

# Miss Margaret

***Margaret Storey lives in Bluefields for eight months of the year. She works with SIFT's sponsored children and their families who know her as Miss Margaret.***



Now into my fifth year of serving long-term in Bluefields, it feels as though I have two homes and two families. I continue to spend eight months in Nicaragua and four months back home in Newcastle and I am so very comfortable in both countries, though it is always a wrench when I leave my children and grandchildren behind each year.

With 125 children being educated in Bluefields through our school sponsorship scheme, my time is never dull. It has its joys and sorrows, its proud moments, disappointments and frustrations – but it's never dull!



Many of our students live by the rubbish dump area and it is heart warming to see these young people being educated and doing so well. They would never have had the opportunity to go to school were it not for generous folk in England offering to sponsor them. At the moment we have 16 students studying for a degree in university and this year should see another 10 graduating from secondary school and applying for a place at university.

Much of my time is spent supporting the families of our students and doing a monthly check at the various schools to make sure they are attending. Sometimes they will come and ask me to help them with their English studies or to accompany them on a hospital appointment or visit to the dentist.

The women's craft group which I started three years ago has gone from strength to strength. Some of the women have now made their efforts into small businesses – all it took was a bit of encouragement and supplying the items to get them started.

People often ask me how long I intend to serve in Bluefields – my answer is “As long as God wants me to be there and gives me the strength to do so!”

# Medical check-up



**The vital signs:** We are very grateful to everyone who sent us a donation towards our medical work on the island of Ometepe as a result of the appeal in the autumn Insight. We received £3,115 which is enough to run all four of our clinics for a month.

**The prognosis:** We still need £7,000 to cover the shortfall in this year's budget and enable us to continue providing vital healthcare.

**The cure:** We urgently need people to help us sustain the medical work by donating regularly. One way of doing this is by sponsoring one of our nurses. Please see the enclosed brochure for more details or pass it on to someone else and encourage them to consider supporting SIFT's medical work.

# Make mother's day



Are you looking for a present for Mothers' Day which will make your mum's day and help other people at the same time? We may have just the thing! From 5<sup>th</sup> March we will holding an eBay auction of 12 items of jewellery, handmade by SIFT Trustee Jane Weaver. The auction will last five days and all proceeds will go towards SIFT's medical work. Go to [www.seed-trust.com/ebay](http://www.seed-trust.com/ebay) for further details.

# New year, new website

Our website has a brand new look for the new year. At [www.seed-trust.com](http://www.seed-trust.com) you can learn about our work and find out more about how you can support SIFT. It will also have all our latest news so don't forget to check back regularly.



# Staying in touch

Contacting our supporters by e-mail rather than by post enables us to use more of the money which you donate to us where it is most needed. If you would be willing to receive the SIFT Insight by e-mail please either contact Ali Wilson ([ali.wilson@seed-trust.com](mailto:ali.wilson@seed-trust.com)) or visit [www.seed-trust.com/insight](http://www.seed-trust.com/insight).

# Fundraising opportunity



Calling all budding auctioneers! SIFT's Patron, Andrew Selous MP, has kindly donated a tour of the House of Commons followed by either lunch or tea with him to be auctioned to raise money for our medical work on the island of Ometepe. We are looking for someone to organise and run an

auction in their church, workplace or community. If you would be interested in running this event then please contact Ali Wilson by e-mailing [ali.wilson@seed-trust.com](mailto:ali.wilson@seed-trust.com) or calling her at the SIFT office (01297 22484).

## Introducing David Langmead

We are delighted to announce the appointment of a new Trustee for SIFT, David Langmead, the son of Tony, SIFT's representative in Nicaragua. David first travelled to Nicaragua with Latin Link in 1995 when he spent eight months helping to build Verbo School in Bluefields. Since then he has visited Nicaragua on a variety of trips, including managing a project to secure land for Verbo Church.



David has been a Christian for thirty years. He lives in Hampshire with his wife Belinda and their children Esther and Joshua and has worked as a salesman for twelve years. In the last few years he has helped the homeless of Southampton on a regular soup run and has also been involved in a prison outreach ministry into HMP Winchester, Albany, Parkhurst, Camphill and Guys Marsh.

## Can you help?



We are looking for more people with a passion for SIFT's work in lifting people out of poverty in Nicaragua to serve as Trustees. If you would like to know more about what this would involve, please contact Colin Weaver, our Chair of Trustees ([colin.weaver@seed-trust.com](mailto:colin.weaver@seed-trust.com) or 01487 822766).

# Love from Ali



Whilst I was in Nicaragua in August I was privileged to be able to meet José Gaitán Vivas, one of SIFT's sponsored children. José is sixteen years old and lives with his mum, Bernada, and dad, Santos, in one of the poorest parts of the town of Bluefields on the east coast of Nicaragua.



He is the third youngest of eight children, having three brothers and four sisters. Having such a large family is difficult financially for José's parents. His dad is often unemployed and his mum suffers from diabetes and had a stroke last year which makes it difficult for her to work. Before it was relocated the town rubbish tip used to be very close to José's house and he could often be seen there looking for things which his family could use or make good to sell on in order to help his family make ends meet.

Despite his difficult background José starts the fourth year of secondary school at Verbo School in February and is one of the best students in his class. He is on the school's honour roll as a result of his excellent results. José has been sponsored by SIFT for all his school life and said of his sponsorship *"If it had not been for SIFT I would never have been able to study at Verbo and maybe never even studied at all"*.

Once he finishes school he intends to go to university to study to be a teacher. He already gets plenty of teaching practice because he helps local children who are struggling with their studies by holding classes for 15 children in a neighbour's home. He is very dedicated to teaching them what he has been taught at school and covers a variety of subjects. I was able to attend one of the lessons during my trip and it was wonderful to see that not only is José benefiting from his sponsorship but that he is also passing on his knowledge to his friends and neighbours.



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## Contact us

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**Patron:** Andrew Selous MP