

Máncora, Perú Missions Trip 2010

Dear Sponsor:

First and foremost, I need to thank you from the bottom of my heart for making this trip possible for me! If it wasn't for your prayer and support, I would not have had the privilege to go. THANK YOU!!



This was my first missions trip and it will definitely not be my last! I had an amazing time down there serving Jesus. This year we had the incredible opportunity to actually stay with people from Máncora for two nights. Before the trip, I have to admit, I was kind of hesitant about staying with a family I had never met, but it turned out to be a great experience. I roomed with a girl from my team and two other girls were in a house right next to us. We were able to talk with our families and get to know them and share with them about ourselves. They gave so much of

themselves to us. They cooked for us and gave us their absolute best! One day, my roommate was talking with Angélica, the mother at our house, and she was asked what she would normally eat for dinner at her home in Panamá. She told her she often eats sandwiches and orange juice. That night, they fed us exactly that! Angélica even made the orange juice completely by hand! They showered us with kindness from the second we got there and truly listened to us. The three pictures below show the street of the house, the front of the house, and my roommate, my family, and I. Our last night at their house we gave them a picture our youth group had made of Jesus and a *mola*—a Panamanian cloth.





This year was mainly focused on kids. From Monday to Thursday we had a Bible Fun Club at the church *Cristo es la Respuesta*. Our youth group, along with youth from Máncora, led it. The days started with a training from our church's children's pastor. I really enjoyed them because what we learned was very useful not only for that week, but for every time in the future that we will work with kids. We had a short break for lunch and then the kids started coming! We began by just playing with the kids and hanging out with them outside. Then everyone came in and we had worship. You can see in the two top pictures our band playing and teaching the motions to the energetic children. That was my favorite part because I loved dancing and going crazy for Jesus and watching the kids do the same. Almost all of the songs had motions and every child had them memorized by the end of the week.

After that, there was a short puppet show and we split into groups for stations. I was with the 2-5 year olds. They were all so adorable! There were four stations: a message, verse, snack, and game. As a group leader I mainly just got the kids to their next station and brought them back if they wandered off. Our trainings really taught us how to keep the children's attention and how best to act with them. A few of the older girls I met are shown in the picture below.

The last day of the Club, the salvation message was told at the end of the program. The main speaker (one of the youths from our team) told all of the kids that if they wanted to accept Jesus as their Savior, they could do that by praying with one of the youth leaders on their way out. We did it this way so that their desire would be the most genuine. The kids left and it seemed like no one did. Later on, I heard that one girl did talk so someone and pray to accept Jesus! Praise God!





Some of the parents of the young kids I was with stayed during the program. One that I became close with was named Yaneth. She had a son named Orlips that was three years old, a daughter named Lizbeth that was 2 years old, and a three month old baby named D'Estefano. She and her family had just moved to Máncora four



months earlier because her husband could not find a job where they were before. Their house was right next to the church. It was very small and made of bamboo and mud. She said sometimes her children would cry because of their hunger and that was one reason why she brought her kids to the Bible Fun Club—so that they would forget about it. That made me wonder how many of the other children came just so they could have a packet of crackers and a juice box. Máncora is a very poor town and the people's work is irregular because many of them sell things and their business depends on when there are tourists to buy them. Despite all of this uncertainty, Yaneth was extremely trusting in God. Just by talking with her I could tell that she was a Christian and had faith in Jesus that everything would be okay. Her story and friendship really impacted me and other people on the team. She and two of her children are on the picture on the top left and her beautiful daughter is on the top right. I had the privilege to keep her company and see her bright smile as she showed her fascination over the huge, brightly colored ball.



On Friday night we held a Family Fair. We told the children about it during the Bible Fun Club and were even able to announce it on the radio! A few other youth and I cleaned up the *Coliseo* (coliseum) where the concert was held. It was truly disgusting—the bathrooms reeked and every crack in the cement floor was overflowing with broken bottles and their caps. The day before had been Perú's independence day so we figured there had been a lot of parties going on. Even after sweeping for a few hours, it was not perfect, but it was a lot better than how it was when we arrived.

Despite the conditions of the arena, the Fair was a blast! We had face painting, balloon animals, handed out glow-in-the-dark bracelets, and just hung out with the kids and youth we had gotten to know during the week. A few people from our team did a dance and then we showed a video about Jesus' life. Then we started to sing. We had rented a stage with flashing colorful lights and a loud sound system so no one in Máncora could not see and hear our praises. The concert went extremely well. We started with the songs that we had done during the week with the kids. They all did the motions as they sang. Then we sang some deeper songs and had a great time worshipping our Creator in that way. I had so much fun that night! The picture in the bottom left shows us doing the motions to one of the kid songs. If you want to see a video of the concert, search Crossfire Mancora 2010 Promo on Youtube. One of the members of the team is a professional photographer so we got a lot of great pictures and videos of our trip.



Our last night there, we were invited to the pastor's daughter's fifteenth birthday party! So we all got dressed up and went! We were amazed at how decorated the church was for the party. They went all out. It was really fun and interesting to find out about their culture through this party. The bottom right picture shows all of us there with the *Quinceañera* (birthday girl).

Sadly, that was our last night in Máncora. After being at the party for a short time, we had to say our goodbyes and get on the bus for the 9 hour drive to Guayaquil. It was so hard to tear ourselves away from this loving group of people. It amazed me how close you can get to someone in such a short period of time. Though these people are shy and to themselves, they showed their care for us the whole time we were there! They remembered each and every one of us by name and cried when we left. I need to say it again, thank you for making this trip possible for me! I feel so blessed!

Love, *Celina*

