



# Merry Christmas!

December 2014

Hogares Luteranos el Buen Pastor – Dominican Republic

## **A Wonderful Witness**



Leonarda is the mother of Leonardito who is paralyzed from the waist down with spina bifida. She asked if she could help me pick up people with developmental disabilities for our *Amigos de Jesús* Christmas party. As we drove she talked about her father who had died a few days earlier from cancer.

We first pulled up to Alvaro's house. A few months back Alvaro's family took down their rotting wood house to build a cement block house, but funds ran out half way through. A dirt floor is framed by walls that are almost complete and sheets cover the open square spaces in the wall where windows will eventually go. There is a tin room over the back bedroom and a holey blue tarp shades the living area.

Alvaro's mother, Ligia, met us and we went to help get Alvaro dressed. As we struggled to get him up, Ligia said, "Ay, Daniela. When will this struggle end?" Leonarda immediately spoke up, "Oh, please don't say that. I just lost my father to cancer. I stayed with him day and night taking care of him. Now he is not here and how I miss him. Our children are gifts from God and it is a struggle to care for them, but we should do it with joy. We don't know how long we will have them with us!"

I was amazed at what Leonarda was saying. We have "struggled" with Leonarda over the years, working to help her learn to care for her son, Leonardito, in spite of the impoverished conditions in which they live.

However, Ligia quickly responded, "Oh, I meant the struggle with building our house! It isn't easy! It seems like it will never end."

This is precisely why God became incarnate in the person of Jesus Christ – to be with us in the struggle and in our suffering. The hope that we share with these mothers and their children is that Christ came to conquer sin and death. In this life we will always struggle and may suffer daily, but that will end someday. Faith in Immanuel, God with us, gives these mothers the sure hope that we have a heavenly home that will not rot or crumble. They wait expectantly for the day their children will walk on streets of gold and feast in the heavenly banquet. They find comfort today knowing that one day they will be with Jesus face to face and all suffering will end. This is the Good News of which the Angels sang – the hope we have in the Savior, who is Christ the Lord.



Alvaro



## **A New Cistern!**

Running water is often in short supply in the Dominican. This October we hosted a MOST Ministries team from Redeemer Lutheran Church and Christ Lutheran Church in Peoria, IL. Thanks to these folks, we are now collecting rain water into an underground cistern. We were also able to turn the cistern into a great outdoor patio area.

The team worked their hearts out alongside church members moving rocks and dirt, mixing cement and mud, laying block, landscaping, hanging gutters, and varnishing the eaves of the group home! We are so thankful for their hard labor, for the fun and fellowship shared with the kids, and for being able to spend time with our brothers and sisters in Christ from the United States!



Junior, Moises and Randy were “supervisors” of the project, constantly watching the progress. Junior encouraged workers on with playful reprimands to “get back to work”! Estefani served water and Gatorade to the workers, Ramona helped to serve lunch every day in the home, and Francis provided comic relief with his playful and joking attitude (noted by the photo below). Great teamwork!

*Below are shots of the kids from this December! Check out our page on Facebook to see more pictures!*



*Love in Christ –  
Junior, Moises, Estefani, Ramona, Randy, Francis  
Marisol, Danelle, the Tíos and our Dominican Republic Lutheran Church*

*To continue supporting the work of Hogares Luteranos el Buen Pastor:*

<p><b><u>General donations</u></b> can be sent and checks payable to: <b>Bethesda Lutheran Communities</b> 600 Hoffmann Dr. Watertown, WI 53094-6204 <u>Designate</u> funds on <u>memo line</u> and <i>in writing</i> to: <b>HLBP Dominican Republic</b></p>	<p><b><u>Child Sponsorships</u></b> can be sent and checks made payable to: <b>Special Children, Inc.</b> 15285 Watertown Plank Road, #3 Elm Grove, WI 53122 <u>Designate</u> funds on <u>memo line</u>: <b>Orphan Project</b>, child's name (Info and Pay Pal Donations: <a href="http://www.specialchildreninc.com">www.specialchildreninc.com</a>)</p>
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