

Joyful greetings to you from Bogota, Colombia! This is our update for Leadership & Development LIZWAN/Emmaus Road Foundation for the months of September and October, 2010.

On this update we share with you a recent story published by First Lutheran Church in Sioux Falls, South Dakota about the real joys and transformations which families in the United States experience



when they invest prayers, communication and financial resources in the life of a young Christian leader in Colombia. We will also share information about Givology, an online organization that supports education of poor children and supporter of our ministry, and letters from our students to their donors.

SPONSORS FROM FIRST LUTHERAN MEET THEIR SPONSORED STUDENT

“It was like watching two different worlds come together. Time is frozen in my mind from when they hugged each other. I saw tears of joy and a long embrace! It was such a joyful encounter.”

This is how Pastor Natanael Lizarazo describes the meeting of Colombian Wilson Javier with his sponsors First Lutheran Church members Bill and Marcia Huffman.

Wilson Javier and Marcia gave each other a big hug when they first met at St. Paul Lutheran Church.

Bill and Marcia committed to sponsoring Wilson’s education in 2002 through Leadership & Development LIZWAN, an organization founded by Pastors Barbara and Natanael that among many things contribute to the education and training of Christian leaders in Colombia, South America. Since that time Bill and Marcia have been praying for him and getting to know him through letters and emails. Their wish to meet him came true when they traveled to Colombia as part of a mission trip with First Lutheran Church in July 2010.

“The highlight of the trip was to be able to connect with him,” says Marcia, “even if we don’t speak the same language.”

Wilson’s family moved to Bogota from the village of El Cocuy. They feared for their lives. He now plays drums in a praise band at San Pablo Lutheran Church and lives with his mother, sister and uncle above his family’s store. His father passed away when he was 15 years old.

“He likes soccer and swimming, but it took a long time to know that much about him because his letters are always filled with gratitude and spirituality,” says Marcia.

To be sponsored through LIZWAN, students must apply to their church. The congregation determines need and then forwards information about the student to LIZWAN. The board of directors then makes the decision.

“The difference in sponsoring someone through LIZWAN is the personal relationships,” says Pastor Nate. “Monthly updates are sent to sponsors, who are matched with specific students based on interests. Sponsored students are responsible for a portion of their education. They attend training seminars and participate in the life of the church.”

It costs \$250 a year to sponsor an elementary or secondary student. But LIZWAN does not provide everything for the students.

“It doesn’t sound like a lot by our standards,” says Bill. “We’re paying for a third of his education, really. He works for the rest and his family works for the rest.”

Wilson’s family runs a small store that sells fresh fruit and other food items. Because the store is located in a vulnerable neighborhood, customers must receive their purchases through a window with bars. This is a safety measure for the owners of the store commonly seen in Colombia.

In the photo (left to right), Wilson’s sister Nora, Marcia, Wilson’s mother Rosa and Wilson Javier standing in front of their small store.



Wilson gets up at 5 a.m. and takes the city bus to school, a two-hour trip, goes to class and then makes it home again by 6.

“He is so remarkable,” says Marcia. “He wants to be a chemistry teacher and be able to tell people about God.”

Along with Wilson, Bill and Marcia were able to meet other LIZWAN students as well.

“They have a wide variety of goals and are eager to talk about them and what they will be able to do,” says Bill. “I would say the majority [of the students] had the opinion that they were doing it for their country and not monetary gain for themselves.”

Through this experience, Marcia says she has learned humility, “[In the U.S.] we are always working longer and making more money. They say, ‘What can I do with my life to serve God and have gratefulness and joy.’”

Marcia says she is impressed by the letters Wilson writes. He often gives thanks and praise to God and to his sponsors.

In a recent letter he wrote, “I want to finish my professional career because it is a goal of mine and because it is a way to show you the gratitude I have for all the support you are giving me ... We have to make efforts, we have to be committed, and we have to be patient and tolerant. There will always be difficulties but those are opportunities, ‘God changes our crying into joy.’”

Right now, 47 students are sponsored through LIZWAN, though they are seeking to increase the number of students sponsored to 100 by 2012.

"It's nice to have Wilson as part of our lives," says Bill. "It's not just a one-year thing. It's a commitment. Stick with it. The kids need it. LIZWAN doesn't just go down the street and say, 'There's a boy who needs an education.' They check these people and make sure the money is used properly."

Marcia agrees with Bill saying, "For us it's sacrificing one meal out a month. And with that you can touch somebody in a tangible way. A small sacrifice here is huge for them. It's life changing. And therefore it's life changing for you."

For Marcia and Bill, their sponsorship of Wilson will be over in two years when he finishes college.



"I'm sure when he's done we'll say, 'Who's next?'" smiles Marcia.

To learn more about sponsoring a student through LIZWAN, contact Pastor Natanael Lizarazo at 339-1983, ext. 21, or access other information at

www.emmausroadfoundation.org.

In the photo, FLC members at Wilson Javier's home.

Ongoing partnership with Givology: Givology is an Internet online giving marketplace for education based in the USA, which leverages small dollar donations to support grassroots projects and student scholarships in the developing world. Givology believes education is the single most important and sustainable resource for individual empowerment, advancement, and poverty alleviation. Givology has 22 grassroots partners in Latin America, Africa and Asia. Its philosophy is to build lasting sponsor-student relationships and cross-cultural communication which is possible through its messaging and blogging system where donors can send messages to a student, as well as receive updates on their progress. To learn more about Givology log in to www.givology.org.



Givology
give to learn, learn to give

Since 2009 Leadership & Development LIZWAN and the Emmaus Road Foundation ministry became a Givology partner. Through this partnership the education of seven (7) students has been possible in 2010. The students who benefit from these scholarships, besides being thankful for being able to attend school, really enjoy receiving and sending messages from and to their donors.

We take this opportunity to convey our gratitude to Givology's team for their ongoing efforts to make education possible in underdeveloped countries. We also celebrate our ongoing and efficient

communication not only with Givology's team but with our students' donors. Education is indeed already making a difference in the lives of those students being supported by Givology. Thank you!

Next we share with you two letters from our students to their donors:

Letter from Erika Natalia to Givology:

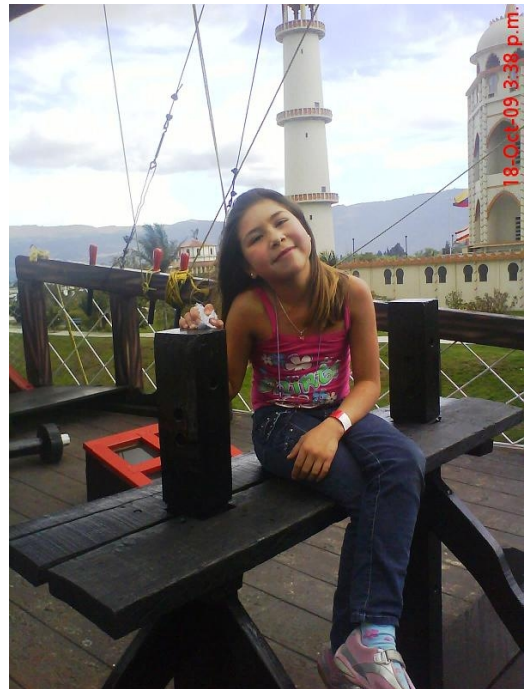
"Hello!

First of all I thank God for all the support you give me through the Scholarship Program of the Emmaus Road Foundation. It is a privilege for me to be part of it because I have my education secured and I can become a better person and bring joy to my parents and to people like you who believe in me.

About my school classes, I still have the same teacher. We do fun things and celebrate Children's Day, Language Day, Teacher's Day and Women's Day, etc. Right now I am planning my graduation from 5th grade because next year we will pass to a superior stage, which is secondary education which is a big step. We are planning everything so that our last day as elementary school students is unforgettable. We are learning how to draw using squares and that is fun. Classes now are so much fun. On Friday June 18th we received our first grades report. I got the highest grade in Religion and now that is my favorite subject but I continue to like drawing.

From the bottom of my heart I thank your support and I hope I can get to meet you one day to be able to thank you. God bless you abundantly.

Erika Natalia"



In the photo, Jennifer Carolina and her mother

Letter from Jennifer Carolina to her sponsors Cheryl and Leroy:

"Hello Cheryl and Leroy:

In this occasion I write to you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Best wishes and blessings to both of you and your families.

I want to tell you that this year I started to study again. I am at college studying Business Administration; I am in second semester at the La Salle University. The career I just started is 10 semesters long and I am supposed to know English perfectly when I start seventh semester because all my subjects will be in English.

My family and I are doing well thanks to God. I am very happy to be able to continue my studies. I go to class in the afternoon and in the morning I help my father and mother with their small business. Last year I worked with my parents all year and was able to save some money to pay for my education. The financial help you gave me this first semester was used to buy books, copies and transportation.

I also want to thank you so much for the scholarship you give me because it is definitely a great blessing to me. I say bye now and want you to know that you are always in my prayers. I ask God to give me the opportunity to meet you some day. God bless you and keep you.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Carolina”

On behalf of our students and their families we want to thank all our donors for supporting the education of the less privileged ones in our country Colombia. All your contributions, big or small, are translated into amazing blessings for those we serve through our ministry.

We kindly ask your prayers for:

- Upcoming visit to Colombia of brothers and sisters from the Southeastern Minnesota Synod and South Carolina Synod-ELCA, from November 9-16, 2010.
- Evolving plans for the House of Hospitality & Mission Immersion here in Bogota!
- Increased funding for scholarships!

Feel free to communicate with us! We like to hear from you! Our e-mail addresses are the following: ldlizwan@ielco.org (Colombia) lizwan@alliancecom.net and 4290@flcsf.org (USA). If for any reason you change your email address, we greatly appreciate letting us know so that we can keep you in our e-mailing list. If you know of anyone interested in our ministry, feel free to share this information or find us in the web at www.emmausroadfoundation.org. You can also find us in Facebook under the name of Leadership & Development LIZWAN. Here you can find many pictures which you are free to download and use if needed. We thank Katie for creating this account.

In Christ's love,

Stella Lizarazo

Executive Director Emmaus Road Foundation – Colombia