

Dear Friend, Encourager, Partner-in-Mission,

The Vision Trip



On May 10, an elder from our Wisconsin church, Doug Galuk, his wife Lori, and their three sons, Samuel, Isaac, and Aaron, arrived in Quito, Ecuador. Because of their commitment to raise up a team to reconstruct a building for the Dunamis ministry, they wanted to come ahead of time and see firsthand what Ecuador, the Dunamis ministry, and other ministries, that we serve, were like. In just four short days, they managed to accomplish everything they set out to do including spending one of those four days with their three newest Compassion children.

When they arrived on Tuesday afternoon, a fellow Reach Beyond missionary drove me (Sondra) to the airport to meet them, while Darrell and his friend Pablo rode in a mini-van to pick up the seven extra pieces of luggage they brought filled with our personal belongings. After the long day of travel, the Galuks were happy to settle in at a guesthouse we had reserved for them near Reach Beyond (our small apartment will not comfortably accommodate five guests.) We joined them for supper in a restaurant and then they crashed in their beds making up for lost hours of sleep preparing for the busy days ahead.

Dunamis - Ministering to 9-17 Yr Old Girls from Human-Trafficking

The next day we picked up their family in a private bus that Boris, the director of the Dunamis ministry, and Darrell had arranged for that day's transportation. **First we visited the existing site** where the rented cement ministry building and the workshop structure owned by Dunamis, currently stands. Doug, Boris and Darrell spent hours discussing details of how the workshop should be taken apart by the other U.S. team coming in July, the transportation of building materials, and other matters. Lori took photos of the workshop to help their team to know how it needs to be reconstructed. She then spent time looking at the handmade tagua nut jewelry that the girls of the ministry make that she would buy and take back to the U.S. as gifts. When the men were done, everyone gathered inside the ministry building to listen to Majo, the program director, and Sondra, the translator, explain the ministry.

Then, it was time to meet the girls - ten precious teen and pre-teen girls who have been rescued from human trafficking. We watched as they proudly worked on projects in their sewing class. After class, Boris arranged for some “get-to-know-you” games for us and the girls. We were each told to greet everyone, say our first names, then immediately say the name of our favorite food. So, the result was, “Hi, my name is Darrell hamburger” or “Hi, my name is Samuel pizza” and the girls began to giggle. When it was their turn, the girls could hardly get the words out because they were giggling and laughing so much.

What precious girls! Each one appeared to be like any other teenage girl. In many ways, they are, but in so many other ways, they are not. These girls are victims of incest, rape, and/or sex or labor trafficking. Young, beautiful, innocent, vulnerable creatures of God are claimed as another person's property and used for unthinkable purposes. A topic that no one likes to hear about or discuss, much less come face to face with. But today here we all were, in the same room, laughing together. A precious moment in time in the lives of these girls - and ours!

Afterward, we visited the future site of the Dunamis ministry. After saying our good-byes to the girls, we boarded the bus to have lunch at a local restaurant that serves authentic Ecuadorian food. Then after lunch we headed to the new property where the team will reconstruct the workshop building. The time spent sharing lunch together, traveling in the bus, and during a meal in our home later that evening, was a special time of building relationships between our U.S. church and this ministry, between two cultures, and between brothers and sisters in Christ.



As with the present location, the future location of the Dunamis ministry can NOT be disclosed. This is because the “owners” of these girls are reportedly gangs, the mafia, and other crime rings. But what we can tell you is that from this location it feels like we can reach out and touch heaven! This amazing three-acre piece of land looks as if it was created, especially by God, just for the healing that these girls need. When Doug, Lori, and the boys stepped off the bus and walked the property, the camera shutter began to click. Even their three teenage boys remarked with comments like “cool” and “awesome”!



Boris first showed us the new little home, under renovation, in which he and his family will live. Then he quickly introduced all of us to the architects and some of the workers involved in all of the Dunamis building projects. As the adults discussed the plans, the boys explored the property and watched the clouds below us. **When it was time to depart, we all joined hands and prayed.**

Today, it was confirmed in our heart's why God has asked the Galuks and our home church to help! God wants people to offer their time, money, and resources to help! The more quickly we can help Dunamis move forward with the completion of the new facility the more quickly they can help even more girls and minister to them in a more holistic way!

When these girls leave the Dunamis program, 99% of them do NOT return to their former life. But this is not the only goal of Dunamis. We desire not only for the girls to live a better life, but a life knowing Christ as their personal Lord and Savior! We not only want them to change their life style, but to flourish, to be educated, and to return to their communities whole. This is why Dunamis is building 'The Forever Home'. This is why we support Boris, his wife Fernanda, and the Dunamis ministry! **We hope that you will also support us in this ministry! These girls need to have their chains of bondage "unlocked" and to be set free in Christ!**



The Zambiza Dump Community Up Close and Personal

Friday, we were picked up in a van, by Brian of Extreme Response (ER), who provided us with the opportunity to witness how they minister to the people of the Zambiza dump. First, we toured the former site of the daycare ministry that ER has provided for the dump worker families and their children for the past 17 years. Although the daycare has been moved to a new location, the ministry cook still prepares meals here for not only the 15 children in the daycare but also for 33 children in the before/after school program and staff at the Quito Family Resource Center (QFRC).



Next, Brian headed toward the guard station hoping to convince the guards to let him bring in visitors to view the dump site and transfer station. Depending on the day, the guard, and his mood, ER may or may not get permission to bring in visitors. I had been praying for days that the Lord would somehow allow us to enter today. In 2005, although I did not witness the people at work when I visited the dump for the first time with Operation Christmas Child, the sights, sounds, and smells left a permanent imprint on my mind and my soul.



Doug has said that because of the number and type of missions trips he has led and participated in, he no longer experiences 'culture shock' - but that was before today! He, his family and I will not forget what we saw and heard, and the odor as we approached the work area. In 2005, although I did not see it firsthand, I was told how the people searched for and retrieved whatever recyclables they could find from the heaps of garbage. But being told about it and seeing it in person are not the same. We walked across the catwalk above with odor permeating the air and the roar of the front-end loader pushing the garbage. We watched beautiful hardworking mothers, fathers, and relatives walk through and dig through mounds of slimy, rotting garbage, sticking their feet and hands into it, stunning our emotions and piercing our hearts with compassion and disbelief. No human being should have to work 12 hours per day, six days per week doing this horrendous work for less than 50 cents per hour! Then memories of 2005 flooded my mind and I remembered being told that the families worked directly under the equator sun and in the huge downpours of rain. Back then, these precious mothers and fathers needed their children working at their sides with their babies strapped to their backs or in dirty cardboard boxes placed in the garbage while they worked. Back then, many did not have, as they do now, shoes for their feet, gloves for their hands, hardhats, safety vests, or a roof above them. **Yes, the conditions may be described as "better" but is not this situation still seen as 'unjust' in the eyes of a God who loves them deeply?**



With heavy hearts, we left the site with Brian, taking hot pots of food from the ministry cook to deliver to the new daycare center. After serving the parents of small children for the past 17 years, the present government has placed new regulations upon the ministry requiring them to relocate the daycare facility. The new site is now a daily 50 cent bus ride round trip - the expense of an hour's wage for the parents to bring their children. But thank God the new location at one of Reach Beyond's facilities is only temporary for ER is looking for a site closer to where the families live and work. Soon the smiles and laughter of 15 babies and toddlers takes away the pain of what we saw at the dump and begins to fill our hearts with hope and joy. Here, these little ones are taught interactive educational activities, receive a hot meal, are bathed, have their clothes washed, are prayed for, and soak up the love of their Christian caregivers. **While it is impossible to forget the weariness and shame in their parents eyes as they work, we also will not forget the precious smiles of their children!**



Today, because of Extreme Response these precious people are blessed with a daycare, an after-school program, hot lunches for their children, alternative work-skills training, Bible studies and clean, safe facilities in which they and their children are ministered to. In addition, Extreme Response strives each year to build and furnish simple cement block homes for one or more families, in the name of Jesus Christ.

We thank God for the honor and privilege to be a small part of what God and Extreme Response are doing to help meet the needs of the girls of Dunamis and families of Zambiza. We thank you for your prayers and financial support and we hope you'll tell others about what God is doing as we continue to serve the people in Ecuador!

Please click on the links below to view three short videos about the above ministries:

https://docs.google.com/file/d/0Bzn-m6HLJ3JebDAXemNLU1ZFR1k/edit?usp=drive_web (Dunamis)

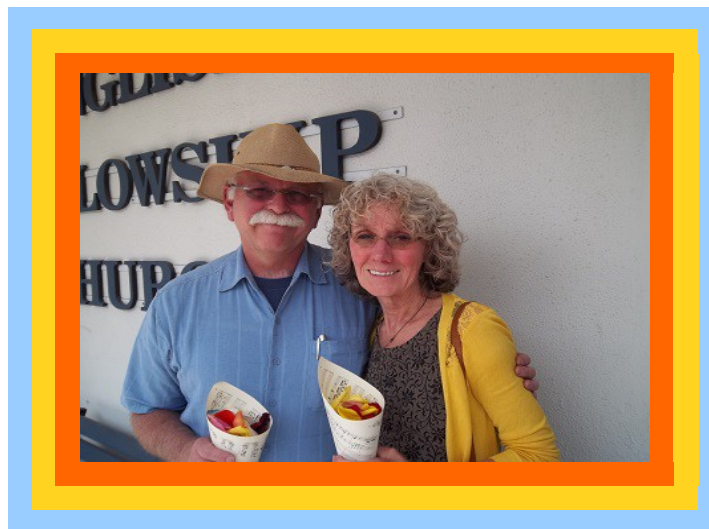
https://docs.google.com/file/d/0Bzn-m6HLJ3JeU2xVc0NOSkdWRkk/edit?usp=drive_web (Dunamis)

<https://youtu.be/DZGtCVU-P1M> (Extreme Response/Zambiza Dump Ministry)



Darrell and Sondra Holden

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