

Daily Report
July 4, 2010

As I wake up to a beautiful day in the DR, I realize it is a very special day for us as Americans, but also because it is Sun. But I am wondering if today will be any different from other days for the people of Rio San Juan. July fourth obviously would hold no significance for them, but I pray to God that Sun will soon become a day of worship and fellowship for Angel, Ranger and their friends.

During morning quiet time I reflect on all the blessings and advantages I have because I live in the US and grew up in a Christian home, but I also realize many of the temptations which come from our society. I find myself wondering if I might like the pace and simplicity of life in a place like this and if living in the US distracts us from focusing on God. Col. 3:2

As we move into worship, I see the faces of the locals who come to worship and notice they are somewhat reserved seeing all the strange faces. The children are all smiles and so curious and open to us. I again feel frustration with the language barrier, but can communicate a bit with a 1 ½ year old named Givens from the children's home. The singing is beautiful in both languages. I am so proud of Matt as he leads some singing, Chris as he leads a prayer, and Josh M. as he presents a lesson. I praise God that we have such talented young men who are willing to step up and be such leaders. The children are well-behaved and quiet without the benefit of toy distractions. I am so proud of our young ladies also (Caitlyn, Robin, Emily, Rachel, and Rebekah) who go to assist with a children's class. Our greatest and easiest connection point with the Dominicans seems to be through the children.

Our visit to the children's home after lunch was so enjoyable. I so appreciate the hearts of Lydia, Marta, Porfi, and Carla and their love for the children there. It breaks my heart to hear what some of the children have gone through, but thank God for the vision of MANNA here. The youth group has felt called to adopt both Cristo and Givens to help support so that we can have an ongoing relationship with them.

We then traveled to the com center again to do a Cultural Amazing Race (which my group won) that was fun but oh so hot! I was really amazed at the friendliness of the people. They were so open and eager to help us.

For the last event of the day, neighborhood children come to the com center for a devo and movie night. As they arrive I recognize many faces from VBS and notice their eagerness as they see us. It is so gratifying to see our young people jump up to play with them as they would the younger children at home. Matt and entourage do another awesome job with the songs, and Zack presents a good lesson on the ten lepers which the kids really got into. As we leave them to watch their movie, several children make sure to hug us good-bye.

As I close I know no better way to end the day than to spend it singing praises to Him on a rooftop in Rio San Juan at sunset looking forward to a life spent with Him. -Jana

First of all, I would like to say how grateful I am that God has given me this opportunity to come to the Dominican. My experience has been wonderful! I could not ask for anything better...well maybe no bugs but that is not a big deal.

Today started off with a wonderful church service. We fellowshiped with our Dominican brothers and sisters, which was a neat and rewarding experience. Before the sermon started I went to their "wee worship." During "wee worship," I played with Cristo, and little Dominican boy, and you could tell he was having the time of his life. Even though I could not understand half of what he was saying I really think God gave me this opportunity to interact with this little boy. He was so happy with just the little things that I would do him and I pray that I could be as thankful with the things God has given me just like him. After church, we toured the children's home. Then we went on an Amazing Race adventure through the city. Even though we came in second place, it was fun!! We ate rice, ran around the city complete lost, but it was totally worth it. Also, the children's worship tonight was AWESOME to see their faces light up for Jesus!

One other thing that really stuck out to me was the Friday VBS. Yes, it was crazy and hectic, but very rewarding watching the kids understand. There was this one little family that came in though. It was a 10 year old little girl with a 9 month baby. This girl would not let anybody hold her brother, but I was one of the only ones. She handed me Markis (her brother), and I realized that he did not have a diaper on. I was hoping that he would not pee on me, but then thought, God has given me this opportunity if he pees on me then I will make the best out of it. You could see Jesus smiling through all those kids that day.

I am so glad God has called me on this trip, and I pray that he will continue to use me in a way that is pleasing to him. Continue to keep us in your prayers and I look forward to seeing all of you all real soon!
-Caitlyn Wilson

p.s. mom I didn't peek into the guys shower if you hear anything about that I promise