

September 2011

Hello from Costa Rica! The end of summer in the US means the end of team season for us, so it's a good time to update you on all that's been going on during the past few months.

This biggest news has to do with the Methodist Children's Home: as of late June, the Home has finally opened its doors! After four years of planning and hard work, we and our partners are overjoyed to finally be able to serve children in need at the Home. Our priority has always been to receive siblings groups and children who have been declared abandoned by the Child Welfare Agency (PANI), so that brothers and sisters can grow up together and all may know what it means to belong to a family that deeply loves and cares for them. So far, it has been our privilege to welcome eight precious children, ranging from 18-months to twelve years old. In compliance with PANI regulations, we regret that we are unable to share photos of them with you, but you can imagine that they are beautiful kids with smiles that would melt your heart. Though it's heartbreaking to know the circumstances that have brought them to us, we give thanks that our God is a God of hope and that they are now in a safe and nurturing home. We are humbled that God has entrusted us to be part of His work in their lives and we pray that being in the Home's care can allow the healing process to begin as they learn their Heavenly Father's love for each of them and how to live together as His children. Ella has been asked to serve as the Assistant Director at the Home, and since July we've also hired highly-skilled Costa Ricans for the positions of psychologist, social worker, and administrator. We're thankful for the ways in which our team has learned to work together, from the bigger picture of the ministry down to the daily details of caring for the children. Please continue to pray for the Home, for the children placed in its care, and for all those involved in working with them each day. Pray also for the continued financing of this project. We've attached a copy of our pledge card for the Home, and we ask you to share this with you church, your Sunday School class, your family and friends, with everybody! We are thankful for those who have helped and continue to help with the building stages, and we have faith that the Lord will prompt many to help with the operational costs as well.

Speaking of building, we had a busy summer hosting work teams from the States. We've begun work on the lot for the second house, so much of our time was spent building two retaining walls for the lot itself. This meant lots of digging, pouring concrete, and laying block, and by the end of the summer we were able to start digging the trenches for the house itself. Everyone worked incredibly hard, and we're thankful for their commitment to this project. With each team we also enjoyed doing great VBS activities to minister to children at local churches. A highlight was the team from Ella's home church, who put on the very first VBS at the Children's Home, both for the kids who live there and for the local community. A couple of churches also brought glasses and wheelchairs to distribute, and it was a blessing to be a part of changing people's lives in such a practical way. We are always so thankful for the teams that come each year, for their sacrifice and work,

and for the encouragement they give to us and to the church. On our website (www.fairclothcostarica.com), you can see pictures of the progress made at the Children's Home and of our other areas of work.

As for our other ministries, they continue their normal rhythm and are always a blessing to us. Will's teaching at the Seminary has been exciting this year, as he has taught advanced courses for the group of students who will graduate this year as well as introductory courses for students who've just enrolled. Please continue to pray for the Seminary, for its leadership, and for the pastors who are both being strengthened and are strengthening the local churches through their studies. Also, our weekly ministry with the children of Los Guido is now in its fifth year. We're still meeting each Saturday at the church and we've been having between fifty and seventy kids each week, with a lot more little ones than in years past to keep us on our toes! Recently Ella has been designing lessons on the theme of fear, and of the peace and protection we find in trusting that the Lord is always with us. Please keep this ministry in your prayers: that the Lord would continue to give us lessons that reach these children where they are, that we and our team could be renewed in our service to them, and that they would be kept safe and grow in their knowledge of God's saving love for them.

As for us, this month (September) marks our seven-year anniversary in Costa Rica! This is incredible to realize, and as we look back on our years here, on all that the Lord has done so wonderfully and unexpectedly, and on all the people and churches who have partnered with us through prayer, gifts, and work – well, we can only be humbled by it all and say a great big "Gracias!" We thank you so much for being a part of this ministry and we hope you know we pray for you and appreciate your partnership.

As we look towards the end of this year, we ask for specific prayers in a few areas. First, for our health and strength, that we would be able to finish this year well and start planning for 2012. Second, for all of our partners and supporting churches, that the Lord would continue to inspire people to partner with this ministry and help provide for its needs. Third is a very specific request, something that has become clear to us in the last few months. Between Will's work at the Seminary and now Ella's almost daily presence at the Children's Home, we've realized we need a second car. We've worked well as a one-car family for seven years, but it's time for a new vehicle. So in the coming weeks we'll be issuing an appeal for help to buy a car here, and we appreciate your prayers in advance that this would be received well.

As always, we wish these few words could communicate to you even more the joy that it is to serve here and our deep gratitude to you for helping make this possible. Thank you for your love for us and for this ministry. May God bless you and yours.

Peace in Christ,

Will and Ella Faircloth