



Giving Hands Foundation of Barahona

FUNDACIÓN DANDO LA MANO

October – December 2016

Praise God for an incredibly full and productive ending of 2016 and the Ramirez's time in Altigracia! We emphatically repeat Ephesians 3:20-21, which has become like an anthem this year: "Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think." Amen, amen, amen! He's done it again!

October was a low-key month for Altigracia, as the Giving Hands clinic functioned mainly through Dr. Jacob and the kids of the community had settled into their school routine. We took our first missionary representing trip to Puerto Rico the week of Oct. 5-12 and shared fellowship with our supporting church, Iglesia Plenitud del Reino. Dr. Jacob shared a presentation of our story and current ministries, and we began the plans for an upcoming collaborative mission trip of Christ-centered community outreach that will focus on dental and medical care. Our week in Puerto Rico was a sweet time with a branch of our forever-family tree who blessed us personally and sent us off with many donations for both our clinic and upcoming Christmas program, Navidad International.

In the remainder of October and early November, we worked in collaboration with our stateside volunteers to complete sponsorship of Altigracia's kids for individualized Christmas gifts to be delivered later in the month. In the first stage of Navidad International, we uploaded photos to Facebook, showing each child aged 3-13 and listing their name, age, and gift request. We quickly secured sponsorship for every last photographed child, even including some 2-year-olds and older teenagers. General Christmas donations were also collected to purchase extra toys for children whose photos were not included and to cover the expenses of a Christmas party for all the community's children to celebrate Jesus and receive their sponsored gifts and snacks. We began the in-country preparations with community partners, while the volunteer team worked tirelessly to collect and pack gifts and other donations, as well as purchase dental hygiene items for a community giveaway.

Before Team Christmasgiving could arrive for their Thanksgiving-week Christmas festivities, we received a surprise visit from Felicia's dad, Bob! As a first-time international traveler, he showed up in Barahona as a completely unexpected but amazing blessing, by the provision and protection of the Lord! Bob brought the first bag of Navidad International gifts and then spent his week familiarizing himself with the ways and quirks of Dominican construction projects. He worked in our home alongside



various neighbors and family members to also share some American techniques of building and electrical work – and much relationship-building in the process. We believe this is only the beginning of a productive long-term collaboration to bring many safer homes to the community of Altigracia!

In the week before American Thanksgiving, Bob returned to Pennsylvania as Esther, Kylea, Phil, Jennifer, and Victoria arrived to the DR to jump straight into an extreme week of adventurous work and beautifully active love known as Christmasgiving!

The team and the event of the year had finally arrived! We unpacked and reorganized over 230 individually named gifts, 180 large tubes of toothpaste, over 1,000 toothbrushes, and a variety of craft, clothing, shoe, medical, and nutritional donations. THIS was some of God's "infinitely more than we might ask or think!" Praise the Lord! But it was only the beginning! We then went downtown and purchased all the Christmas party snacks, as well as more than enough extra toys and teenager gifts, with extra funds to spare. By the grace and power of God, we completed all preparations in less than three days and were more than ready



for the series of three 80-child parties on Sunday, November 20. And as the peace and love of God flooded

the event space, each party played with a beauty beyond our greatest expectations! Our team of local volunteers were phenomenal, the children's behavior was positively impressive, and the gift, snack, and craft reception was precious. We photographed each child and several joint-sponsorship groups as they received their gifts, and we all walked away from this beautiful day feeling indescribably blessed in the Joy of the Lord!

After a one-day break for a beach trip, Team Christmasgiving completed our agenda with an afternoon of hygiene blessings.

God used several generous donors to provide the requested funds and guided a last-minute shopping spree to secure enough shampoo



and conditioner to fill one 16oz bottle of each product to every family in Altigracia! In beautifully effective intercultural teamwork, we distributed the hair products, toothbrushes, and toothpaste in impressive time with unexpectedly impressive organization. Then, plenty of hair products still remained to supply the weekly hair care ministry of Iglesia Nueva Luz de Salvacion for several months! Again and again, praise God!

Christmasgiving wrapped up after two huge days of community blessing, two group swimming getaways for intercultural bonding and appreciation between visitors and hosts, and a full week of heartfelt service in the incredible riches of God’s Love. Giving Hands Foundation praises the Lord and thanks our visitors, community volunteers, and every individual who participated in Navidad International sponsorship and/or contributed additional donations and prayer support. These have been the human embodiment of



God’s Love in this day and age, the hands and feet of Jesus, and we are sure of the impact

you continue to make in the hearts of your neighbors in Altigracia.

After Team Christmasgiving departed and November transitioned to December, God continued to provide for the long-term establishment of Giving Hands’ programs. Through a Dominican Black Friday offer, God provided two new computers for our Sala de Tarea (student support center), and He continued to provide other necessary items for this ministry. Through two individual donations, God also provided crucial medications and quality prenatal vitamins for the Giving Hands Clinic pharmacy, which led to a special day of patient service focused on prenatal care by a visiting specialist, Dr. Jose Roa. In the first two weeks of December, primary school student participation in our school attendance incentive program grew to over 150 students, and several students achieved their first large goal of 30 school-day sticker credits to earn long-awaited prizes. We then trained two new attendance record administrators to continue this program after the holiday break and report weekly to Felicia. These administrators, Anyelina and Eva, also successfully transitioned to leading the weekly Giving Hands Sunday School program for Altigracia’s kids and have now sent photos and videos to Felicia each week. Dr. Jacob transitioned clinic operations to the local volunteer staff, and we implemented a formal patient record system with a detailed form for each patient consultation. Finally, we submitted all necessary paperwork and fees, thanks to an incredibly generous donation, and have officially secured Dominican governmental registration of Giving Hands Foundation (Fundacion Dando la Mano de Barahona) as a nonprofit corporation. We praise God,

for this begin to open a wealth of new doors for us as an organization within the Dominican Republic.



With all of these successful establishments and transitions – as well as a strong beginning of construction on our Sunday school teacher Anyelina and her family’s home reconstruction after a devastating fire – God settled His Peace upon the Ramirezes’ move back to the U.S. in time for Christmas. Our programs will now function in a new dynamic, but by God’s provision, we are confident they will continue successfully. Funds are needed, as always, to support these ministries and enable them to flourish, so we request your prayers and thoughtful consideration of monetary support. We also seek monetary support for our first return mission trip to Altigracia, scheduled for the week of February 6, 2017. On Saturday, February 11, we will partner with Iglesia Plenitud del Reino, of Puerto Rico, to provide dental and medical care to the entire community (approximately 700 individuals). As we fundraise, we trust God to provide for the costs of this clinic and our travels. We are also praying for provision of internet service in our student support center and an “ambulance” vehicle for transporting emergency patients from our clinic to the downtown hospital. Please continue to support Giving Hands Foundations with your prayers, especially for these specific needs.

Again, we praise God and thank you for your partnership in 2016 and look forward to continuing our service to Altigracia in 2017.

Dios los bendiga, hermanos!



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