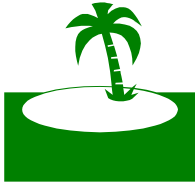


CHRISTMAS 2001



"Pardon me, what did he call us?" I have discovered this

year that my number one favorite thing about this work is working with Volunteer Teams when they come to work in the Barrios with us. When Siloam Church came from Greenville, South Carolina, we worked in a barrio called Negro Primero. The team was great, with the amazing benefit of having a Venezuelan with them, from their church. He was helping another volunteer, Josh, learn Spanish, so that he could help in the dramas everyday. One day, Josh was congratulating the girls for having won the "Say-The-Verse" game against the boys. In his 20-something exuberance, Josh was cheering for them and pointed at them, saying, "Champiñones!" He couldn't understand the blank looks on their faces as they stared at him, without joining in his celebrating. He didn't realize he was calling them mushrooms!



In July, we attended a Regional Summit of the Caribbean

Basin Region in the Dominican Republic. It was a wonderful time, for many reasons. I want you to know how important a one-time meeting can be. Jeff and I spent a breezy hour on a balcony overlooking the ocean, talking to Jeff Fray, a licensed psychologist in Tennessee. This brief conversation with a caring, kind-hearted soul brought much encouragement to me that has lasted months. May we all be that breath of fresh air that someone needs!



You remember what you were doing on Alyssa's 8th birthday, don't you?

Sure you do ... the whole world does. Alyssa's was born **September 11, 1993**. But, she has world-wide notoriety for a different reason. Her face and story are in a "MK" Prayer Calendar that the WMU produces called "...MatchFile for Children in Action". After receiving her 30th or 40th letter from children she's never met, I told her she needs to write them all back. She said, "Mom, I don't like being famous!"



”And the winner is ...” Sometimes it’s a bit difficult to celebrate holidays in Venezuela when no one else does. So, the Brown family had our own “Trick-or-Treating” right in our own apartment. We went about by candlelight, taking turns handing out candy as the others stopped at our bedroom doors, played Clue in the dark, and yes, wore costumes. Daniel went as “Daniel the Black”, Alyssa as a pear; Diane was Mrs. America, and Jeff ... well, he was “The Stepmother” complete in a dress and new “do”. For some reason, Jeff says the photos are unavailable!



”RUN, Daniel, RUN!” November 30th, 4th grader
Daniel won a running race against 4th, 5th & 6th graders from both his current school and the neighboring Venezuelan school he went to last year. I asked Jeff what it takes for shorter legs to run faster than longer legs. Is it more mental or more physical? Jeff confirmed that (at least among grade schoolers) mind truly is more important than matter in running. “Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.”
Colossians 3:2