with the projects we visited. Women this: health care that. Tsunami damage this: computer training that. It's not that the visits were without meaning — they were all wonderful projects and brought out empathetic feelings for the people being served. I met beautiful, compassionate people, mostly women, who are doing wonderful things for others. Still, I could not identify any feeling of really being moved in the way I thought of as: "the great meaning of my trip."

Someone had asked me before I left home: "What do you expect to get from this?" My answer was that I hoped to come home a more compassionate person. That was kind of a vague and generic answer that got me off the hook. It didn't actually mean anything, but sounded really noble. Then I took the high road and told them that my sister had invited me to come along and I volunteered to take a digital camera and write articles about the projects we visited. That way I didn't have to admit that I had yet to identify how the trip was affecting me with real meaning.

On our trip, I saw poverty and inequity. I saw religious conflict and followed the local politics of cultural religious differences. I met women who could not function as businesspeople because they could not borrow money or open a bank account. I saw health care being provided and medications administered to the indigent. I looked into the eyes of hospice patients who were being treated with dignity in their final days. I saw the devastating effects of the 2004

tsunami and met a man whose livelihood had been restored when IPM provided him with an engine for his boat.

At home, I started writing the articles I promised I'd write. I scoured my notes and wrote about each project and reviewed the photos that went with them. It all had a kind of mechanical feel to it. For the past twenty years, I had made my living as a professional writer, so there was a feeling of "cranking it out," as though I were working for a typical client. I worked around the Christmas holiday, immersed in the haunting memories of the trip and still wondering if I would ever come to valid answers to: "What did it mean to me?" and "Did I actually connect with those people? Or was I just a tourist? A voyeur? A writer?"

On Thursday morning, two days after Christmas, with morning TV chattering in the background, I was working on some stories and distributing them to the other team members for review. A couple of them centered on the feelings of emerging hope I felt for the women of India.

Then came the announcement: "Earlier today in Rawalpindi, Pakistan, former prime minister Benazir Bhutto has been assassinated....."

Stunned, I sat in silence.

A tear ran down my cheek.

Who's Who

As IPM transitions into the New Year, it does so with numerous staff changes since this time last year. Laurel Domanski-Diaz, Sonya Marie Dias, and Jean Ann Sekerak all left IPM in 2007 to pursue new educational, familial, and employment opportunities. In their place, we are pleased to welcome an increasingly diverse and professional staff, bringing extensive experience and various strengths to their positions.



Laurie Rodney and Margaret Kikuvu on a January, 2008 Immersion Experience to Tanzania

In June, 2007, **Laurie Rodney** began as the Director of Education & Outreach, replacing Jean Ann Sekerak. Bringing with her several years as a teacher and administrator for Facing History & Ourselves, two years on the IPM board, and most recently her work as a Senior Development Associate for California Tomorrow, she has assumed responsibility for the Immersion Experience Program, as well as all other elements of Education & Outreach. She is currently based in San Francisco where she lives with her spouse in between frequent international travel with the Immersion Experience Program and to Cleveland to work directly with IPM staff.

Meg Chuckran is working with Laurie as the Education & Outreach Fellow, as part of a two-year volunteer position. Meg graduated from Holy Cross in Worcester, Massachusetts in May, 2007 as a Spanish major, and began work with IPM in July. Her work with IPM includes facilitation of logistics for the Immersion Experience Program, coordination of IPM's various publications, and various aspects of Education & Outreach.



Yolanda Long at work in the Cleveland office

Yolanda Long also joined the staff in July, 2007. She comes to IPM from several years working for a medical insurance company. She has lived in Cleveland all her life, and lives with her two children. She is working as the Administrative Assistant for IPM, supporting many aspects of IPM's daily operation, and she is the pleasant voice answering all of your calls to IPM.

In our international offices, we are pleased to welcome **Magda Lanuza** as a strategic consultant in Latin America & the Caribbean. A Nicaraguan now living in El Salvador, Magda comes to IPM with various experience, both in the United States and in Latin America, having obtained her master's degree in international development with Brandeis University. She lives now with her spouse and son in El Salvador, and works closely with IPM's El Salvador based staff.



Magda Lanuza (left) with participants from the University of San Francisco on a recent Immersion Experience Program in Nicaragua

Margaret Kikuvu also began her work with IPM's Sub-Saharan Africa office as the regional Coordinator of Sub-Saharan Africa, replacing Esther Gathiri. Margaret lives in Nairobi with her husband and daughter, and facilitates both Projects & Partnerships and the Immersion Experience Program in Sub-Saharan Africa. She comes to IPM after working with Catholic Relief Services and the Adventist Development and Relief Agency. She is also currently studying to obtain her master's degree in project planning and management at the University of Nairobi.



John Coughlin on a visit to IPM Project Partner, Lidia Coggiola

More recently, we are pleased to welcome **John Coughlin** to the staff, replacing Sonya Dias. John began with IPM in late December, 2007. He moved to Cleveland with his family after ten years working in Ireland and Mozambique with Trócaire. With more than twenty years of international experience, as well as a master's degree from the University College Dublin in Humanitarian Assistance, John is now working as the Director of Programs & Partnerships of IPM. He is working most directly with continued development of IPM's seventy Project Partners around the world.

Michael Garcia, joined the IPM staff in January, 2008, replacing Laurel Domanski-Diaz, as the Director of Resource Development. As a first-generation Cuban-American, Michael is fluent in Spanish. He comes to IPM with eight years of experience in Development at Case Western Reserve University, and holds a master's in Non-Profit Management from Case. Michael coordinates our Resource Development Program and meets with IPM Donors around the USA.

The staff is complemented by several volunteers and student interns, both in Cleveland and St. Louis. As IPM continues to grow and develop, we are enthusiastic about the diverse experiences and skills that this new group brings to IPM.

MY FAITH

MY JOURNEY

RACHEL SNYDER, STUDENT,
COLLEGE OF THE HOLY CROSS



Rachel Snyder, College of the Holy Cross student, in Unyolo Village on her May 2007 Immersion Experience to Kenya

I was blessed with the opportunity to be a part of the Kenya Immersion Program last May with the College of the Holy Cross. It is hard to put into words exactly what my experience in Kenya was like. It was unlike anywhere else I had ever been, and unlike anything else I had ever experienced. The first thing that comes to my mind when I think about my time in Kenya is God's amazing love.

I vividly remember going to a poor village called Unyolo during our week in Kenya. We spent an entire day under the trees playing, dancing, and singing with the children and other members of this community. I remember it being one of the most tiring days of my life, but also one of the most awesome and inspiring. The children loved to hang on us, touch us, and look at our skin. I think to many of them we seemed quite strange at first. Many had never seen white people before, and didn't know what to make of us. I will never forget how one of the children took a good amount of time to inspect me, and then began to realize that I had elbows and arms and legs, just like he did. I was not quite as strange as he may have first thought. Seeing this realization, and

coming to my own realizations about the commonalities of humanity, was rather powerful. This is where the feeling of God's love comes in. Though there are many differences between people, a very strong tie we share is the fact that we are all God's people, and we are all loved by God. This is not to say that before going to Kenya I didn't know God loved all of God's people, but rather I had never really stopped to think about just how awesome that love really is in the way I did that day in Unyolo. The people of this community, though financially poor, are so rich in spirit and life. Despite the fact that they did not physically have very much, they shared so much with us – with strangers. I saw God in the people of Unyolo – I saw God in their eyes, in their smiles, in their love.

And isn't God's greatest commandment to us to love one another? So why then is today's world plagued by so much hatred and violence? In the words of Mother Teresa, "If we have no peace it is because we have forgotten that we belong to each other." This is a very radical and powerful statement, but one that brings much truth to light. So often we forget that although

we as humans are so different from one another – we have different cultures, different beliefs, different practices – we also are alike in many respects. One of the most significant likenesses is that we are all loved by God. How amazing is a God that loves all of us – Kenyan or American, brown or yellow, city-dweller or farmer, male or female – and how amazing is this love. It can cross borders, break down barriers, foster peace and understanding.

The lesson, and challenge then, is to live in a way that demonstrates and perpetuates this love. I invite you to think about the ways in which you might do this today.

JOIN US ON AN UPCOMING IMMERSION EXPERIENCE!

Kenya: November 11-21, 2008

Experience this breathtaking country on our ten-day Immersion Experience. Visit with IPM Project Partners, meeting people working for real change and social equality in Kenya. Tour the Masai Mara and witness the extraordinary natural beauty of East Africa.

India: November 13-23, 2008

Travel with IPM and see firsthand the redevelopment efforts on the devastated beaches that were hit by the tsunami in 2004; spend time with IPM Project Partners working for religious, social, and economic justice; and tour historical and religious sites to get a grasp on the complex history of India.

El Salvador: December 6-13, 2008

Join us on our annual "Holiday with a Conscience" Immersion Experience, including several opportunities to purchase fair trade handcrafts. Take advantage of this opportunity to spend time learning from our Project Partners about their work with women, children, and youth throughout the country of El Salvador.

For more information, or to participate in any of these Immersion Experience Programs, contact the IPM office at +1.216.932.4082, or email Laurie Rodney at lrodney@ipmconnect.org.

2008 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: \$3,500

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: \$5,000**

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: \$1,000**

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: \$10,000**

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

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: \$3,500**

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**

WOMEN

WOMEN GENERAL FUND

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

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: \$3,500

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 (Muttom, Tamil Nadu)

Alangaramatha Women's Society is a community-based organization started by women to encourage the development of working women in and around the Muttom area. **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: \$1,000**

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 (Golpahunjanjyang)

QUEST 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: \$1,500**

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 ylong@ipmconnect.org.

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