



September 2014

Dear Friends and Family,

We hope this summer has been a good one for you. While here it is supposed to be the rainy season; we have had very little rain so far which makes it feel more like summer because it is so hot. However, Nicaragua needs the rain in order for crops especially beans to grow so please be praying for more rain. The summer months are always busy for us with teams here. Starting in April through July we had four different teams come and serve with us at the sports center. School has now started so life has slowed down a little bit. Here is what we've been up to...

From Nicole

These past couple of months I have been held by more arms than I can even begin to count. In April there was a huge team here from Maranatha High School and then in June there was a team of girls from Naples, Florida. So many people loved on me. Then we traveled to California to see my grandparents and lots of other friends. Then in August we hosted a team from New York and I think almost everyone in the group held me at one time or another. Some people say it is to give my mom a break or to help her out when she is translating; others say it is because I am so cute and easy going. Personally, I like the last option. And when teams are not here there are always girls at the sports center that love to give me rides in my stroller. I even end up in the arms of some of the boys from Papi's soccer team at times. It's great to have so many friends!

From Anthony

At the end of summer we had a team from New York come work with us for a week. One of the teenagers on the team became my good friend. His name is Noah and he would hang out with me and play soccer. When teams are here my mom is often very busy translating and organizing activities. Sometimes it is hard because I do not always want to do things with the large groups of kids. It was fun to have a friend like Noah that I could pal around with. In the last couple of months though I have grown to enjoy being a part of the feeding program and playing with Sami in the afternoons at the sports center.

From Samantha

I LOVE summer time when teams are here! In June right after school got out we had a team of girls here. Every morning when I would hear the bell ring for breakfast I would jump out of bed ready to hang out with the girls. Before they arrived Halle was hoping to pour the concrete for the floor of the pool but for a number of reasons that was delayed. We ended up doing it while the girls were here so they all got to help. It was fun to watch the pump truck. Anthony was more content to stand there watching for a long time whereas I would check in every once in a while and then go back to playing with all of my friends at the sports center.

Then in July there was a New York team that came and did an incredible week of activities for children from 6-12 years old. It was such a great week full of games, crafts, songs, skits and Bible lessons. Their theme was Forgiveness and I learned a lot about needing to forgive other people especially my brother when we fight over silly things. The team also had some fun ideas for youth night. One of them was playing ultimate frisbee at night with glow in the dark bracelets and a glow in the dark frisbee. It was total chaos but the youth loved it! Anthony and I get to stay up really late on youth group nights and we love that!

What a great summer this has been! Between teams we traveled to California to visit my grandparents one more time before they moved. My mom and dad helped do a lot of packing and I helped Grandma pack up boxes too. One afternoon we got a treat for all our help – we got to go ice skating. I have been wanting to do that for a long time. It was a bit harder though than I thought it would be.



From Thomas










For me the highlight of these past couple of months has to be taking my mom to the States that in the next year or so would be our last chance for my mom to visit CA. We had already booked travel for July and so last December we applied for her visa and she got it. Then we found a great deal on flights but they were not the same as ours. So my mom flew on an airplane for the first time and came to the States all by herself. You might not be all that impressed but remember that my mom doesn't speak any English. She was very proud of herself when she walked through those doors at the SFO airport and found us waiting for her! She had a great time visiting Menlo Park, and seeing San Francisco and Santa Cruz. She also really enjoyed going shopping. Overall it was a trip of a lifetime for her. Guess we will have to take her to Mississippi next.

Of course the other activity that I have been involved in lately is yet another soccer league. My neighbor, Mario, and I are co-coaching this one but not actually running the league. This is an official league not like the community ones that I have run over the years. It is a 17 and under league for all of Managua and as of right now our team is in fourth place. Many of my players from past teams are too old for this league but even so many of them like to go along for the ride and watch the game. The area that we live in is just enough outside of the city that many people do not leave very often. For many of these guys this is the highlight of their week.

From Amanda


Life has just been really busy this year. Between paying scholarships to helping out at the feeding program to working with teams when they are here plus of course being mom to three kiddos, life has not slowed down much. Our trip to California in July was a great time of rest. Even though we were helping my parents pack we enjoyed lots of down time and even some touristy trips taking Thomas' mom different places. It was so much fun seeing California through her eyes.

In the past five months we have had four different teams. Maranatha High School was here in April and was probably one of our biggest teams yet. One of the projects they worked on was painting a beautiful mural along the wall by the pool. I think all 28 team members painted at least once during the project. We have always appreciated their artistic abilities. In June the church from Austin, Texas that has raised the money for building the pool was here for two days doing children's and women's ministry as well as checking out the progress of the pool. When they come back next year, they will be able to give swim lessons. As they left to do ministry in another community for the rest of their trip we welcomed in an all-girl team from Naples, Florida. Since this team turned out to be all girls they focused on reaching out to the teenage girls in the community. Besides doing youth nights they also hosted a tea party just for teenage girls. In the mornings they helped do work projects; one day that meant helping with the cement pour of the floor of the pool. While we were in California a youth team came from Washington. Being led by Halle and Kathy's son, Brookes, we were bummed to be gone while they were here. When we returned from the States we hosted our last team of the summer from Westpoint and Buffalo, New York. They planned lots of activities for kids, and it turned out perfectly because the kids of the neighborhood had that week for their mid-year break from school. The team really loved on the kids and each other. It was a great way to end our summer of teams.

Our kids are on the American school year so they just started school. Samantha is now in first grade and is going to school all day. She is really enjoying the new challenges of first grade like memorizing whole poems in Spanish. Anthony is in Pre K2 and really enjoys math and soccer. He also likes his teacher a lot and is often coming home telling me a new song that they learned. Nicole just turned one last month and seems to be learning new things daily like how to climb the step ladder and grab the phone or where the Kleenex boxes are and how fun it is to tear them to pieces when no one is looking! Life is never dull around here.

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. Seeking Him for life,

Thomas, Amanda, Samantha, Anthony y Nicole Gutierrez

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