

# Lovely latrines

SIFT has been providing primary healthcare to communities on the island of Ometepe since 2005 and our medical team, led by Dr Sandra Villagra, saw 6,400 patients last year. However, as well as treating people's illnesses, we also look for ways to help people live healthy lives and so avoid getting ill in the first place.

Four years ago, Dr Sandra let us know that many families in the communities where we work did not have a proper latrine, and some did not have one at all. This not only results in many preventable illnesses, but also in a lack of dignity for families. Since then our spring building trips have sought to address this need and so far we have built latrines for 87 families on Ometepe.



*The Centeno family with their new latrine*

This year we were working in the remote community of El Corozal, home to around 600 people. Two of SIFT's nurses are based in the village, and Dr Sandra also visits every other week to give consultations. The community had identified 12 families who were in need of a latrine, and the family members worked with local Nicaraguan builders to construct their latrines.



Our team of UK volunteers were in El Corozal for a fortnight in February to help with the project. The families were very appreciative of their new latrines and it was great to work alongside them.

We are really thankful for everyone who made this year's project possible and helped us to provide these families with safe and hygienic toilet facilities.

# First impressions

Marcus Wood, a student from Axminster, travelled to Nicaragua with SIFT on the February 2013 building trip and told us about his time there:

“After two weeks in Nicaragua, I didn’t want to come back. Every day out there was a challenge whether that be dealing with the heat, labour or emotions that came with seeing living conditions far worse than my own. Consequently, the end of each day felt very rewarding knowing that you’d changed another family’s life for the better, even if it was only in a small way.



“I met many people out there each with their own story to tell, but the one thing that brought them all together was that despite the dire circumstances they



each lived in, they all were smiling. It’s not something you would expect to see in a country filled with poverty, but the truth of the matter is, as a people they are much more grateful, much more giving and much friendlier than we are. As with anything there were exceptions to this, but on the whole it was rare to see someone who didn’t greet you with a beaming smile.

“I feel privileged to have been a part of this, and despite falling ill for a few days I am anticipative for 2014, when I hope to join the building trip again.”



# Meet Jader

Jader Alberto Thyne has lived in Bluefields on the east coast of Nicaragua all his life. He lives in the family home with his mum, Caroline, and his three brothers. One of his brothers has a family of his own and is financially independent so Caroline supports herself and her other three sons by doing domestic work. The work is not very well paid so things are tight financially.

Jader has been sponsored by SIFT through our education sponsorship scheme since 2005. He graduated from Colón Secondary School in November 2010 and is now in the third year of a four year psychology course at URACCAN, one of the two universities in Bluefields.



He is enjoying his course more than ever now that he is going on field trips and gaining hands on experience working in the community. This has included assisting in a home for the elderly, and helping the police with prisoners, victims, drug addicts and people with mental health problems.

Jader is very appreciative: *“It is a blessing to have a sponsorship which has got me now to university and I have progressed and progressed. I wouldn’t have done it without SIFT’s help because I couldn’t afford books or a backpack. I am very grateful!”*



Jader’s first aim is to qualify and become a professional psychologist. He realises it could be difficult for him to get a job in Bluefields and is prepared to move away to find work if necessary.

Once he is working, he wants his own house as he feels it is time he was on his own and gaining his own independence. It is then that he will look towards marriage and starting a family.

When Jader is not studying he does odd jobs to earn some pocket money. He also plays volleyball for the university and enjoys playing football.



## Love from Ali

Lots of people have been working hard lately to raise money for SIFT. I thought I would share some of their stories with you.

The Girls Alive Group from Lawrence Weston Christian Fellowship in Bristol held a sale of nearly new goods where they sold toys, books and bric-a-brac as well as refreshments. People who attended the sale also watched a presentation about SIFT and the latrines project in particular. The girls, pictured right with a presentation cheque, raised £362 to provide a latrine for a family on Ometepe.



The COSMIC Sunday School classes at Creech St Michael Baptist Church have been learning about what life is like on Ometepe. Every week they learnt about a different aspect of the lives of the children who live there and one week I was able to visit the Sunday School to tell them about SIFT's work. They decided to donate their weekly collection to SIFT and raised £115 towards our medical work. They also shared what they had been learning with the rest of the congregation and held a cake sale after the service which raised £417.09 towards a latrine.



David Cox completed the gruelling 250 km Atacama Desert Crossing in 47 hours 35 minutes and 54 seconds. He came 69<sup>th</sup> out of 132 competitors and raised £2,838.04 towards our medical work.

We are very grateful to them all for their efforts to help other people. If you are thinking of raising money for SIFT and would like help with resources please get in touch with me via [ali.wilson@seed-trust.com](mailto:ali.wilson@seed-trust.com).

## Contact us

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