

April 2014

Dear Friends and Family,

It is hard to believe that it is already April! This year has been super busy. I suppose having three kids might have something to do with it but there is a lot going on around here as well. Here is a bit of what we've been up to in the last couple of months.

From Nicole

I am almost 8 months and love to laugh and be with people. In the last couple of months I have met lots of new friends. First there was Skye who came for six weeks to live at a children's home and help out at the sports center. Then there was Andrew who came for nine weeks and stayed at Halle and Kathy's house. He helped out a lot around the sports center. Then a team from State College, PA was here. Some of the people on that team were very excited to meet me. Finally the last person to come was Wendy. So many people loving on me in the last 3 months; it was great! I love all the attention. Thankfully attention is not too hard to come by around here.

From Anthony

I have continued to watch Halle and the building of the pool. Some afternoons after school I head over to the sports center to check out the latest changes to the big hole in the ground. A couple of weeks ago there was a huge concrete mixer here pouring part of the foundation for the floor. There were lots of people helping out that day. I cannot wait until it is all finished and we get to start swimming. I just turned four last month and am very excited to be BIG now. Some of my favorite people to hang out with are older than me like my cousins and all of the guys on Papi's soccer team.

From Samantha

Wow what a busy year it has been so far! In January our house was full of backpacks and school supplies. You could hardly walk in our living room. I did not mind though because Mommy was more willing to let us go play at the sports center. Anthony and I really loved playing with Skye. She would come to the sports center and help out in the library and hang out with the kids from the community. We even went to the children's home where she stayed and played a couple of times.

At the end of February Kathy started a feeding program at the sports center. Now when we come home from school on Tuesdays and Thursdays we line up with the kids to wash our hands and then we eat lunch in the Ranchon. Kathy leads the group in songs and reads a Bible story. Sometimes she asks questions and you can earn a sticker if you know the answer. Last week I got my first sticker. You can also earn stickers by helping after the feeding program is over, like wiping the tables and drying cups. I am usually too distracted with playing with my friends to sign up for chores plus I do plenty of those at home. I love going to the feeding program because so many of my friends from the neighborhood come and I get to meet new people too.

From Thomas

My soccer team continued to do very well in the league that I am in charge of. We made it to the championship game but we lost by a point. We were all bummed to lose but I always start a new league a couple of months later so we will have another chance. As much as I like to have my team win, I realize that this league is really about getting guys together to play sports, make new friends and giving young guys something fun to do with their free time that is healthy. Amanda brought the kids to the championship game and she was really surprised at how many people had come to watch. She said it really was great to see so many families their supporting their sons.



Another soccer activity that I have created lately is planning scrimmage games between the 1st through 3rd graders at the private school where I work and the kids from the neighborhood where we live. It has been a great activity for all of the kids involved.



From Amanda



Since coming back from the United States in January life has been really busy. With scholarship decisions and 600 some backpacks to buy supplies for plus a team that would be arriving at the end of January, I hit the ground running. However, I could never run too fast because life with three children just takes a little longer. January and February seemed to fly by though and lots of little jobs were put off until a later date. March did not seem to slow down either even though I was done paying all 51 university scholarships for their first trimesters or quarters as well as the other 48 scholarships that are for youth at vocational schools or learning English or at private schools in Managua. There was always something else to do - translating for a family who is going through the adoption process, helping pour cement one day for the pool, learning my new position as treasurer for the church that we attend on Sundays, hosting youth groups every two weeks. All of that plus the normal activities of life with a family. The best part for me, though, as a mom, is that in many of the activities that I do for the sports center and the scholarship program, my kids are often by my side and even helping out. Nicole is only 7 months old so she cannot really do much and yet taking a baby with me to the bank and other places often gets me preferential treatment. They love babies in this culture so having Nicole with me when I go pay scholarships always helps me develop relationships. Anthony is now four and is very helpful and even more so if there is some competition involved. Samantha is six and a half and loves to be with people. She knows many of the kids that are at the feeding program and that hang out in the library. She also is an amazing helper with Nicole. My kids are always at youth group nights and are often around when we have teams here. I love that they are growing up in this environment.



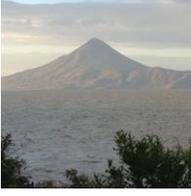
The pool is coming along. What looked like a large hole in the ground a couple of months ago is now starting to take shape. At the end of March we had a group of 12 guys helping with the first cement pour for the footings of the floor of the pool. We still have a ways to go, but week by week it is coming along. The community is excited about the idea of a local pool, and I know many kids will soon be learning how to swim.

Thank you so much for your continued prayers and support! We appreciate your prayers for all that we are involved in and for us as parents raising three children to love the Lord with all of their heart. May you enjoy a wonderful Easter celebrating Christ and His resurrection!



Seeking Him for life,

Thomas, Amanda, Samantha, Anthony y Nicole Gutiérrez



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