

Christ Episcopal Church

Dominican Republic Mission Trip

June 23 - 30, 2018

The Christ Episcopal Church mission team travelled to the Dominican Republic on Saturday, June 23, 2018, and spent a week in the village of El Pedregal, our traditional mission field. The 14



missioners pictured above on the completely repaired and repainted playground included: Julia and Julius Ariail, Phyllis Hiers, Steph Johnson, Sally Querin, and Paul Stevenson from Valdosta; Wil Brown from Brunswick; Caroline Hiers from Thomasville; Meg Hiers from Marietta; Grady Lacy from Woodstock; Mary Marwitz and Fred Richter from Statesboro, Casey Wesselman from Albany; and Jeannette Pringle de Quezada from Santo Domingo.



This talented group divided the tasks and accomplished an amazing amount of work during the week as well as enjoying several excursions. Arriving in El Pedregal on a chartered bus around 6:30 p.m. on Saturday night after a Delta flight from Atlanta to Santo Domingo, the group ate dinner and settled in to the second floor of the Stevens Dormitory after a warm welcome by Padre Ramón Canela and the camp staff.

Steph Johnson, above, was in charge of painting murals in the kindergarten room of the school.

After breakfast on Sunday morning, the group attended a worship service at the Mount of the Transfiguration church that former Christ Church teams helped build. Several members of the local congregation have worked with our team in years past and greeted us fondly.

The team went to visit Leidy, Jesús, and Emanuel at the house our team built for them last year. This year's team was amazed at how beautiful the house was after completion of construction and

Leidy's decorating. Leidy has translated for our team for several years. We gave the family some baby gifts because they were expecting a daughter on Thursday of the week we were there. We also visited Zaida, a camp staff member who had a new baby two weeks before and gave her presents as well.



After lunch the group went in taxi vans to the Jarabacoa Flower Festival. Despite the recent rains, the flowers were beautiful, hanging in baskets from trees and arranged in arches so that people could take photos in the special locations.

Returning to camp from the festival, the group organized into teams to make decisions about the work that would begin Monday morning. During the week, the group shared the love of God with church members and villagers. They taught Vacation Bible School, repaired and repainted the playground the team built in 2014, painted Noah's Ark and animal murals in the daycare center, repainted the school logo on the exterior wall of the compound, taught sewing to village women, taught bracelet making and made God's Eyes with the village teens, vaccinated almost 50 dogs and cats, and entertained over 150 children and their teachers for a splash party with music and a lunch of hot dogs, cake, ice cream and soda.



Caroline Hiers taught the teens to make friendship bracelets.



Mary Jeannette Pringle de Quezada, wife of the Dominican Bishop, pictured at left, served as the 14th member of the team, teaching sewing, teaching VBS, and translating for the team. Jesús Rosado, a tailor in Jarabacoa and husband of our translator Leidy, also taught sewing. The sewing class was taught in the afternoons from 2 until 4:00 on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. Eight students learned to make curtains and baby blankets on the 8 sewing machines our church mission group brought in 2015 and 2018. They hope to continue the classes with Jesús during the year.

On Monday afternoon one of our missionaries, Grady Lacy, accidentally fell and suffered several scrapes on his nose and forehead. The campamento staff came to his aid immediately, and Padre Canela drove him to the local Dominican medical clinic where he was examined and treated. Dr. Wendy Diaz prescribed a healing lotion and a tetanus shot. Padre Canela drove to the pharmacy in Jarabacoa to purchase the medicine. He also returned Grady to the clinic on Tuesday morning for a follow-up exam and treatment. Our whole team is grateful to the staff of the clinic and the campamento for their assistance.



On Tuesday afternoon, the Colegio Monte de la Transfiguración held a graduation and honors celebration on the second floor of the Stevens Dorm with decorations and music. During the ceremony, Padre Canela surprised Julia and Julius Ariail with a presentation of a plaque for Christ Episcopal Church in recognition of the many years of financial support for the school we helped build. Julia and Julius announced that the mission team and our church would once again sponsor scholarships for the children for the 2018-19 academic year.

Phyllis Hiers, Julia Ariail, Grady Lacy, Jeannette Pringle, Mary Marwitz, Sally Querin and Caroline Hiers taught Vacation Bible School in the mornings of Monday through Wednesday with four Dominican teachers and our translator David Duran. On Wednesday, the third day of Vacation Bible School, Dayamo Ramirez, director of the Dominican Government's Natural Resources Department in Jarabacoa, pictured at right, and his education assistant Claudia Herrera, talked to the children at VBS about the importance of water in life and protecting the environment.



Paul Stevenson, Fred Richter, Meg Hiers and Casey Wesselman worked every morning to repair and repaint the playground we built in 2014 in partnership with the Nebraska Youth Team. In the afternoons, Sally Querin and Phyllis Hiers joined in the painting. Julia Ariail, Mary Marwitz, Jesus Rosado, and Jeannette Pringle taught sewing in the common room of the lower floor of the Stevens Dorm in the afternoon with Grady Lacy and Leidy Rosario translating.

Upstairs on the Stevens Dorm second floor balcony, Caroline Hiers taught teens to make friendship bracelets and God's Eyes in the afternoons. Steph Johnson and Wil Brown worked all day painting Noah's Ark-themed murals in the kindergarten room of the school, display boards for the playground and the school logo on the exterior wall of the compound. Julius Ariail and Sally Querin photographed the team's activities all over the campus all day.

As a treat for the team Thursday after lunch, we enjoyed an excursion to the Salto Baiguete waterfall. Several members walked the trail over a swinging bridge and up the mountainside, while others rode in a taxi to the entrance. This spectacular waterfall is a popular tourist destination in the country. Another group of missionaries from the US and many Dominicans were enjoying the day there as well.



Our two veterinarians, Meg Hiers and Casey Wesselman, assisted by Phyllis Hiers and Sally Querin, held a rabies clinic on Tuesday afternoon in the school courtyard and on Wednesday at a pavillion in Jarabacoa, the nearby city. They treated almost 50 dogs and cats and left an additional 50 doses of vaccine with a local family that sponsors a dog rescue program.

A wonderful coincidence of timing allowed the group to be in El Pedregal when Leidy gave birth to a daughter, Brithany Sofia, on July 29. The entire group went to the hospital after the waterfall excursion for a "welcome to

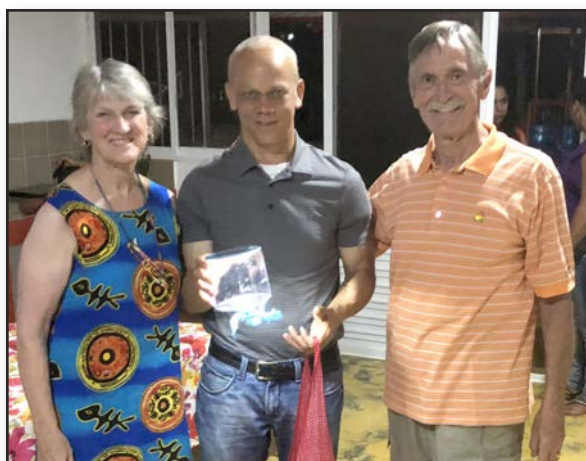


the world" and congratulations visit.



Thursday was Splash Party Day for over 150 participants. Every year the Christ Church mission team holds a party for the local children who come to play in inflatable pools, slide on slip-n-slide tarps with soap and water, and eat hot dogs, cake, ice cream and soda. This year the team took a 6 foot inflatable ball, a soccer ball and a volley ball for the children to enjoy. The team and the teachers served the food, played with the children and danced to the music on the loudspeakers.

At the farewell party Thursday night the team presented the Dominicans who had helped with VBS and the splash party with team t-shirts and crosses. We also presented 14 solar "Luci" lights to the campamento that were donated by a parishioner from Mary and Fred's home church, Holy Trinity in Statesboro. We also gave funds for the purchase of 72 sets of sheets for the children's summer camp in July to Padre Ramón Canela, priest in charge of the Campamento.



For the 2018-2019 school year friends of the mission and parishioners from Christ Church, Holy Trinity (Statesboro) and Holy Nativity (Dothan, AL) are donating 89 scholarships (\$31,150) for the village children to attend the Episcopal school we helped build.

The team left the camp on Friday morning riding a chartered bus to the Novus Plaza Hotel, formerly the Mercure, in Santo Domingo. Going out in groups, the team toured the historic district of Santo Domingo enjoying the many shops and art displayed on the pedestrian mall, El Condé. For dinner, the group dined at the Buche restaurant with Bishop Moisés and Jeannette Quezada, Karen Carroll, mission facilitator for the Dominican Diocese, and Patricia Martin, administrative assistant for missions.

Flying home on Saturday on a Delta flight, the team arrived safely once again into our doors. The entire "Go Team" thanks the many "Home Team" donors who made the trip possible and so generously donated to next year's scholarships. Well done, good and faithful servants.

As we prayed at evening prayer,
May the peace of the Lord Christ go with you
Wherever he may send you;
May he guide you through the wilderness:
Protect you through the storm;
May he bring you home rejoicing:
At the wonders he has shown you;
May he bring you home rejoicing;
Once again into our doors.

Julia and Julius Ariail, team coordinators

