

Happy November 2010 Thanksgiving

What a whirlwind trip, jammed packed with events and evangelization, enough for many trips but fit into one very busy one. Some of you may know that my mom, Josephine had to have emergency heart surgery and was not able to make this trip. She was progressing well and then they had to do a valve repair. The second surgery happened while we were in route to Brazil. Upon arrival I figured I could turn around and be back in the States within 24 hours and decided to stay. I felt a little of what most missionaries must feel, caught between the "Call" and family obligation. In the natural I knew she was in good hands and most importantly knew that she was in God's hands. With much encouraging prayer from my travel companion, Libby, telling me she knew that we were right where God wanted us; we stayed. It wasn't always smooth, but it was one of the best and fruitful trips we have ever had.

One of the days was "Dia das crianças", children's day, a day almost as celebrated as Christmas. Between 2 groups we had 4 events scheduled, but due to a logistical problem we were only able to attend 3.

The 1st was with the children of Maanaim. A whole day affair with food, games, prizes and evangelization. The crew put on a play with the theme of "acceptance"; how God is our example of loving and accepting all.

(Bible adventures)



One little girl, Julia, told me how she cries everyday because she wants to come to Maanaim and asked us to have more events.

(Julia)



I told her we are planning new things and she will certainly be one of the first to be invited. This is of course after I was able to compose myself and talk without crying. We were blessed to be able to bless everyone with food for the day and prepared bags of food that they were able to take home. Sometimes I love my job.

The 2 other events were with the church "Novidade de Vida", New Life. They took us into 2 neighborhoods that were new to us and some of the worst areas I have ever experienced. They both are run by the drug dealers and can be dangerous. They instructed us to not wear any jewelry, wear a T-shirt they provided stating we were one of them and to stay close. They said they have been working in these areas for some time and have won the trust of the people. They no longer believe they are part of the police and know they are there for the benefit of the neighborhood.

They illustrated Noah's Arc by holding up just a brown sheet. Saying that everyone was invited and that anyone who decided to go into the Arc would be safe. Outside was danger, but inside God's protection for all who would come inside.

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."





(getting ready for the ARC)

The person telling the story was quite good and captivated the adults and children equally. Of course when the invitation was given all wanted in and all were prayed over and given personal attention.

(Libby & friend)



(Pantanal)

Later we visited some of the homes and were amazed and appalled by their living conditions. Nothing more than shacks, sitting one on top of the other; up to 9 people in 2 rooms. Sewer water flowing down the common walk ways, questionable people everywhere, but we were always invited into their home with gratitude and love. Kids would just hang on us, clamoring for attention. Every house a different story of heart break and struggle.



This group is working to break this desperation, by teaching them there is a different way and there is hope. Beyond these evangelization and feeding events they also offer them informational days; where they teach and give them resources for education, jobs and facilities. The church has a volunteer lawyer, psychologist and child education specialist to assist in any of these areas of their expertise. They are doing a wonderful work and we are very happy to be able to partner with them **(Gloriously & marvelously made)**



Happy Thanksgiving

(Bringing the Good News)



I will have more details on more of our experiences, but wanted to get this out and share some of the good things that are happening. I do have to tell you of 2 things that left a special impression with me. These kids love stickers, big kids, little kids they love them. So they are a premium and we have to guard them. A little boy came up to me and asked me for an extra sticker and said he would give me any candy I wanted in his bag in exchange. You have to understand that these kids have no discipline and any they have has been learned from this church. So I said he could keep his candy but he had to say please. He proudly said he would and that he would also say **thank you** after I gave it to him. Baby steps maybe, but a step in the right direction. The lady that hosted one of the events lives in a nearby house to Pantanal, the drug dealer run neighborhood. She told me she was one of these children and went to an event like this one put on by missionaries when she was young. Now she has the opportunity to pay back the wonderful gift that God sent to her through people like us. Never think that what you do is in vain. Maybe those missionaries never knew the impact they had on that child, but by doing what God intended for that day many lives will be changed. We are very thankful to God for faithful workers and supporters; we appreciate all you do.