

Mission and Vision

After more than 30 years experience teaching special education in the public schools, and training teachers in this area, Pat is being called to use these skills on the mission field:

Hermano Pedro Orphanage

This institution located in Antigua, Guatemala houses approximately 250 children and adults with moderate to severe disabilities. While adequate physical care is given to these children and teens, educational and social programs are severely limited. Hermano Pedro will serve as Pat's "home base" of operations in Guatemala. The goal of this involvement is to improve the communication and feeding programs available at the orphanage.

Communication Systems

Numerous children in Guatemala are unable to speak due to physical and mental disabilities. Using line drawing symbols and communication boards and devises, Pat will assist these little ones in becoming able to ask for what they want and need.

Educational Consultation

Children with disabilities are often not allowed to attend public schools in Guatemala. Pat will give support to private teachers working with these children through Bethel Ministries International.

Supporting Medical Care

Many of the poor and disabled in Guatemala have never seen a doctor. Accurate diagnosis and adequate care are essential to their lives. Pat will assist parents trying to find medical help for their child.



Visiting a home north of Huehuetenango, Guatemala

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Patricia Duff
&
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Serving Jesus by
serving the poor and
disabled in
Guatemala

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Why Guatemala? Why now?

The best way to understand the reasons for this move is to meet four of the children of Guatemala who have touched and broken Pat's heart over the years. It is her prayer that they will touch your heart, too.



Tania

On her first trip to Guatemala in 2005, Pat was accompanying a group of women visiting orphanages. Upon entering one of these "hogars" Pat was drawn to a four year old sitting in a high chair. Tania had just come to the children's home, and no one there was quite sure what was wrong with this little one who seemed so disconnected from the world. They feared she, as so many others, had been severely abused. After spending a few hours with Tania, Pat suspected that Tania had a form of autism, and later assessments confirmed this. A disorder commonly recognized in the United States was totally unknown to these caregivers. Tania today lives in a home operated by Pat's friends at Amor del Niño, and has just begun attending school.



Sam

In June, 2006, Pat first met Sam at Hermano Pedro Orphanage in Antigua. It was apparent that Sam had autism. His case was not typical, however. While he would spend literally hours in his crib banging his head, when he was taken from bed he immediately calmed. He loved walking around the courtyard, tossing fabric into the air and watching it float to the ground. While unable to speak, he could readily make his wants known to anyone who took the time to "listen." Sam was also remarkably affectionate. A communication system could have greatly decreased his frustration. When returned to his crib, his head banging would resume once again. This sound haunts Pat right up until today.



Lisvi

Pat met Lisvi in January, 2009, at a wheelchair distribution in northern Guatemala, near the Mexican frontier. After asking to hold a "baby" who was present, Pat discovered that Lisvi was not an infant, but a 6 year old, weighing only 14 lbs. Fighting back panic at this reality, Pat took her to a friend from Bethel Ministries who was measuring folks for wheelchairs. Dick confirmed her worst fears, that Lisvi was indeed starving. After much conversation, her parents agreed to accompany them to a malnutrition clinic in Antigua, 8 hours from their home. While the doctors at the clinic were willing to admit Lisvi for treatment, her parents could not bear to leave her alone so far from home. Within the next month, Lisvi went to be with her Heavenly Father, but not until after she had changed Pat's life forever.

The time to move is NOW.

Fernando is a ten year old who has accompanied Pat and her friends from Bethel on a number of trips into villages. Serving both as a translator and a "wheelchair mechanic," he is an amazing young man. He lives with relatives, because his mother left Guatemala to find work in the States when he was only one. This has given Fernando a sensitivity and kindness that is truly remarkable. He likes nothing better than to go into the villages or visit the kids at Hermano Pedro in Antigua. He is the future hope of Guatemala.



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