

September 2011



Dear Friends and Family,

What a busy summer this has been for all of us! We hosted five awesome short-term teams in ten weeks this past summer and were blessed by their work and new friendships. They worked hard at the sports center and enjoyed getting to know the neighborhood kids through playing sports, doing crafts and hosting a number of youth nights. Below is what these past five months looked like from each of our perspectives. Enjoy!



From Samantha

This past summer was so much fun! I love it when the groups come and stay at Halle and Kathy's. My favorite part is eating in the Ranchon, going to the hotel and playing with the girls like Meagan, Erin and Abbey. I also liked playing with Andrew; "he's a silly goose pancake!" In June we had a girl named Jennifer come and stay with us for a month. That was lots of fun. She played games with me and taught me how to do cartwheels. I am still practicing though.

Even when there are no groups here I still have lots of fun because at the sports center there are lots of kids to play with. Mommy lets me go over by myself. I just have to make sure that the gate is closed so that our big Rottweilers don't get out, and then I check in with Rosmery, the librarian, just so she knows that I am there. "I love that I like that there are a lot of kids."

Some days though I just stay home and play with Anthony. We play really well together and do not fight. "I love my baby and he's a cutie."

Four weeks ago I started preschool at NCA (Nicaraguan Christian Academy). I love playing and making new friends. On Mondays I have computer class with my Papi. Mommy said I am supposed to call him Mr. Thomas when I am at school, but that is hard and I forget, so I call him Papi. One day though another girl in my class started calling him Papi too. I have learned lots of new songs at school, and I teach them to Mommy so that she can sing them too.

My favorite memory so far this year was having Grandma and Grandpa come to visit. We stayed for a couple of nights at a lake house; that was so much fun. I love to travel and go to new places. I often pretend that I am traveling to CA to visit my Grandma and Grandpa.



From Anthony

For me this past summer meant learning to walk. Everyone was always saying how it was taking so long for me to walk, but boy you should have seen me crawl. I was the fastest crawler around, and to be honest I didn't think walking would be much faster. Well, I was wrong and that's okay cause now that I've gotten the hang of walking I get to go outside more!! That's the best part. So now in the morning, once I am awake, the first thing I do is find my shoes and take them to Mommy, and then I go find her shoes and take those to her. She seems to find this funny, but I'm just trying to get her out the door faster. You see, once my big sister started school, Mommy and I go for runs or walks in the morning. I love starting the day that way!

Right now my favorite things to do are play with any kind of ball, ride Sami's tricycle and close gates. You might find that last one funny, but there are lots of gates around here that need closing. Whenever we go to the sports center to hang out, there are lots of gates that the kids have left open so I walk around closing them. The kids are always squealing with delight at me, but I am not fond of being held or walked around. I am on a mission to walk somewhere and explore so I would rather be left alone. Unless of course, it's my Papi who has come home from work and is out on the soccer field with his teams. I love being out there with him. Maybe I'll play soccer someday!

From Thomas

About 3 years ago I saw a need in our neighborhood of Chiquilistagua. There are many young guys who have a passion for sports especially soccer but don't have the economic resources to sign up for a soccer league or buy uniforms. Having been involved in another league in Managua, I decided to start my own league at the lowest cost possible. I formed a team of guys, used my own money to buy uniforms and then invited other people to sign up for our league. That year we started with 5 teams playing at our El Salero sports center on Saturday afternoons. The season went well, and





there was a lot of interest. The following year we had 6 teams sign up. What I like the best is that most of the teams are from around our area, and therefore I am able to see many of the guys throughout the week as they come to hang out and play at the sports center. Their soccer skills are improving, but many of them have also had the chance to participate in soccer camps and hear the Gospel because of two short-term teams. In playing sports it doesn't matter what culture you are from; you just love soccer! Many of the guys around here have enjoyed these groups and have asked for more.

What has impacted me the most about the soccer league was something that was said to me about a month ago. I was talking to some guys about the league, and one of them said how cool it was that the soccer league has changed our neighborhood. He said that before the league started there were many groups of guys, not exactly gangs, but groups that did not get along and would fight and disagree, but since the league started many of the groups have disappeared and now guys, who before would fight, are now playing soccer together. Also, another guy said that playing in the soccer league has helped many young guys stay away from or stop being involved in things like smoking and drinking because they realize how those things don't help them on the soccer field.

This past summer some friends of a friend of mine were organizing a weekend soccer tournament on Ometepe, an island on Lake Nicaragua. Because of my friend, my team was invited to participate. The guys on my team were super excited about the invitation, and all of them wanted to go; however, in the end only 15 were able to go. Some were unable to go because they could not pay for the trip, and others had to work. Most of them had never been out of Managua much less to Ometepe. I was also excited because I had never been to Ometepe either! None of the guys had ever been on a boat and therefore much less been on an island. Praise God that the trip went well, and we did not have any problems traveling there and back. We played in the tournament and were eliminated in the first round, but for me the most important part was sharing with the families of that community and the guys of the other teams that we played against. Many of the other teams' players hosted two of our guys in their homes, providing meals and a place to sleep while we were there. We made lots of friends that weekend. When we left, the tournament organizer said that he hoped that we would be back and hopefully could win a game the next time! Overall, it was an awesome experience.

From Amanda

As you can tell life has been very full these past five months. From working with teams to paying scholarships to getting Sami ready to start school to watching Anthony learn to walk; there have been no dull moments. And while life has slowed down a bit lately; it is still full. We have taken some time to fix things around the house and enjoy lazy Saturday mornings together as a family.

Over the summer we had the privilege of having a 15-year old gal, Jennifer, stay with us for a month. We had met her last year when she came with a short-term team and invited her to come back and stay with us for a longer time this summer. She was very interested in improving her Spanish and experiencing more of what it meant to live in Nicaragua. While she was here, she helped out with teams, played with Sami and Anthony and took Spanish lessons. Overall, it was a great experience!

With five different teams working at the sports center this past summer, a lot of projects were accomplished. They painted 3 new murals on our baseball stadium wall, put in 2 new walkways, did lots of work trimming and using the chainsaw, and made great progress in the stands of the baseball stadium. When teams were not lifting heavy blocks or painting, they were either playing sports or working in the library with the kids. We hosted a total of eight youth nights that involved playing games and giving a Gospel message along with team members sharing about their personal experiences with God. One group even put on a worship concert. It has been a great way to bond with the older youth and share our faith.

Seeking Him for life,

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