

BUILT TO

LOVE

Stories From Travis & Roberta Sanders

May 2016



CASAS *Por* CRISTO

Language School

In life there are always things that come naturally to a person. An excellent example for me is building things with my hands. On the other side of that spectrum are all the things we are not so gifted at. If you were to go just past that and turn left you would find the home of my language learning abilities. Every year, learning Spanish is high on my list of what I need to accomplish in order to be more effective in our ministry. However, the years always seem to slip by before I can learn much Spanish.

I am very excited that this year is finally the year I am diving head first into meeting this goal. At the beginning of June, I will be flying to Guatemala to study at a Spanish language school for two weeks as well as build a family a home. I am very excited about this opportunity and have been trying to put as much practice in before hand as possible to give me a head start.

While I will be getting to study in one of the most beautiful places on the planet, this journey will be anything but easy. I will be spending most of my day in class. Then, in the evenings, I will be fully immersed in the culture by living with a family in a village where virtually no one speaks a word of English. On top of that I will have to be away from Roberta and Violet for three weeks. So please pray for each of us while I am on this incredible adventure.

- Travis

iiiBaby Numero Dos!!!

I am excited to announce that we are pregnant with baby #2, who will make his arrival in November. We are thrilled that Violet will have a little brother to grow up with, though we are a little nervous about the challenge of working full time while caring for two small children. In the meantime, it has been really fun watching Violet grow and explore her world. She is learning to talk and loves to investigate everything outdoors, even if that means rolling around in the sand. My parents took us to the beach in March, and Violet loved everything about it. It brought us all such joy to watch her excitement as she experienced the ocean and the sand for the first time. Please pray for us to grow into the parents we will need to be to raise two children. Also, please pray for my nausea to subside soon.

- Roberta

ON THE ROAD

In April, we were able to take a fundraising trip back to the Midwest. Thanks to our friends at Thursday Church, we were given the opportunity to share about Casas at the Lightbearers Conference, an all ladies conference focused on empowering women in ministry. This year, over 600 ladies came and heard what God is doing within many ministries, including Casas. This incredible group raised over \$12,000 to go towards feeding, clothing, and housing people in Southern Indiana and to build a home next month with me in Guatemala.

We also enjoyed getting to speak to and spend time with Wabash Presbyterian Church in Orio, Illinois. It was wonderful catching up with some folks that we had not seen

in many years. We would like to give everyone there our sincerest thanks, and we hope to see you all in Juárez one of these days.

We spent the last Sunday of our trip sharing with Patoka Christian Church in Patoka, Illinois. We are excited that they are planning to serve with us in Juárez this summer. Plus, it was great to catch up with some of our old friends that attend and serve there.

Though our time was short, and there were many more people we would have loved to see, we were glad to be able to spend some much needed quality time with our extended families. It is always so much fun to see Violet interact with all of her aunts, uncles, and grandparents (both the regulars and the greats), and we look forward to the next time.

SO MANY BUILDS

Our lives here seem to sustain a certain level of chaos. Every Spring Break that level goes up, and this year seemed to be even more chaotic than usual. My Spring Break started in the middle of February when my father-in-law brought the Southern Illinois Preachers back for a second year. We built a new home for Lorenza, her daughter Evelin, and her son-in-law Cesar. Lorenza is the sweetest lady. She has suffered through many health issues through the years, including having to be resuscitated on three separate occasions due to heart attacks. Being a long time believer, Lorenza insists that God brought her back from death in order to experience His provision of a home for her and her family.

Two weeks later, I once again had the privilege of working with our good friends from Boyd Christian Church. This year they partnered with Parkersburg Christian Church to give a home to Natalia and her extended family (mother, daughter, son-in-law, and grandkids). It was an incredibly fun week with the mixed group. It was also an honor to be a part of God's reminder to this faithful family that He will always provide.

Then I built once again with the lovely folks from Fellowship of the Rockies in Colorado Springs. They brought nearly fifty people and built four homes this year. I was lucky enough to be a part of two of these houses that were on the same plot of land. I led one house and trained a new Casas volunteer on a second. This created a hectic week of going back and forth between the two houses, but in the end we provided sisters, Sandra & Mariana, with homes. They are both single mothers and brand new believers, so I can't imagine the picture of Christ that they got to see that week.

The following week, I built with The Bridge of Natchitoches, Louisiana. The team leader, Zeb Marcotte, is an old friend from growing up in Allendale. It was an incredible time of getting reacquainted and getting to know all of the super fun Natchitochians. Though we had to fight incredible winds in the vast open desert, we were able to finish the house for Ricardo & his family. We didn't get to meet his wife, Itzel, because she was in the hospital about to have their third child. Ricardo and his family are not followers of Christ, so please pray with us that this astonishing gift of a new home and child and being introduced to a local community of believers will be a great witness to their lives.

My final build of the Spring Break season was with St. Peter's Episcopal of Milford, Connecticut. St. Peter's has been faithfully serving families in Juárez since 2008, but this was their first time to build with Casas. Even though I had a bit of a rough week with the extremely difficult site, my bad back, and the fatigue of my crazy schedule, it was an amazing week. Though difficult, the site was beautiful, overlooking downtown Juárez and El Paso. Graciela and her family are very involved in their church and community through their work at a food kitchen. It was an honor to build for them with my new friends from Milford. I would like to extend a huge thanks to them for sticking it out with me and for their hearts for the families of Juárez.

- Travis



Real Estate & Finances

Last August the contract on our home in Mount Carmel fell through. As a result, we scrambled to put our home back on the market, and we had to increase our paychecks in order to help offset the cost of covering both our mortgage in Mt. Carmel and our rent in El Paso. Our budget has been really tight since then. We spent the last eight months praying for God to find us a buyer. Well, He finally did, and just in the nick of time, too. We had to lower our paychecks substantially in the beginning of April because we had drained the entire surplus that we had accumulated in our support account. The new buyers moved in already, which means we should still be able to pay all of our bills even with the lower paycheck amount. Yay! We are still currently withdrawing a few hundred more each month from our support account than we are bringing in. With a new baby on the way, I'm sure our budget will need to stretch even further. Please consider helping us cover this deficit by becoming a monthly or a one-time donor so we can continue to serve with Casas por Cristo. Thank you to all of you who support us! Without you, we would not be able to be here. We really appreciate your partnership, which allows us to share the love of Christ by providing quality housing for those in need. To give, please return the enclosed response card or go to www.builttolove.net and follow the link in the "Give" section.

Prayers

Travis' Back - He continues to have a lot of pain with lower back disc issues. Please pray for healing.

Roberta's Pregnancy - Pray for her nausea and for a complication free pregnancy.

Violet - That she will refrain from hurting herself as she becomes more daring and that she will transition well into being a big sister.

Life - Balance between ministry and life as our family grows.

Finances - Thanksgiving that God has continued to provide for us and the ability to stick to our budget, which has become very tight.