

It is now Monday morning, beginning my third day in Honduras.

Departing: After having Shirley Sholtis meet me at my home so that we could ride together, we left for the Pittsburgh airport. As we arrived at our gate, the plane was already boarding. We got on the commuter-type plane and then sat for about 15-minutes as Houston did not have us on the flight plan or something. While sitting, Shirley and I were going over the schedule that Sister Laurinda had in place for us while there.

While flying to Houston, we realized that it was going to be a very short layover and that we really had to hustle to make it to the gate for our next flight. As the plane was landing, I met a girl named Angela who is from Monroeville. She works as an Assistant Manager for S&T Bank in Penn Hills. Angela was on her way to meet her boyfriend who is in the Army and learning how to fly helicopters. She is just staying for a week while he is there for a 7-week training program.

We finally made it off the plane and found the tram that would take us to Concourse E where our flight to Houston would depart. We were really cutting it close. Shirley and I were the last two to get to the gate and that is when the bottom fell out of our plans. The gate person examined our passports like everyone else had and found that Shirley's Passport was due to expire in December and would not let her proceed onto the plane.

The gentleman at the gate gave me about a 1-minute notice to either enter the ramp to board, or I wasn't going. It was upsetting but I left Shirley in Houston and boarded the plane for San Pedro Sula. You know how you hear that when people get bumped off or missed an important flight only to find out later that the plane went down?? That's exactly how I was feeling, my plane would crash and then Shirley would know that it just wasn't her time....Kinda funny to think it now that I'm safely on land.

As I arrived in San Pedro Sula, I had thoughts of Sister not making it to meet me at the airport, especially after Shirley and I discovered that she had it listed on our itinerary that we were to arrive at 9:00 a.m. or something like that. So my mind was racing with "What'll I do! I can't speak Spanish, I forgot the name of the hotel we're staying the first night..." and more importantly, I wasn't sure that my luggage made the flight with me to San Pedro...!

I went through the first part of Customs with no problems, then stood at the baggage claim for almost a half hour. No bags!! Finally there she was...Sister Laurinda! You know that this lady is important when she walks right past the armed guards through a gate to meet me over by the baggage carousel. I was very happy to see her and explained what happened with Shirley at Houston.

Sister helped me look through all the luggage that had been pulled off before I got there, and we found one of Shirley's bags... "Where there is one, there is all four." Sister said. We eventually found three and then I started thinking that maybe Shirley only checked in the one bag.

Sister had to run outside while I took the luggage through to the Customs Agent. I found out later that they were towing her truck away from a NO PARKING area. It was actually hooked up and she 'begged and pleaded'....

As I was coming through Customs with my luggage (and Shirley's), I was stopped. Not because I had three bags, my laptop and my fanny pack thrown over my shoulder, but because they saw something during X-ray of my luggage. Oh Brother!

I opened up the largest piece of luggage (all donations for the kids) and they began to sift through it. They saw over 100 ball caps, pens, pencils, books, bracelets, puzzles, crayons and much more. When they came to the peanut butter, they held it up and passed it to someone else to discuss it, of course I couldn't understand....all I can do is say 'peanut butter'....but they just ignored me.

So I hit them next with 'Sister Laurinda'...."Oh" she said and told me to go on- and everyone walked away. I got outside to the waiting area for arrivals and found it packed with people. Sister had returned and decided to go back inside to make sure that I didn't miss one more of Shirley's bags.

She told me to wait in a certain area, so I did. While standing there with my bags on a cart, a young American lady came up to me. "You look like a friendly face." She said. She was really lost! She had come from L.A. and was to meet a gentleman named William Davis. She had nothing more than his name and the organization he was representing, no phone number. I assured her that we would get her on her way to the right person.

We introduced ourselves to each other...her name is Angela, same as the girl from the plane. We talked while waiting for Sister to get back from the baggage area. Angela was coming to do surgery on the eyes of Hondurans. Sister then came back with Shirley's green bag in tow. Now I remember that bag...it has lots of my stuff for the kids in Urraco.

I introduced Sister to Angela. Sister asked a few people if they've heard of the group that Angela was looking for. Nobody could help. So I gave Angela my business card and the name of the hotel where we're to stay. I told her that if she didn't find William Davis, to call and we'd find her a place to stay.

Sister and I left the airport and headed to the hotel, Gran Sula or something like that. I still can't remember the name. There I would be meeting Lou Cherry, the Director of ProPapa and Joe Farrell, also a Board Member. The Surgical team would be there as well.

Lou met us in the Lobby and helped me check in. I was happy to finally get my luggage into the room and just kick back to relax for a few minutes. We were having lunch in the cafeteria in 15 minutes, so I cleaned up and met them downstairs. Lou introduced me to Joe Farrell and one member of the surgical team, Chris.

After lunch, everyone was planning on a bus ride to the market, but I decided to just hang out in the room, take a nap and see if I could connect my computer to the wireless network. As I lay on my bed, I could hear the music playing near the pool down below. I enjoy Latin music.

After my nap, I was able to hook up to the Internet. It took me a few tries but it worked, although not a very strong signal. I was able to check the local news from home and my email. I wasn't able to send emails but could receive them.

Dinner time came quickly and we ate at the Hotel restaurant. It was very good...chicken cordon bleu was the main course. The lemon pie was good with the marshmallow topping. During dinner I sat across from Christine and beside Susan, both members of the surgical team. I was introduced to everyone, but remember particularly Ellen and Kathryn.

I had traveled with Ellen's husband on my last trip to Urraco. Katherine is fluent in Spanish and came with Ellen, her friend. She plans on going with me to Urraco since Shirley didn't make it. All the schools are having programs honoring Shirley for her work with the Scholarship program, so Katherine will help me with that.

Dinner came to a close and everyone went back to their rooms. I left the door open on the balcony so I could hear the music playing at the pool. I also checked some real estate info on the internet, then was in bed by 9:00 PM (which is really 11:00 PM back home.)

My bed was comfortable, as was my room. I awoke several times during the night, only to realize I still had a few hours to sleep. I decided at 5:00 a.m. it was time to get up. We were meeting for breakfast at 6:15 in the cafeteria and I wanted to shower and get ready for my long day.

I was scheduled to help Benigno haul all of the surgical supplies to the Hospital. After we got everything there, it was just told to kinda "do as I could." I felt that I wasn't too helpful... not knowing any Spanish is such a setback.

I found out that the people were at the hospital since 6:00 a.m. and even that one spent the night there, sleeping on a bench. All the children that were supposed to be there came except for one or two, I think. But the crowd grew as word began spreading that the surgical team was in town.

The surgical team was brought a young girl in. She had several problems including a 'club foot'. Her eyes were crossed severely and she was slightly retarded. The surgery was to try to correct the club foot.

Then they discovered later that she also had seizures. I believe it was decided that this made it too risky to do the operation. They had to tell the girl's mother that she wasn't going to be a candidate for the surgery after all. I felt very bad, as did Ellen. I wasn't sure if the mother had been told yet or not, but they stayed outside.

I found myself sitting with a young boy who was having a difficult time waiting. I sat with him, and although he wouldn't look at me, he quit fussing while I rubbed his arm and his back.

Soon, the young retarded girl made her way back into the lobby. I brought her over and eventually she sat on my lap. I was able to calm her and rubbed her hair until she fell asleep in my arms. It was sad knowing that she probably would not be getting the surgery but it was a wonderful feeling knowing that I could give her at least a few minutes of encouragement. I was told later that she had been molested by her father and that he was spending time in jail for this crime. It was a wonder that she trusted me at all!

Jesina, Kathryn and I called a cab to take us back to the hotel. We were scheduled to meet the bus and then pickup the translator on our way to Urraco. I packed my bags and brought everything to the lobby, where I met our bus driver. His name was Madrid...or at least he said if I'd remember the capitol of Spain, I wouldn't forget his name. At the last minute, Benigno thought it might be best for Delmy and the kids to ride back to Urraco with us.

We stopped in El Progreso to meet David, our translator, at Burger King. We had lunch there and then went on to Urraco. We were running late so we couldn't go directly to where we were staying, so we stopped at the grade school in Urraco. I saw a few students that I recognized, and asked one where Jessica was sitting. I then saw her in the very front row...and as I went up to her, I gave her a big hug although she was kind of shy toward me.

I was so happy to see her. I sat down in one of the chairs that had been moved to the front for us. We were greeted by the teacher and the kids put on a short program. It was held outside and although the skies appeared clear, it began raining. The program continued with some people using umbrellas but most of us scurried under trees or the overhang of the building. At the end of the program, a beautiful cloth was presented to Kathryn, to be given to Shirley.

We were then invited to have coca-cola. I was able to meet three of the children that I sponsored on behalf of my clients. I had a picture taken with each child. It was now 2:45 or so and we notified that the high school students had been waiting for us since 11:00. They received the wrong information that we'd be there earlier.

We rode a short distance to the high school and then sat inside. A parent spoke to us about how thankful he is that his child is part of the Scholarship program. I was able to talk to the kids and tell them how proud we are of their accomplishments and hopeful that they would continue their education after they graduate.

I asked how many planned to go on to college and was pleasantly surprised that most of the Seniors raised their hands. I asked the graduating class to step outside so that I could

have a photo of them. I met the high school teacher there and asked to see the computer lab.

It is quite spacious and has over 20 computers that are all networked with each other, but not the Internet. Many of the computers are not in working order. Also, the teacher explained that they have to double-up when they have lab as there are not enough computers. I told him that I would place a request to my family and friends for any unused computers and then ship them down for the lab. I'm really hopeful that I can come through for them.

Word must have spread quickly that I was in Urraco because when I got to the gate of Benigno's home, many children were waiting. As soon as I got off the bus, I remembered many of the names....and then I was tested by several and sure enough, I couldn't remember all of their names. I received many hugs and Kebi even gave me a kiss. It feels so good to be here. I didn't even take my stuff up to the room right away-- I went out to play with the kids!

Darkness comes early here in Honduras. We went to Lupe's restaurant for our dinner. After dinner, Lupe and I danced as did Jessica, Andreas, Arnol and Johnnie who sat in the restaurant waiting for us to finish our meals.

After dinner, David, the kids and I all walked to church for mass. The kids all sat with me in one row and in a short time, Katherine joined us. I'm always impressed when I go to Mass here with how much energy the people have. Even the kids are following along and singing. Not something you find back home. After communion, I'm thinking it's about time to go and people turn around and begin to look at me.

David, sitting behind me, leaned forward, saying that they would like us to come to the front of the church to say something. So Kathryn, David and I went up front, where I was handed the microphone. I asked David what they want me to say and he told me "Anything."

So through David, as my translator, I introduced myself and told them about this being my third time to visit Urraco and that I really love the people here and the town of Urraco. I then passed the microphone to Katherine and she rambled some stuff off in Spanish and then the people clapped. Although I'm not comfortable speaking in front of people, it was an honor to be asked.

I'm rooming with David. We both went to bed early last night, around 9:00 p.m. Our room is very warm but I'm still wearing sweatpants, trying to avoid getting the mosquito bites on my legs that become infected. This happened the last two times I was here.

I woke up several times during the night but stayed in bed until I heard the roosters around 4:30 a.m. At that time, I began typing my Journal.

It's now Monday night and we had a very busy day today. Shortly after daybreak, I went outside and found one little girl, about 2 years old, playing by herself in the street. I went over and she immediately ran into her yard. I showed her from a distance that I had a tablet with crayons. I drew on the paper with a bright color to encourage her to come out.

She came towards me and I gave her a crayon and paper, and patted the ground beside me for her to sit down. She did. Soon, her brother, about 3 years old, came out and I gave him some paper and a crayon. Johnnie came down off the hill as other kids began waking up. It was wonderful to see about 6 or 8 kids just sitting there so quietly drawing pictures.

I took some photos of them drawing and can't wait to see how they turn out. I counted out enough 'gorros' (hats) and handed them out to the small group while they were drawing. Some of the children that are in the scholarship program were getting ready for school and stopped on their way. Jessica showed up in her uniform and so I got a photo of her. I am sponsoring Jessica the whole way through High School if she agrees to go.

It was then time to go to Lupe's Restaurant for breakfast. The van was waiting but I wanted to walk, in order to give me time to spend with the kids. They held my hand and hung onto me one way or another.

For breakfast we had pancakes, bananas and coffee. While at breakfast, we talked about what all we had to do today. We discussed going to visit three elementary schools; El Cayo, Mealer and Guaymas.

Since it's quite a long ride, we boarded the van and left right after breakfast from Lupe's for our first visit, El Cayo.

I spoke at all three schools telling them that we are very proud of them for going to school and hopeful that they will all continue with the program. If their desire is to get an education, ProPapa will be sure to get the sponsors.

Francesca is the coordinator of El Cayo. She is the 40-something lady who is married to a man that is 90 years old. After the program, Francesca took us to visit the homes of two students. We talked to only one of the students at the home, since the other was still at school. One after another we heard directly from the parents how thankful they were for ProPapa sponsoring their children, to get an education and 'become a better person'.

Our next stop was Mealer Elementary where Maria is the coordinator. We were welcomed by the students and many parents. Several of the students stood in front and recited a poem and one sang a song. And the best performance of the day was a dance done by Dulce Rosa Maria Pineda. Remember this name as I predict she will be the next Shakira! At Mealer, I also got to meet Oscar Antonio Acosta, one of the students I sponsored on behalf of my clients.

After we completed our visit with the family of two students, we went back to Maria's home for lunch. It was wonderful...chicken in a broth with carrots and celery and rice on the side. Of course we also had tortillas.

Running short on time, we left for our last stop, Guaymas. We were a little lost-- I think from Madrid listening to all the women giving different directions (something we joked about.) We finally found Guaymas, arriving at a recreation center serving as the school building.

We waited for all of the students to come to the program. It was very hot in there and Kathryn made the comment that she felt could pass out. I think she was kidding, but I wasn't sure, because Jesina fanned her with a folder during the entire program. We went outside to get photos, then made our way back to where we were staying. It was a very long ride, and as we pulled in to the house, the kids were waiting to play.

I went for the crayons and paper and passed them out to Johnnie, whom I put in-charge of crayon collecting once they were finished drawing. I sat down inside for only a few minutes before I gave in—I kept hearing my name being called from the gate to come out and play. We played 'make believe lasso' in which we pretended to have jump ropes. We jumped normally and then only on the right leg and then only the left leg. The children always laughed when we came to an abrupt stop.

Johnnie asked if we could go play 'football', which of course is soccer, down at the soccer field. I thought this might be a good time to go down so that David could get into the adult game that is played every day. David plays soccer at his high school in El Progreso and it's his favorite sport.

We arrived at the soccer field and the kids made up their own rules. The person who scored a goal is then the goal keeper. It was pretty much just a 'free for all' but they were having a lot of fun. Some of the kids were pretty good. The adults would be there soon and then we'd give up the field to them. David ran back to the house to change into shorts... he was ready to play.

The sun went down and the game was over. David did very well against the guys there that are quite physical. We had to hurry-- it was 5:40 and we had to be at Lupe's at 6:00 for dinner.

Jessica, Johnnie and a few others walked us down to dinner. It was only going to be David and I for dinner since Katherine had gone back to San Pedro Sula to be with the surgical team. Jesina was going to El Progreso for the night, and Madrid was taking them in the van.

The dinner that Lupe prepared was delicious. We had beans and rice, fried plantain, and a round steak with green peppers. After dinner, the music was playing, so the kids and I got up and danced for a few minutes. They laughed because I'm a lousy dancer!

We were down to 6 kids. I wanted to make a call to my parents and David wanted to use the Internet. The operator at the Internet café tried my parents' phone number but only got an answering machine. I took the kids outside so that David could use the Internet.

A new store opened in town with basic supplies, so I took the 6 of them over for something to drink. Each one of them said 'thank you' in English to me. I reminded them that when the drink was empty, it was to go into the garbage, not on the ground. Littering is such a big problem here.

The children walked David and me to the gate and we all said good night.

It is now Tuesday morning. I'm up before sunrise and the neighbor is cooking outside. I can hear them talking and the smoke from their fire is coming in the direction of where I'm doing my work.

I woke up this morning with bites on my legs and sure enough they are getting infected like last year. They aren't too painful just yet so I'm taking the prescription that I purchased when I was here last September. I only have 4 pills, so not sure how much that will help me. I can't figure it out why my legs get infected so easily. This is the only thing I don't like about Honduras... mosquito bites that get infected.

Daniella is at the gate calling me already....she can see me through the gate. I'm going out to play now.

Change in plans as the gate is locked and Delmy and Benigno are sleeping. So I handed some paper and crayons through the gate until I can get the key to open it. Since we will be finished with the school visits today, I will try to work on the ProPapa newsletter. Joe Farrell advised me to do no more than 1 1/2 page newsletter which leaves me only little room for articles.

Today we have two schools visits left. I visited these same schools last year with Shirley. Sandra is the coordinator for the one and her sister Jenny, who graduated from the program, is the coordinator for the other.

The sun is coming up over the mountains now and shining behind me. The roosters are all crowing. Gladys is yelling my name and asking why I'm not outside. Well, I don't know for sure that is what she is asking because it's all Spanish, but I'm pretty sure.

David and I decided to walk Jessica and Kebi to school this morning. I enjoyed having Jessica hold my one hand and Kebi the other. Johnnie came with us too. We walked them right to the front gate and then we said good bye. They were very excited that we walked them. We left the girls and as we were headed towards Lupe's, we encountered a 'crazy cow'. He was up against a truck and then jumped back as Johnnie, David and I were passing him. I told them to get out of the way as he starting bucking....all I could see was one of us getting stabbed with the horns of this bull. We waited until he moved on and then continued to Lupe's.

At breakfast today, it was only to be the two of us. I asked Lupe if I could buy Johnnie breakfast, so he sat down with us. Soon after, Jesina came for breakfast as well. Johnnie enjoyed himself and sang along with the music as he was eating.

I talked to him about going to school one day. Since he is 11 years old, he'd have to start with night school so that he could learn the basics of reading and writing. He can't read at all. Jesina took all of his information and I told him that if he'd want to go to school, I'd be honored to be his sponsor but he'd have to work and study hard. He agreed!

After breakfast, we visited Aldea 29 and then Aldea 28. Daniella remembered me when I called her name out of the van window. At Aldea 29, I talked to the kids and joked that they could tell that I wasn't Shirley because I had a beard and that Shirley is much prettier than me.

I also talked to a little boy named Danny who was in 'time out' because he didn't want to be in school. Danny and I talked about how lucky he is to have the opportunity to get an education and that he should really try to make the best of it. I used him in the magic ball trick and also explained to the other kids about how important it is to get an education. Sandra asked if I'd do the magic ball trick in the other classrooms as well. After entertaining, we went with Sandra to visit the homes of two students.

It's now Tuesday afternoon and I'm sitting out along the street with some of the kids. Johnnie is right beside me to my left and telling the other kids to quit touching my computer as I'm typing this Journal. In a little bit, I'll show them the photos in a slideshow presentation of the last two trips to Urraco.

I have some flashcards that Johnnie is using to test the kids. $1+1=2$. Also, Vanesa went to find Gladys because she took the crayons this afternoon and some of the kids want to color on the tablets I have.

The kids want me to quit typing and play with them instead. I'll take my computer back inside and then gather a few things to bring back to play.

We had well over 20 kids out there playing, which eventually led into arguments and fights. Not sure what all they were fighting about but probably a total of 6 or 8 kids had been crying at one time or another. Word is out now that I gave some of the kids hats the other day and now they all want hats, even some that have already gotten them.

Back to what happened when I visited the schools this morning. I was able to have my photo taken with children that are in the program from both schools. I also found Maria, the girl I sponsored on behalf of my clients, Art and Joy. I explained to her that Art and Joy want to continue to be her sponsor. She was happy to hear that.

After visiting the second school today, Aldea 28, we went to visit the homes of two students. The parents of both children are so thankful for the sponsorship that they are receiving from ProPapa. The first one gave us bananas and coconuts to take with us and

the second family gave us oranges and coconuts. They felt that they must repay us and by giving us fruit from their trees is the only way.

When we arrived at Benigno's home from visiting the schools, it was time for lunch. David and I walked to Lupe's while Delmy and Jesina rode in the van. Jessica, Christian and Andreas walked with us. While we were eating lunch, I decided to buy the three a Coca-cola.

After lunch, we walked back to the house and I took my computer out with the kids for them to see the photos from my previous two trips. When a different photo would come up, they'd say the child's name and laugh and say stuff in Spanish. It was cute!

It's now 7:00 PM on Tuesday and I'm feeling beat. My legs are infected again from the bites although not too painful that I have to keep my legs up. This afternoon we played 'lasso' in the streets. We also did a lot of puzzles, coloring on the tablets and working the math 'flash cards'. All the children were fighting over them...I think Jessica took them home for safe-keeping.

I've received word that the surgical team is going back to the United States early. Delmy asked me if I wanted to go back to San Pedro Sula to celebrate the Despedita with them before they leave. (Despedita is the celebration of the departure from Honduras) I think that I'll just stay here instead. I'm already dreading leaving on Friday—it will be here before I know it.

I have seen Darline several times already, but she is kind of distant with me. I think because she is no longer the little girl I met almost two years ago, now 12 years old. I haven't pushed the issue with Darline, just saying 'hello' and asking "How was school today?"

I think she is coming around, seeing all the kids having fun in the street. Actually, tonight she was one of the kids that 'snuck' inside the gate to come see me while I was typing. I was trying to convince them that they had to stay outside the gate but they didn't want to listen. So I gave Arnol a hat and I told him to 'hold it for me' and I winked as I made him the enforcer. He was able to convince them to go back outside the gate. Before she left, Kebi gave me a big hug and kiss.

It's Wednesday at 2:30 a.m. I heard the roosters and thought that it might be time to get up. Now that I'm up, I'll just write a little bit in my Journal.

Last night while David and I were sitting and talking, I could hear 'Davee, Davee'. I couldn't tell who it was, but soon after, Rebecca, Christian and Yvette came sneaking in to see me. I'm so happy to have David as my translator because all three were speaking a mile a minute. They all wanted hats.

I went into my bag and gave Rebecca and Yvette each a hat. I knew that I had already given Christian a hat. He was wearing it all day and according to David, it was now at his home.

So then Christian wanted a 'pluma' - a pen. I got all three of them a pen. They were happy and left. David made the comment that they'd be back in 20 minutes. It was more like 20 seconds when Christian came back asking for a hat. It was so funny....So after a few more attempts at coming back asking for a hat, he left. Then Carmen came. She wanted a hat and a pluma (pen). I thought that I had given her one the other day but she insisted that I didn't. So I gave her a hat and said 'SHHHH'.

David explained that she couldn't tell anyone. She left and soon Rebecca came back saying that Carmen was telling everybody.

Soon, two men came in through the front gate. I thought that they were here looking for Benigno. David started to laugh and said, 'you aren't going to believe this'. They want a hat! They both had a hat on their heads so I offered to make a trade...I'll take their old hat and give them a new one.

They only had one, they claimed, and that was why they were asking for another, so 'no trade'. I went back upstairs into my bag and got a hat for each of them. Soon, Christian was back. I didn't give him a hat, but I did give him a breakfast bar. He was thrilled. Off he went. These kids know that they are not allowed past the gate yet took the chances of getting caught by Delmy or Benigno just to try to get a free hat.

Today I think we are planning on driving to the mountains to see the water project. Joe Farrell, Lou Cherry and Sister Laurinda are all coming to Urraco for a meeting with Benigno some time today as well. I may have to go see the Doctor for my insect bites on my legs. They aren't too painful but all bright red with infection and some have 'pus' coming out of them. They are very, very itchy so I'm trying just to ignore the discomfort.

I'm thinking about all the donations that my family and friends brought to me for Urraco. Kenny cleaned out his 'hat collection' and I donated close to 60 hats. Missy gave me hats from a printing company along with Adult size T-shirts, tote bags and more that were all 'brand new'. I'll try to take an inventory to see what I have left to distribute. I'm trying not to give any one child more than the other. I can't remember who donated the puzzles but they are terrific. It takes the kids a lot of time and once they are done, they are very proud of themselves.

I've tried to call my parents three times since I've been here but they aren't answering. I just remembered why. They are at my home and not theirs. I can't believe I didn't remember that!

I'm wondering how Nate and Ortie are doing back home, and my dog Buddy, if he's doing okay. I'm thankful that my parents agreed to stay at my home while I'm here. I

know that they'd enjoy coming here to be with the kids, just like I'm doing this week. I'll talk to them about it when I get home.

It's now a little after 3:00 a.m. and I think I might stretch out in the hammock and go back to sleep for awhile. Hopefully, the mosquitos won't eat me alive.

I slept off and on in the hammock until I heard Delmy get up. That was about 5:30 or so. I got my shoes on and went outside the gate to see Kebi, Wendy and her baby, and a few other kids up on the hill. I walked up towards them, Kebi meeting me half way with a big hug. I took them some peanut butter, a banana and a few crackers that they all shared.

They really didn't care for the peanut butter on banana but liked it on the crackers. We spent some quiet time drawing and coloring. Johnnie came out with one of the puzzles and was building it. Soon, everyone started yelling that the cows were coming so we had to quickly pick up our things and move to the side. It's normal that the kids throw things at the cows and the dogs 'nip' at them as they go by. One thing I've learned since starting to come to Honduras last year is that they really mistreat the animals. I saw one of the kids kick a pig while the other kids just sort of laughed.

I'm still trying to teach them not to litter. They know not to do it while I'm with them but it's just a way of life. Even the adults just throw their garbage on the ground. I may look for a rake and shovel and go out to clean up the litter in front of Benigno's house.

It's now Wednesday, 2:30 p.m. I found a shovel and a rake and cleaned up the garbage with the help of some of the kids. I instructed all the kids that all paper is to be thrown in the trash can that I placed out in front beside the gate. They made sure that when they would put some in, I'd see them.

After breakfast this morning, I went to the Internet Café to make a call to Ortie. He told me that he is ready to close on the sale of his home and that Nate offered to help him move if needed. Ort also told me that my sister Katie was in the Hospital with a blood clot in her leg. She will be okay but they need to discontinue the medicine that she has been taking for her breast cancer. I will call my mom tonight to get the full details.

Soon after we cleaned up the street, Sister Laurinda came with Lou Cherry, Joe Farrell and Katherine came back too. Carolann and Mirey, the young daughters of two of the physicians came as did Jennifer, another member of the surgical team. Sister picked up my prescription for my legs at a pharmacy in San Pedro Sula. I started off by taking two pills and will take another one before dinner and one before bed. As I remember last time, the medicine 'kicked in' fairly quickly....I think three days.

The group only stayed for a few hours but Johnnie, David and I gave them a tour of the medical clinic, the cemetery and walked to the river. We went back to the house and then went to Lupe's for lunch. While at lunch, it began to rain. With our guests, we had to put several tables together. Many of the kids that walked with us to lunch were waiting outside the restaurant and became drenched from the heavy rain.

David and I said good-bye to all our visitors, then we were back on our own. We walked with the kids to Benigno's and I stayed outside the gate with them for about 10 minutes until I went to lay down for a little nap. David was going to sleep in the hammock.

Not sure what we are going to do the rest of the day but no doubt the kids will be involved.

It's about 8:15 p.m. on Wednesday and David and I finally are able to call it quits for the day. We are exhausted. Jessica took me down to see where she gets her corn ground into *masa*. It was interesting to see this all being done at the *Molino*-the place where this is done. Everyone brings their corn and then pays the woman who does the grinding. She has to start the engine using a handle attached to it by turning it very quickly until it starts. All gather around and just talk until their corn is completed. And then if it's a big bowl full, the customer usually sits it on top of her head when she leaves.

While waiting, Alberto got into a fight with his sister Kebi and also his brother, Johnnie. Not sure what is going on in Alberto's mind except that his hormones are beginning to race and he tells me that he's 'macho'. I remember Alberto's brother, Nelson, beating him up last year so it just gets passed down, I guess.

As we walked back with Jessica and the other kids, Jessica invited me to come to her 'casa'. I did and immediately a chair was brought out for me to sit on. Jessica's 12-year old sister, Jossi, was sitting there with her baby in the hammock. Cindy, her 15-year old sister was sitting in a chair while her baby was sleeping.

Cindy was asking me questions like when I was flying home and when I was coming back. Of course I couldn't understand the Spanish but with the use of signs, I figured it out. Her baby woke up, so Jessica's little brother Andreas brought him out and sat him in my lap.

Cindy was saying something about me taking the baby back with me to the US when I leave. I thought that was what she was saying but I told her that I'd be back after dinner with David and she and I could talk. It was soon time to go to Lupe's for dinner so I went back to the house to get cleaned up.

When I met David, I asked him about adoption and he thought that I couldn't adopt a child because I'm not married. I was under the impression that Americans could not adopt children from Honduras. But he agreed to go with me after dinner tonight.

David and I ate dinner at Lupe's and had the company of about 8 kids. Lupe was off tonight but her mother and a friend were working the restaurant. So when they weren't looking, I was giving the kids some bananas and watermelon pieces. I also poured some coca-cola in a glass and had three of them share it. The mosquitoes were just awful tonight under the table that Jessica and Kebi kept rubbing my lower legs to keep them off of me. David was getting bit up as well.

Speaking of my legs, they are very achy tonight, but I'm hopeful the medicine kicks in tomorrow. I'm supposed to take no more than 3 pills per day according to what Sister heard but last year my prescription read '1 pill every 6 hours for 7 days' so that means 4 per day for me. I started initially with 2 when Sister came and then one before dinner and now one before bed.

After dinner, I went to the Internet Café to call my mom. In the little phone booth with me was Jessica, Carmen, Darline, Andreas, Kebi and Johnnie. They all got on the phone to say *Hola* to my mom. The kids were so excited. My mom told me all about Katie but also that my niece, Julie, got injured at cheerleading today and had to go to the Hospital and my cousin Beth has cellulites, just like I get when I'm in Honduras. Crazy! My dog Buddy is doing well, the weather is cold but the house is keeping warm with the new wood burning furnace I purchased a few weeks ago.

After dinner and our stop at the Internet Café, David and I went to Jessica's house to meet with Cindy. Through David, I asked Cindy what she was saying. She replied that she wanted my phone number. So I gave her my real estate card with my email and phone number but asked how we'd communicate without me knowing Spanish. She thought it would be better to email since her friend works at the Internet Café and knows English.

And then I asked about the baby....she said that she was teasing me about the baby going home with me. What she wants is to marry an American man that will take both her and her baby. She's only 15 so I don't think that will happen too soon but I told her that I'd look for her. She wants a man between 22 and 29 years old. I told her that I don't even have time to look for a woman for me let alone looking for a man for her. She said that it might be hard but she'll try to find a lady for me and I'll try to find a man for her. We have one year to search so we shook on the deal.

We came back to the house and I jumped in the shower. Oh it felt great!! They have upgraded the water system and it pumps water from a well (still can't drink it though) into a holding tank on the roof. The commode and the shower both work from gravity. The water is cool at first but then your body gets adjusted to it.

David and I sat and talked about the Spanish language and about American food. His favorite is hamburger. I told him about the new Red Robin that opened that is famous for their hamburgers. I also told him about pizza from Vincent's and how the grease just lays on top. He thought that sounded great as they now have only two choices for pizza: Pizza Hut or Dominos.

Now it's a little after 9:00 p.m. and I'm ready for bed. Tomorrow we are planning on visiting the water project in the mountains. Benigno asked if I could bring some shirts and hats for the workers. I hope I have enough shirts. Off to bed!!

It's 8:00 p.m. on Thursday and it's been a very long day. It started at 5:30 this morning when I unlocked the gate and walked up the hill to Kebi's house. I took two granola bars

to share with the few kids that were out. I also grabbed some colored pencils and a tablet. It's really something to see their artwork showing a house, the sun, some clouds and a sidewalk basically the same way the kids in America would draw it. I bet I have well over 100 drawings that I held onto for when I get back home.

David and I are to meet Benigno at 8:00 a.m. after breakfast and ride up to the water projects in the mountain.

We met the school kids at the gate and walked them to school. After that, David and I went to Lupe's for breakfast. I bought Johnnie breakfast today. He is such a good kid...sometimes! He has a way of agitating the other kids, just like his brothers Alberto and Nelson do to him.

After breakfast, we walked back to the house to meet Benigno. The neighbor lady came over to say that Benigno called saying that he'd be running 30 minutes late. This was already an hour after he was supposed to have been here. So I jumped in the shower as it was extremely hot this morning.

While waiting for Benigno, we played with Darline, Jose, Evan, Johnnie and one whose name I can't remember. We teamed the kids up to do the puzzles and the winners got a prize. The winners were Johnnie, Evan and the one boy so they got a bright colored pencil and a little pencil sharpener. Darline and Jose got a pen.

So we switched puzzles and again, Johnnie, Evan and the one boy won. I gave Johnnie a ruler (he broke it within a few minutes) and the other two a red pen. The kids just love working with the puzzles, especially the puzzle of the United States. They all know where 'Da vee' lives!

Benigno finally came a little after 10:00 a.m. David and I squeezed into the truck and rode 20 minutes, where we had stop the truck and walk 20 minutes up the mountain to where they are building the water tank. This tank will supply Urraco and 7 other villages with fresh water. We hiked up the steep mountain where some places had little steps dug into the hillside for us to use.

I saw wild goats and saw a horse wandering around on our journey. This was the first time that I was able to see the palm oil trees up close. We kept going and met up with four of the workers, each carrying an 80 pound sack of cement. We finally reached our destination and found about 8 men framing for the concrete tank that they were going to pour today.

I knew Alexis, one of the leaders of this project, from when I came with the Construction Team in March of 2005. As I stood back and watched, I could tell that there was a little bit of a power struggle between a few of the guys. Lots of words flying back and forth and I could always tell when Benigno would talk in a deeper voice, he was trying to put them all in their place.

During one of the many discussions, everyone stopped and listened to the man with a clipboard (that's how I knew he was important) and he's pointing at me and talking in Spanish. I'm thinking 'what in the world did I do'? David quickly translated that the man was saying that he worked in the states and they had better equipment and power tools to do the job and it makes it much easier.

I agreed, and then continued with 'I thought that maybe a generator and a power saw would help' but then decided I better not say too much. The next few moments became real tense when the one mentioned that we are about 50 bags of concrete short. So they had to order more plus carry more sand up the mountain.

The young boss of the labor crew was scolding his crew of 6 men who carried the sand, saying that they were only putting 7 shovel-fuls in instead of 10. (I guess that is where the term 'sandbagger' comes from) He made an offer that if they put 10 shovels full of sand into one burlap sack, and carry it up the mountain, he'd pay 30 limpera for each trip.

"30 limps?" I asked David. Yes, about \$1.50 per trip up the mountain carrying about 80-100 pound bags of sand. All 8 of the laborers plus their boss rushed down to do it!!

We realized that we were about 1 ½ hours late for lunch at Lupe's so we headed back down the mountain. The trip to the water project was very educational and interesting. Maybe I can write a short article for the newsletter on this.

We squeezed back into Benigno's truck and then stopped for a soda. Then we headed to Lupe's for our lunch. Benigno had lunch with us and then took off for San Pedro Sula to attend the departure dinner of the surgical crew. Before he left, he mentioned that we would be leaving for El Progreso at 10:00 tomorrow morning since it was the only time that they could get me back there. David and I are to have our departure dinner with Sister Laurinda there somewhere.

After lunch, we walked to the house and the kids were outside waiting for us. They actually followed us into the yard and wouldn't listen to me when I told them that they know the rules, they must stay outside the gate. David and I convinced Jessica and Johnnie to get everyone out...and they did.

I took my 2nd shower for the day...it was so stinkin' hot today. Even the water in my shower was too warm from being in the tank up on the roof. After the shower, I took a 15 minute nap in front of a fan. Then back out to play in the street.

Soccer was starting at 4:00 p.m. I can't get over how good Wendy is. She is just as fast as David. And she is very physical too! She scored the first goal past Johnnie. Alberto played after working construction all day. It was nice to see the kids playing so hard and having a lot of fun.

The little fleas were attacking my legs, so when David came off the field for a drink at almost 5:00 p.m., I told him that I'm ready to go back up to the house. On our way to the

house, I saw Jorge, the construction team leader I met on my first trip. He waved me over to see his little baby in the hammock and I was able to meet his wife.

The kids were asking when I was leaving and I said that I was flying home on Saturday but after a few minutes, I felt that I was deceiving them so I asked David to tell them that I'm leaving for El Progreso at 10:00 a.m. tomorrow and then sleeping over night there and fly home on Saturday. I feel really bad about leaving but tonight is the first time that I'm looking forward to being back home.

I took my 3rd shower of the day and then we headed to Lupe's for dinner. I took 2 packages of peanut butter but found out that we had 10 kids with us. I told them that they'd just have to share it and of course that started a fight during dinner.

David started laughing as he translated what they were saying... 'How old are you? Go to the back of the line!' After dinner, Lupe turned up the music and the kids and I danced for a little bit while David ran to the Internet Café. I kept the 10 kids with me and as we were walking down the street, they wanted me to buy them a 'chilly willy' (ice cream). And then a coke...and then chips. If there were only a couple that would have been fine but I couldn't do it for all 10.

As we were coming to the house, I saw Cindy, Jessica's 15 year old sister, standing near our street. She asked me to come to her house. David wasn't with me and I have such a tough time trying to understand them without him. Cindy showed me a photo of her Aunt who is 29 years old. She is coming to Urraco tomorrow to meet me.

I tried to explain that I'm leaving 'manyana' (tomorrow) and so I had Jessica explain it as she knows when I'm leaving. David came soon after and he helped me to get everything straightened out. Jessica already told her mom that she is not going to school tomorrow because I'm leaving. I told her that she needed to go and she just ignored me. I kissed them all good night and went up to the house to, yes, have another shower.

After we went inside the gate, Johnnie jumped up on the wall as did Kebi. I took a photo of them and then told them that they had to get down as the other kids saw me talking to them there and they wanted up as well. They left. Johnnie came back in about 15 minutes sitting on the wall yelling 'Da vee, Da vee'. I said 'no Zupotos' (no shoes) so I couldn't walk over without my shoes.

David went over to see what he wanted and then he jumped down into the yard and came over to me. He wanted to see what I was typing, and I showed him his name. He asked me about other words-- he can't read. He saw the colored pencils beside me and began to draw. It was nice, but then Carmen saw us from up the hill at her house and David said that it sounded like she was also coming down. So I told Johnnie he had to leave.

It's going on 9:00 p.m. and I'm ready for bed. Benigno and Delmy aren't home yet from the dinner with the surgical crew but I'm sure they'll be back soon since Kayla gets up for school at 5:30 a.m.

I woke up this Friday morning at about 4:30 a.m. The neighbor lady was already outside cooking over her open fire and I could hear music playing at the little hut behind our house. The roosters are all crowing and the neighbor's dog was barking. Everyday it's pretty much the same routine. It's after 5:30 a.m. and I'm surprised that the kids aren't at the gate yet. Benigno's truck isn't here so I think that they must have stayed the night in El Progreso or San Pedro Sula after the departing party for the Surgical Team.

Our plans for today are simply walk the kids to school (all except Jessica, as she's not going today), breakfast at Lupe's, come back to the house to pack and then possibly visit the palm oil processing plant on our way to El Progreso. So I'm heading out to see where in the heck the kids are. I can hear a few talking but they aren't at the front gate.

It's Saturday morning and I had such a busy day yesterday that it left no time for journaling. I'm in El Progreso at a hotel that Sister put me in. My bed had hair in it when I pulled down the bedspread so I slept on top of two towels. When I showered this morning, the water didn't go down the drain and the sink didn't work either. Sister told me that it is a 5-star hotel.

About my day yesterday: Kenia, Kebi and Jessica all skipped school. They walked with David and me to the school along with Carmen, Arnol, and a few others, but they hid when we got close to the school. We then walked to Lupe's for our final meal there in Urraco. I brought along some JIF peanut butter and so I gave Johnnie money to go buy a loaf of bread. I set Jessica, Kebi, Kenia, Reynoldo, Johnnie and Andreas at one table and made each of them 2 peanut butter sandwiches.

I couldn't believe it when I saw Kebi open her sandwich and put hot sauce on it. And then the others followed when I made such a big deal about it. They ate them! I made one additional sandwich and put a little apricot jelly that Lupe had on the table for our pancakes. Each took a bite but wasn't too impressed with the taste. When we were done, I told Lupe 'good-bye' and thanked her for the wonderful food. We then walked back to the house to pack.

When we arrived back at the gate, there were several kids waiting for us there. I told them that we had to pack but would come back outside to play until Benigno came. It took me awhile to get everything sorted out. I was leaving most of the things that I came with including pens, tablets, tote bags, a few more shirts, my shoes, bracelets that my friend, Denine, donated and much more. Again, I can't believe how many items were given to me to bring along. Once I figured what few things would be going back home with me, I went outside to play.

We did some puzzles and drew until about 11:00 a.m. Then we realized that although Benigno said 10:00 a.m., maybe the original plan for Sister to pick us up at 4:00 was what had been planned after all. So we took all the kids to the soccer field and I decided it was time for me to give soccer a try. I know nothing about soccer but scored two goals. I think the kids think I'm good! I was playing against Wendy and she was physical with

me, so I pushed her around pretty good. It was well over 90 degrees and after about only 30 minutes I was ready to go back to shower. While I was playing soccer with the bigger kids, David kept the other kids busy with 'duck, duck, goose'. They really enjoyed it and played for quite some time.

Once we got back to the house, I went to take a shower and found that the water tank on the roof was empty. So I had to go outside and get water from the cistern into a big bucket and then 'bucket wash'. Believe it or not, it felt wonderful. It kinda reminded me of when you bathe a little baby in the kitchen sink, and you dump the water over the baby's head....that's what I felt like, all 'shivery'.

After the shower, I went to take a little nap in the hammock up on the 2nd floor. It was only about 15 minutes and when I woke up, I stretched my hands over my head. When I opened my eyes, I could hear the kids stand up and yell 'Da vee, Da vee'. It was so funny! They just sat waiting for me. As I sat up on the hammock, I saw a dead tarantula laying next to the hammock. I know he wasn't there when I took my nap so wondered if I may have smacked him while I was sleeping if he was crawling on me. I showed David and that's what he thought had happened.

Back out into the street to play. It was scorching hot by now and so I brought a chair outside to sit on. I saw Yvette's little sister back in the corner and I asked her to come to see me. She shook her head no and then looked downward. I went over to her and asked David to come over to see what was wrong. She told David that 'Da vee didn't notice her this morning when he was leaving to walk the other kids to school'. I explained that I had so much on my mind with trying to get to Lupe's and then back to pack, and that I'm very sorry. She gave me a big hug and then she went to play with the other kids.

The kids were getting pretty wild, so I sat them down in a shady spot by the big rock out front and asked if they had any questions about where I live or about the kids back home. They asked about the sizes of homes, if people ride in cars, if I have a bicycle and wanted to know all about snow. I told them that it gets very cold in Pennsylvania but that didn't matter to any of them. They all thought that they'd like to play in the snow. Some of them said that they would hide in my luggage and come home with me so that they could shovel my driveway for me after a big snow.

Sister called David a few times to let us know she was running late. She finally picked us up at 5:30 and was concerned about driving the back roads in the dark. So we had to quickly gather our things together and get them loaded into the truck.

I made a brief statement to all of the children that I played with all week. Every one of them had been sitting there when it was time for me to leave. I told them through David 'I love you all and will miss you while I'm gone but I'll be back to see you again sometime soon.'

Sister Laurinda explained a bit deeper the fact that I love them all so very much and care for them. Then they started coming up to me to give me hugs and some even gave me a

kiss. I have three letters written in Spanish and David translated them in English from Johnnie, Arnol and Darwin.

Last night we celebrated my departure from Honduras with a dinner at a wonderful restaurant in El Progreso. Sister said a few words and honored me with a Certificate and a little gift. She also mentioned that I'm now referred to as the 'King of the children in Urraco'. Sister and I walked David to the taxi that came to take him to his home. I gave him a big hug and told him that I look forward to working with him the next time I come to Urraco. He was just terrific!

This morning before I left the hotel, Sister introduced me to Sister Saraseta (sp?). She is in charge of the orphanage in El Progreso. She is meeting with the First Lady, who is originally from Spain, about making it easier for North Americans to adopt children from Honduras. In Honduras, you have to be a married person in order to adopt. But she feels it would be okay for single adults to be able to adopt. I asked her to add me to the list as I would be interested in adopting a child from Urraco, possibly Cindy's. So we'll wait to see how it goes. Sister will keep me posted.

As I'm sitting here in the San Pedro Sula airport, I have a few thoughts:

1. I was excited to see 3 people wearing my www.davenedley.com T-shirts that I brought in March of 2005.
2. Many of the kids wore the YMCA shirts donated by my brother Rick last September.
3. I hope that I can find at least 10 used computers that I can send down for the computer lab at the high school.
4. I'm so thankful for all those who donated to the cause at my bon fire and before I left for Honduras. All the cash was put towards the medical fund of Maria and others like her. I need to figure a way to keep income going into the account.

It was a wonderful trip and I told Sister that I prefer to do it this way instead of in a group. She thought that this was a good idea because I was able to spend so much time with the kids and give them the special individual attention they need. I'm looking forward to my next trip back to Urraco, possibly in March or April of next year.