

# BUILT TO LOVE

Stories From Travis & Roberta Sanders  
November 2015



C A S A S P O R C R I S T O

## THE BEST PART

We have really enjoyed returning to mission work with Casas por Cristo. Casas is set to build homes for 250 families this year, and we've been blessed to be a part of several of them. The best part of our jobs is always building homes for families and watching how God uses the experience to change the lives of the team members and the families receiving homes. As a mother, I also cherish the moments where Violet gets to be involved in the work we do. I love that she will grow up thinking it is normal to speak two languages, live in two worlds, and spend our lives working to expand God's Kingdom.

One of my favorite moments occurred this summer during a trip to Acuña, México while building a home for Manuel and his family with the help of Hope Christian Church from Columbia, Illinois. It was 100 degrees outside and Violet and I were roasting while we watched the team work. We were sitting and sweating under a makeshift awning when Manuel's wife, a white haired Mexican grandma named Rosa Maria, offered to cool Violet off by bathing her in a bucket of water. I was so thankful for some relief from the heat for my baby girl. And Violet was much more comfortable after that. The bath also seemed to forge a connection between us and the family. From then on we were comfortable sharing stories and getting to know each other.



Another memorable moment was during a build in Juárez, México this summer with the youth group from my home church, Parkview Christian Church in Mt. Carmel, Illinois. We were building a home for Josefina, the matriarch of a large family. I went inside the little cardboard and pallet shack that her family of thirteen had been calling home prior to our arrival. While I sat nursing Violet on the hard mattress that took up the entire house, I listened to Josefina's story, through sobs, of how her daughter lost a baby in February of this year due to an illness. The baby, Harmonia, was about Violet's age. I had only known Josefina for a few minutes, but Violet's presence made her feel comfortable enough to share her story with me. After receiving her home, Josefina was filled with hope for a better future for her family. I am so thankful to have Violet in our lives to help us minister to these families. We can't wait for her to experience more builds coming up this Christmas Break.

-Roberta

## ¿Hablas español?

Most of you know that I am close to fluent in Spanish and that I taught Spanish for a few years. Travis, on the other hand, has always struggled with the language and speaks just enough to get by. Our lives are so busy that we never seem to be able to make the time to have regular Spanish lessons. So, we would like to send Travis to language school for a few weeks in 2016 so he can immerse himself in the language and culture. This will really help him to be able to minister to the families we serve and better facilitate the construction project for our teams. We are so excited for Travis to get to make this investment into our future as missionaries. Please join us in prayer that he will pick up on the basics of the Spanish language quickly.

-Roberta

## Property Development

If the old saying "Good things come to those who wait" holds true, we are in line for some good things when it comes to our property development project. Though the process has been painstakingly slow, progress is being made on our project here at our El Paso headquarters. I have been continually working with our architects, the city of El Paso, and many volunteers to work through each step of the process. Many days I am attempting to tackle issues that I've never dealt with, and it makes for a lot of research and figuring, but it has also been a very satisfying and exciting project to be a part of. Hopefully by next newsletter I will be able to share with you that we are through the planning stages and actually entering the construction phase.

-Travis



## Around the Office

Fall is usually a pretty slow time at Casas por Cristo, but for my role as a Team Coordinator, things never really slow down. I have been busy registering teams and answering questions for mission trips for next year, which is exciting. Another role I have assumed in the office is creating the weekly email updates that go out to our ministry supporters. I have thoroughly enjoyed getting to share the stories of what God is doing in the lives of our families, missionaries, and pastors through the work of Casas por Cristo. Each email is a special reminder of the purpose God has for each of us to be a part of his plan for bringing his Kingdom to this world. **WE ALL HAVE SOMETHING TO GIVE.**

-Roberta



## YEAR ONE

Violet turned one year old on October 19th. This past year has really flown by. I read somewhere that we have changed over 3,000 diapers and lost over 350 hours of sleep over the past year. While that pretty well sums up how difficult it has been to adjust to our new lives as parents, it fails to encompass all the great things that have come along with it. We have learned and grown so much through our experiences. God has taught us lessons about love, sacrifice, and service. And Violet has brought so much joy to our lives. She is very social, curious, and determined. Some of her favorite activities are waving at everyone, reading books, playing with blocks, and going outside. She is already walking, babbling, and getting in to everything. We are lucky to have had lots of family members come to visit Violet this year, and we look forward to bringing her home for Thanksgiving to spend some time with family.

-Roberta



## Life...why you so hard?

It seems that no matter how hard we try to avoid it, life is crazy. There is a piece of technology for absolutely everything these days - technology designed so that our lives will be easier, quicker, better. Smart phone, smart watch, smart thermostat, smart this and smart that. Even with all this technology to help us, the simple truth is LIFE IS HARD.

It's easy to look at the ol' Facebook or Instagram, and upon seeing everyone else's "perfect" lives, feel frustration that you're having to deal with this or that, all the while your old college acquaintance, Marco, is living it up with his perfect carefree sunsets at the beach again! It is so incredibly easy to feel alone in whatever struggles are plaguing you. It's the exact same for Roberta and myself. However, over the last year God has been reminding us time and time again that we are not alone.

Consider it pure joy,  
my brothers, whenever  
you face trials of  
many kinds, because  
you know that the  
testing of your faith  
develops perseverance.  
Let perseverance finish  
its work so that you  
may be mature and  
complete, not lacking  
anything.

James 1 : 2-4

One night when Violet was around six months old, our evening routine was interrupted when we heard some angry crying coming from her room. Upon further examination we realized that she was sitting on Mr. Taggie, her most prized blanket, and couldn't get him up to smother her face like she

so loves to do. With a simple tug we remedied the situation, and she continued with her evening slumber. I jokingly made the comment, "Poor baby, your life is so hard."

Following that incident I began to reminisce about just how hard life is, reviewing each stage of life, and came to the conclusion that things never get easier. Our problems just morph. They go from, "I can't get Mr. Taggie out from underneath me," to, "My mom won't let me have any more candy," to, "Does he/she like me?" to, "What am I going to do with my life?" and on, and on, and on.

I share this fun little story of Violet's struggle to make my point, but it rings true throughout life. Roberta and I are crazy blessed to have wonderfully close relationships with a lot of people. It seems like the past year has brought extremely heavy issues at every turn with so many of these people we care deeply for - issues of sickness, loss of loved

ones, relationships ending, uncertainty of the future, and personal conflicts. I could go on and on, but there's no need. Life brings headache and heartache no matter who you are.

We were never promised an easy life. By all accounts Jesus preached and demonstrated the opposite. It's hard not to question why it all has to be so hard. James encourages us to consider our trials as pure joy because it produces perseverance. I wish it said, "Consider it pure joy because it's a good time," but it doesn't. What we have found pure joy in, though, is that we are all in this together and that hardships are the way God shapes us to be more like Jesus. I leave you with this challenge: find someone to share your struggles with, encourage others in their struggles, and remember that each person you come in contact with is facing these same struggles, so it's important to love them like Christ.

-Travis

## PRAYER REQUESTS

1. That our house in Mt. Carmel would sell, freeing us from it's financial burden.
2. Travis has been having severe back pain since August.
3. The balance between life and ministry.
4. Our effectiveness in sharing Christ with others.
5. Thanksgiving for the way God has provided for us.

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