

Grace Church Ocala sent a 14 member service team to El Hogar de Amor y Esperanza from June 24 – 30, 2012. The team included middle and high schoolers, a college student, working adults and senior citizens. This is what some team members say about their experiences.

There seems to be a theme to what God has shown me during our time in Honduras. And that theme is “hope.” Hope lives at El Hogar through God’s love. Miracles happen every day. These children come from some of the direst living situations and, for the most part, they are normal kids doing what normal kids do – learning, playing, loving. They are truly an example that “through God all things are possible. *Mary Delancey*

The experience for me and my children at El Hogar was life changing. Being able to witness my children making connections with the children at El Hogar brought a smile to my heart and showed me firsthand how God is working in their lives. We learned that even though our time at El Hogar was short it will be something we will carry with us always. The hope we found in the eyes of the children was inspirational and the promise for a future supported by encouragement and education is priceless. *Paige Stephens, Jamie and Preston*

El Hogar and the boys and girls for me, is all about love - giving and receiving. There are weekly waves of service teams who come to demonstrate to these children that they are so valued, so loved. I received so many unexpected kisses on my head, hugs and embraces, and all those smiles. It is incredible to think many have known the pain of being an orphan on the street or in lived in such desperate poverty. El Hogar was there for them, providing a loving community and family, a hope, a way out of such chaos.

Yet my affinity is to the Farm and those boys who choose to be farmers in Honduras. You see, they no longer need those young child affirmations of love. They have learned to walk in dignity. They work in dignity. They dress in dignity. They know they were rescued. They know where they came from. They know their future is in the making, which includes soiled hands, being caretakers of farm animals. You see they are part of restoring a little Garden of Eden here on Earth. They are His family, His community in Honduras. *Karen Kudia*

Our travel and time spent with the children and teachers of El Hogar was wonderful in so many ways, the most tangible being the hugs and laughter shared through the endless games of soccer and jump rope. But the excitement of El Hogar comes from the seed planted in us during our stay. Ten days later we are back in Ocala, back to our home and routine, and yet we are different because of that seed. We are restless knowing that the mission trip has filled us with an incredible responsibility to become a part of what El Hogar is doing for many children of Honduras. We must use our love, treasures, and God’s wisdom and guidance to contribute to the ongoing effort in raising these young people. To do less would void the importance of the mission trip. To return home from a mission trip and slide back into life as we left it would seem to be a Mission Unaccomplished. *Lise Kent*