

April 2016

Dear Friends and Family,

We hope this finds you doing well and enjoying life wherever God has you! Life in Nicaragua lately has been hot, and being 7 ½ months pregnant in 98 degree heat with 40% humidity is not exactly my idea of fun. One of my friend's thermometers registered 107 degrees the other day! So in thinking of the heat we are especially thankful for some of the highlights we have to share from these past months...

First of all, thanks to all of you who donated to help us buy a newer car with room for more passengers! We found a good deal right before Easter week on a 2009 Toyota Prado that had very few kilometers. We have appreciated having a much more reliable vehicle that will hopefully last our growing family for years to come. Lately, we have really enjoyed the A/C. Since we do not have A/C in our home, driving a car with good A/C makes running errands feel like small vacations! Thanks again for your generous gifts.

Besides good A/C the next best thing in the heat is a pool, right? On April 21st 19 guys including Halle August and Timmy Hayes, director of Nica Nadadores, finished the final plastering of the pool walls, and the next day the water trucks showed up to fill the pool. The neighborhood we live in, like many parts of Managua, does not have running city water during the day. Those of us who can afford to build towers and buy a water tank still have water throughout the day but rely on the city water to come on each evening to refill our tanks. The pool had to be filled in a certain time frame; therefore, it was necessary to pay for water trucks to deliver the 44,000 gallons of water plus whatever water came in through the system during the night. Eventually it was filled, and we have enjoyed cooling off a number of times during this super hot spell. The pool is not yet ready to be open to the community as the walls have to be scrubbed daily until they are ready and the final steps taken in connecting the filters and pumps to make sure all is working well. Plus, we are still working out the details of how exactly to allow the community and groups that rent the sports center to use the pool. So many people in Nicaragua have never learned to swim, and we are concerned about allowing just anybody to use the pool. We would appreciate your prayers for wisdom as we make these decisions.

Back in January we had a small team come from Pennsylvania to work around the sports center and help us with the backpack program. Thankfully January is a much cooler month here, so packing 625 backpacks in our living room, while a bit crowded, was not too hot. Because the group was smaller this year than in past years, we were all concerned about being able to finish packing all of the backpacks, but every year we are a bit more efficient and all went very smoothly this year. The group helped hand out backpacks to the children and youth at two churches that this program has supported for years as well as in the local neighborhood around the sports center. As the team left I began paying scholarships around Managua, adding nine new university students to the list of recipients. This year, ideally, there are 10 students who will be graduating with their degrees. Karina Alfaro, one of the students that I have most enjoyed keeping in touch with throughout her five years of studying, just graduated this past weekend!

When not paying scholarships or running errands, life stays busy with three children. Nicole and I often help at the feeding program that Kathy runs on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Samantha and Anthony are both learning to swim and are participating in a soccer camp at school. Samantha continues to enjoy gymnastics. Of course, there is always helping with homework, and some days Samantha's Spanish homework even gives me a challenge! I am thankful that my pregnancy continues to go smoothly, but I have definitely noticed a lack of energy and patience in this last month especially with the hot weather. We look forward to sending pictures in June of the latest little Gutierrez!

May God bless each one of you where He has you planted!

Seeking Him for life,

Thomas, Amanda, Samantha, Anthony y Nicole Gutiérrez

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