

Porch de Salomon

Panajachel, Guatemala

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*Short-term mission teams
in Guatemala

*Humanitarian relief for
indigenous families and others

*Solomon's Porch
Café ministry

*Live music outreach

* Helping transform churches
and individuals



PorchTalk

Volume 117

April 2015

GOOD NEWS AND FREEDOM

[The Lord] has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free....

Jesus of Nazareth at Luke 4.

March was a month where we saw this scripture really come to life in Guatemala. Our visiting teams, along with our local workers and community contacts, helped free folks from “prisons” of abject poverty, lack of medical care, deafness, despair, ignorance, filth, and literal chains (*at least we got that started—see page three*). All together, our folks helped bring good news and hope to hundreds of folks, all in Jesus’ name.

Reciprocally, our visitors’ “team experience” helped free some of them from bondage of a different sort; whether religiosity, materialism, fear, or a need to control.

We invite you to check out this month’s moving photographs and stories. Of special interest, Selena Snowden’s team from FSU Audiology was a first for us: they brought hearing to scores of folks with their \$64,000 worth of donated hearing aids!

As always, we thank our mission partners and donors who resource Porch de Salomon’s year-round, multi-faceted work to live out, and bring out, Jesus’ message of good news and freedom. *Gracias!*



“This crazy clown and carpenter cried at the audiology clinic. To see the children that I played with all day, who couldn't hear a word you say to them, start hearing before my very eyes, it was more than I could handle.” Joe

(Clockwise, from above):

* Northstar Church medical team members remove a fatty tumor in the underserved Boca Costa region.

* Team leader Selena Snowden with an indigenous girl as her new hearing aid is turned on.

* Juana Sajvin, her daughter, and granddaughter beam in their new house’s kitchen, complete with Ecoplancha stove, Utz Ja water filter, and new cookware



“For the lost, the least, and the last”



WAITING FOR GOOD NEWS

Mauricio (19, *far left*) suffered from kidney failure years ago; he undergoes semi-weekly dialysis in Guatemala City, through the financial support of a generous Porch donor. This donor has also pledged the cost of a kidney transplant if a donor can be found.

Mauricio's single mother Isabel washes clothes and makes \$2.65 per day. The family lives in a tiny, dark concrete room in Panajachel. Mauricio recently asked Isabel why doesn't she just let him die so that the family can "move on." He had given up hope.

Porch de Salomon has begun building a modest, two-story house for this family, partly to encourage Mauricio to not give up! Please join us in praying for:

- a kidney and the freedom it can bring
- steadfastness for this family
- success in the construction of their house (*see photo below*)



MORE GOOD NEWS

(Counter clock-wise, from left)

- * Northstar teamer Tina shares a moment with an indigenous patient
- *Northstar teamer Hannah helps build
- *Team Snowden/FSU Audiology in action!
- *Juana Sajvin and her family at their new house's entrance in Santa Catarina Palapo



CHAINS AND GOOD NEWS by Jayne Mittan, P.A.

... remove the chains that bind people. Isaiah 58:6 (NLT)

Indigenous women flagged down our medical team on our way to Paxabaj. They asked us to come to their house and see a man; they didn't know what was wrong with him, and they were afraid of him. Samuel was lying on the ground, in the full sun, amid the cow dung, naked except for a filthy blanket. His ankle chains were attached to a longer chain, anchored at each end. He had a beard and long, nasty dreadlocks that were matted with unimaginable things. He did not acknowledge our arrival as his lips moved silently.

His wife told us Samuel is 26 years old and the father of their two children. For the last six years, he has been mostly uncommunicative, except for episodes of violent, hallucinogenic outbursts. During one of his worst episodes he destroyed their small house; after that, they chained him up. The family throws food and water at him from a safe distance. If he is coherent enough, he can feed himself and drink. If not, the stray dogs eat/drink what's there.

It was obvious to us that Samuel is schizophrenic. We explained that this illness is completely beyond his control. The family happily accepted our offer to help and the good news that something could be done. We promised to return with the medicine and a plan.

Return we did, two days later, with antipsychotic medicine, clean water, and more. We very slowly and cautiously began to speak directly to Samuel and call him by name. We combined this with gentle touching of his skin, all the while trying to assess his physical condition. He allowed us to perform a cursory physical exam, cut his nasty hair (three feet long, *see photo at right!*), and trim his beard. We washed his feet and ankles, and applied thick bandages under the chains where they were chafing his skin. I do know that he was aware of our efforts to help him and soothe his discomfort. He responded to our gentleness with calmness, much to his family's surprise.

His family could hardly contain their surprise and smiles as we told them that we would provide a water filter so they could enjoy clean water, build a shelter over Samuel to protect him from the elements, and continue to supply them with the medicine to help him. We encouraged them to be sure that he has clean water and food and to help with his hygiene. They expressed concern and fear of touching him, but we reminded them of how well he responded to us, as total strangers. We left them money for food and supplies.

It was hard to leave Samuel there, still chained. But, I hope and pray that the medicine will work for him and that he will be freed from his psychological chains of delusions, hallucinations, and horribly disorganized, terrifying thoughts. I look forward to the day when he has recovered enough that the violent outbursts cease, his family is no longer afraid of him, and his physical chains can be cut off. And I dream of the day when Samuel himself flags down our van to tell us how he is doing.

Editor: Jayne is our medical liaison and is a blessing to many. Samuel Par remains calm and we are hopeful that an increase in his medication (at press time) will help bring a breakthrough. We invite your prayers!



It was a joy to, at long last, complete and dedicate the Xecotoj Library/Computer Center building in that housing project village. Team Northstar Church joined us, for a village-led ceremony which included song, indigenous dance, theatre, a *pulik* lunch, and many, many expressions of gratitude. We, in turn, thank our 2014 teams who funded and built this knowledge/freedom-bringing facility. Three desktops are in place and we are now working to stock the library.

“She grew up in an Indiana town...”

by Laura Weaver

Tom Petty may have sung it, but I actually did it! Life was pretty rough at first, but thank God things got better. Among the low lights: my parents divorced early on; my siblings and I lived with my father, who married a very angry, abusive woman; my older brother with cerebral palsy passed away just before his 8th birthday; after seeing the extension cord welts up and down my legs from my step-mother, my mom and Child Protective Services agreed that my sister and I needed a change of scenery, so we moved to Fort Wayne, IN to live with my mom and her new husband.

But as I said, despite so many terrible experiences, God has really blessed me and healed me. It took a while, but I learned to “come out of my shell” and to trust people again. I excelled in school and climbed to the top of all my classes. Before long, a new friend helped me to start a real relationship with Jesus; I joined a wonderful youth group, and ate up every missions/service opportunity at my new church. As I left high school, I knew I loved foreign languages (took 10 semesters of Spanish), construction (I have a degree in Residential Carpentry), and missions (12 mission trips and counting). I still battle with depression and feelings of unworthiness, but I have terrific friends, like Will and Amber Deeds, who have shown me love and acceptance.

Once, I had an incredibly vivid dream that put me in Guatemala with the Deeds. When things in the dream started coming true last year, I knew, at very least, I had to come visit them to see what God was doing. I loved every minute of my trip. Panajachel was a place I loved, where I could do what I loved, with and for people I loved, for the glory of God, whom I loved. As a little cherry on top, I even found me a man I loved—no matter how much he clowned around. As soon as I left, I was hooked and had to go back. As I prayed about it, everything just fell into place.

I have been here in Pana for seven months now. As cheesy as it may sound, I really do feel like I’m “living the dream.” I get to help people all the time, use my skills, and even take time to smell the flowers. One verse that sums up my feelings about serving here at Porch de Salomon is Psalm 37:4. “Delight yourself in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart.” I’ve never been more content in my life and I would like to thank Lloyd, Melanie, Noe, and the rest of the Porch team for welcoming me. Life is good!!!

(Editor’s note) Laura has a real servant’s heart and gentle way. We wish her and her fiancé Joe much happiness!



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