

March 2011

Thank God the worst of the weather in the States seems to be behind or easing and the rains in Brazil are starting to decrease. Like here this winter was a killer, with whole villages being washed away. Many that once at least had a humble home; are now homeless. Many, whose homes remained, are still digging out and trying to reclaim some semblance of normalcy. There is no help from the government, their neighbors are either in worse condition or just as bad as they. The only hope or help is mainly from individuals, non-profit organization and churches; groups like ours and others of a like heart and spirit. We are working hard to try and affect as many children as possible and we are making good strides toward that goal. Ana Paula's church is growing and more of the old students are becoming interested and attending her services. The Saturday events are a great success with a growing attendance and most with regular attendance. Sometimes the news is good and sometimes we cry because of the ones we lose. The victories are what keep us going, but the loss is what hurts our hearts. This is one of those stories, bitter sweet, but one where we celebrate "the hope of glory." His name is Douglas, a 10 year old cutie, with a beaming smile; introduced to me by one of the workers from Vida Nova as a very special friend.

(Douglas & Friends)



He mostly lives on the street, his father was murdered and his mother a drug addict; who is gone for days at a time. A neighbor brought him to one of the Saturday events and he has been faithful, present every time and helpful with whatever he can do. **(Douglas & Me)**



I sit and talk to him, he is a little shy, give him another hot dog, which he does wolf down and just chat. You want to take him home and shelter him from the hurt, but that is impossible; so you do what is possible. Make sure he knows someone loves him and cares for him as a person and that he is important to you and to God.

(Having Fun)



Every Sunday a group of volunteers picks up kids from this neighborhood and takes them to church. Because of the limited resources they are only able to take about 15 kids and Douglas was always one of these children. Ready, clean and on time, anxious to hear the good word and fellowship with the others at Sunday school.

(Praying for Douglas)



One Sunday he was not present, no one had seen him and because of his precarious living situation he was not always easy to find. They went to church and after service they looked and asked about him. There is a river near this neighborhood where the locals go to swim, but the river had become dangerous and swollen due to the heavy rains. Douglas unaware of the danger and no one to supervise him had gone in the river and tragically was unable to beat the current and drowned. A sad and unnecessary ending to a young life that had been already filled with pain and much suffering. We mourn his passing, but rejoice that he will go to a better place filled with love and joy. The pastor, Marta, assures us that he had taken the step and declared his life for Jesus, professed his faith and was well aware of what this meant. A short life but one made better by those who cared, did the work and

took Jesus to ones who would have never known or heard of His love for them.

This group is dedicated to making this difference and has been praying for ways to reach and help more of these children and their families. They had been praying for some time for a bus to be able to pick up the children and bring them to church. These families would be more than willing to come, but they don't have the means for even bus fare.

Before we even approached them to partner they had been praying for this bus and planning on ways to reach more of the community. Last year when we meet with them they already had the plan written up with everything in place; so that they would be ready when God answered their prayers. We were able to supply the funds for the expansion of the outreach and the work has grown. Now a bus company has offered them their services and a driver of a bus. They are starting with one bus and if all goes well they will expand with more buses. They are now able to take 80 kids in the bus and have 200 more that are waiting. 200 more souls like Douglas just waiting for someone to make a way for a better life.

Marta, the pastor says to thank everyone and that she knows that God sent us to them and none of this would be possible if not for us. God bless all of you and that she loves us all very much.



Jer. 29:11 (NIV)

"For I know the plans that I have for you," declares the Lord, "Plans to prosper you and not harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future."