

Porch de Salomon

Panajachel, Guatemala

porchdesalomon.org

and on 

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Or on-line

www.porchdesalomon.org

*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 130

June 2016

MOTHERS MAY

[Jesus] replied, "My mother and brothers are those who hear God's word and put it into practice." Luke 8:21 (NIV)

Mother's Day was celebrated in both the USA and in Guatemala in May. In a sense, most everyday is mothers' day for Porch's work in Guatemala; many of our efforts focus on helping mothers and their children survive and even thrive. We invite you to review this issue and hear from, or learn about, quite a few mothers.

You can see that **mothers may**:

- *Overcome and work through their motherly fears (Heather)
- * Cheerfully carry on and do the best they can for their children, even after being abandoned (Ana Maria)
- * Seek help for their children, even from strange strangers (Alex's mother)
- *Become impregnated by sexual assault, yet bear, keep, and love their babies (Irma and Isabel)
- * Do something new, for the first time, and take risks (Genia and Rachel)
- * Take on the hard work of pastoring a new church in Cuba (Sagua la Grande pastor)
- *Give generously of their retirement/family time to volunteer as Porch's new assistant treasurer (Robin)

We appreciate those who hear God's word, and put it into practice, and those who generously, sometimes sacrificially, support Porch de Salomon's year-round work. *Gracias!*

Construction begins June 2 on a new house for single-mother Ana Maria Chumil and her children in Chuiquel. Ana Maria's alcoholic husband abandoned his family. They have no reliable income. This indigenous family of seven currently lives in a dirt-floor, one-room wooden shack with a decrepit tin roof. The house is cold and dusty during the windy season, and very wet during the rainy season. They have no electricity, running water, or bathroom. Our incoming summer teams will help!



MAMA, DO IT AFRAID

By Heather Cato Robinson (at left, foreground)

Until our trip last month, I *wanted* to do missions, but only in theory. In reality, I wanted to keep my feet firmly planted on American soil. Two fears held me back: 1) flying-- I had never flown over the sea, and; 2) as a mother, leaving the country without my four children

My husband and a good friend, Nancy, would not take "no" for an answer. And, for good reason: I could afford the trip, the timing was right, and my training as a Physician Assistant would be valuable. So, I pretty much went along like a limp noodle, and prayed mostly for a safe return the moment my ticket was purchased.

(Continued on page two)

"For the lost, the least, and the last"

MAMA, DO IT AFRAID *(Continued from page one)*

As our plane neared the airport in Guatemala City, culture shock struck immediately. It looked quite different than the U.S., where the houses and streets are neatly spaced, and well demarcated. Here, the aerial view was more like someone had tossed a bunch of tin roofing from the sky.

Our first village medical clinic went off without a hitch. Success! Relief! I finally felt like it would be a good trip. Then, we worked in Pixabaj for two days. This village was more remote, had even more poverty, and, in the end, became the most important to me. We encountered two little girls, each with a different issue that was potentially life-threatening, who needed medical care we weren't equipped to provide. However, the parents wouldn't take them, because they don't trust the hospital. We offered to pay, but in both instances, they still wouldn't go. I began to really struggle with my emotions; frustration, sadness, and even anger. "Mother to mother, you're telling me you aren't willing to do *anything and everything* to save your child?" Unacceptable. It didn't take long for the Holy Spirit to remind me that this wasn't just work, it was *mission* work, and to "Pray for them." I didn't like that answer. But, eventually, I relented and did pray.

Then, we met Alex, a 12-year-old boy who was brought to the clinic by his mother for "depression" and "laziness" because he didn't want to work some days. He went to school in the mornings, and worked in the afternoons to help support the family, which included seven children. His dad worked in the fields making \$7 a week. I was saddened, as I spent more than that on *margaritas* the night before! During the clinic visit we gave Alex vitamins and Tylenol, but, more importantly, we went to his house for follow-up the next day.

The father's parents live there, also; 11 people attempting to live on one very meager income. No wonder they needed Alex to work! When we arrived, Alex looked confused and worried. I was concerned that the father might reject our help out of pride, and Alex would be in trouble. But he didn't! Noe and Jeydi explained that we believed God wanted to help them through us, and they allowed us to look around.



There was *no* food, only corn hanging to dry, but that was it. Nothing else. We left with the parents and Alex, and bought them food. Lots of eggs, bread, a vitamin drink mix packed with nutrients, cooking oils, etc. They were grateful and Alex looked so relieved! Porch de Solomon will continue to follow up with them, and we will be sponsoring monthly food staples.

Perhaps we will be helping build them a decent kitchen and more living space in the future! And, in true "I went on a mission trip, and my life is changed" fashion, my life is changed. God put legs on my "want to" and clearly reminded me that faith without works is dead, but also, works without faith are empty. We can't fix all the problems, and no one person can be the whole answer. But together, God is using us to make a difference. As the saying goes, if you're scared, that's ok, "*Do it afraid.*"

Heather Cato Robinson is a Live Oak, Florida, native who lives in Tallahassee with her four children and her bi-vocational pastor husband.

She works at Tallahassee Memorial Hospital as a physician assistant. Heather created the composite "Alex before and after" image at left.

He's no mother, but Porch partner Frank Ball, Sr. is selling his Harley '12 Sportster (value \$7000), with half the proceeds to go to Porch's work! We love this example of creative, tax-deductible giving. Everything we do costs money.



Ana Maria Chumil's cooking area/kitchen (see story on page one)

MORE MOTHERS

Our incoming short-term teams will also help us construct a new house for two sibling single-mothers in *Monte Mercedes*. Irma (*below, left*) was injured and crippled as a child, leaving her unable to work. Her parents both died a few years ago. She was also a victim of sexual assault which resulted in her child, Fredy. She lives with her older sister, Isabel, who has two children, one of whom was also the result of an assault. Dulce works making tortillas, earning a mere \$75 per month, with which she provides for her two children plus Irma and her son.

These sweet, indigenous folk live in a dirt-floor, one-room adobe house with a leaky tin roof. The adobe walls are cracking apart. This abode is cold during the windy season, and wet during the rainy season. All five sleep in one double bed. Their cooking area is shown at right.



Jesus taught us that caring for the physical needs of humanity is an essential part of what it means to love others. Leading our first Guate *Dirty Feet Missions* medical team, with Porch, brought this to life.

Looking into the beautiful faces of the Mayan people and seeing hopelessness turn to hope, as they received medical treatment, was transformative. Equally as moving was looking into the eyes of our medical personnel as they used their training to bring about hope and healing, expecting absolutely nothing in return. *Genia P. O'Neal*



DFM team member Rachel helps another mother's child



CUBA update!

by Lloyd

We are pleased to report that, largely through the efforts of Porch de Salomon and generous designated donors, there is now a new, 30-member Methodist church in Sagua La Grande, Cuba.

Some readers may recall that, after a 10-year hiatus, Melanie and I returned to visit our sister church in Cifuentes, Cuba for a week in 2014.

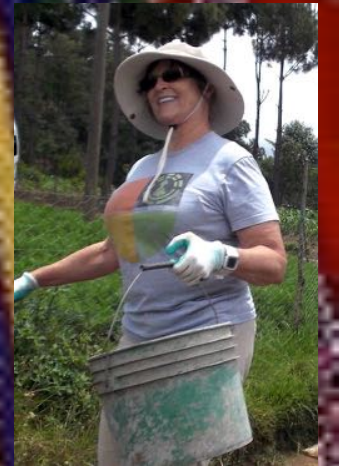
Our primary "mission" was to deliver \$10,000 (from designated donations to Porch de Salomon—*gracias donadores!*) for the purchase of a house-church building in Sagua La Grande, Cuba. This town, larger than Cifuentes, had no Protestant church.

It was amazing that the Cuban Methodist conference was able to purchase a classy 99 year-old building which now accommodates the house church and the pastor's (herself a mother) family. Please keep Cuba, much in the news lately, and this church in your prayers.

I'm Robin Wesson Bateman and I have lived in the Tallahassee area all of my life. I have a degree in accounting from FSU. I worked as a Certified Public Accountant in four different endeavors. For the last 17 years I owned and managed a sporting goods store which I recently sold. This freed up my time to focus on other things, especially volunteer work. I'm a mother of four and grandmother of three.

Last June, my husband Michael and I went with our church on a mission trip to Porch de Salomon. We were both overwhelmed with the work being done. When Lloyd asked if I knew anyone who might help with the accounting, I felt the Lord move and said "if and when" I sold my business I would be happy to volunteer. My business sold in September; here I am doing what God has called me to do!

Robin came on board as our volunteer assistant treasurer in January. She handles and accounts for our incoming donations while the ever-steady Fred Thomson, also a volunteer, handles disbursements. They, along with our volunteer tax advisor, Rich Blankenship, are a blessing to Porch and our work. Lloyd



A year and a half ago, I moved to Pana with one goal in mind: to volunteer with Porch de Salomon in serving *the least, the lost, and the last*. Never in my wildest dreams did I expect to meet the man who has now become my husband. It has been an unbelievable journey, proving that once again God's plans are far grander and greater than anything we can cook up on our own.

A special thanks to Sarah Nelson, whose desire to help the Pana Fire Department led to my meeting Edgar, my new hubby. And a special thank you to all who have been supportive of our marriage. We are very excited to build our lives together here in Pana, and I'm thrilled to continue volunteering for Porch for as long as the Lord shall call me.

Lindsey Newberry Choguj

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