

July 2017

“All creatures great and small, the Lord God made them all.” C. F. Alexander

We just returned from an eight day mission trip to Honduras. A few of God’s small creatures challenged me. We ousted 3 scorpions, a few cockroaches, 4 bats, spiders, and a tree frog from Casa de David (our guest house). Some friendly geckos and a lizard remain a part our indoor menagerie. A large, noisy toad sang outside our window at night and a chorus of birds awakened us each morning.

Our primary purpose for this trip centered on some of God’s *special creations*, the boys and girls of **The Hogar de Niños** (Home for Children). Our happy reunion included many hugs from children welcoming the return of the gringos: Mandy, Owen and me.

We also desired to provide a respite and encouragement for those who care for the children day in and day out. The first two days, we cared for the boys at **Casa Banks** so their house parents, Isidro and Raquel, could take time off. The boys happened to be on a week-long break from school. We supervised their chores: sweeping, cleaning, washing dishes and *chopiando* weeds in the yard.

Play time followed chores. Tic-tac-to, chess and miniature hockey were inside diversions. I read many books to the boys. Six-year-old Marlon snuggled up next to me and practiced trying to read in Spanish. Later, he promised me, **“Cuando vuelva, le voy a leer un libro.”** “When you return, I will read you a book.”

The second day, we took the boys to a public play area with an enclosed soccer court and a pool with a water slide. They had a blast playing soccer with McKenzie who has great *futbol* skills. McKenzie first came with us last year on the respite mission trip, but now lives at Casa Banks as a volunteer through November.

Each day, Mandy took over chauffer duties for the Hogar, while Owen and I took out, individually or in pairs, workers from The Hogar. God opened doors of opportunity for them to share their hearts with us. We had times of laughter, tears and prayers. Janell, who was hoping to go to Nursing School in Mexico this August, found out the day we took her out that her first-year tuition had been provided in-full by donors. She was overwhelmed with gratitude after months of intense prayer.

Taylor, an intern from the U.S., had lovingly cared for the babies at the Casa Hogar for 10 ½ months. She returned to the U.S. the day after we took her out. Viviana, an intern from Colombia, South America, took Taylor’s place. Each intern had stories of God’s amazing grace and calling to serve Him at the Hogar.

Owen shared two evening devotions at the Hogar. He orchestrated a pancake breakfast for all the kids—always a big hit! The day before we left, Owen got very sick with stomach issues. We were not sure if we would be able to travel the next day. Some Honduran doctor friends came to Casa de David, checked Owen over thoroughly, brought things to treat his symptoms and knelt at his bedside to pray for him.

That night, I also asked Isidro and the boys of Casa Banks to please pray for Owen. Later, when they returned from church, little Jorge exclaimed, **“Yo oré por Owen en la iglesia.”** “I prayed for Owen at church.” God answered those prayers. After a rough night, Owen was much better the next morning. We awakened to one of the boys singing at the top of his lungs, **“Gloria a Dios, Aleluya!”** “Praise ye the Lord, Hallelujah!”

That morning, we said goodbye to God’s *special creations*, decked-out in their school uniforms. They could see and feel the results of their prayers as Owen and I hugged each one with a farewell embrace. Indeed, **Gloria a Dios** for all He has done!

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