



MIV

Marianist International Volunteers

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Marianist Family
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Dear friends of the MIV

Here's the last edition of the MIV Newsletter for the year 2008, in which we share several stories not only written by our volunteers, but also by the people in charge of them, who tell us about the impact that these volunteers provoke in different missionary placements in the world that the MIV connects and networks.

The stories are the following:

- Maria, MIV volunteer from Spain, in Kenya for the 5th time for the Holidays.
- Liz, MIV volunteer from the US, in mission in Kenya for a second year.
- Luciana, prospective MIV volunteer from Argentina, who will either volunteer in Peru or Brazil.
- Susana Córdova, permanent Marianist volunteer in Otuzco, Peru.
- Martin Solma SM, responsible of the MIV volunteers in Kenya.

Besides, we would like to highlight that in the city of General Roca, in the Argentine Patagonia, the Marianists are in real need of a woman who can volunteer there to accompany and support a group of young women from the countryside who live in a Home during the year to study and work in a more urban context. We ask you to read this request very carefully and to spread the word, perhaps you may know of a young woman interested in assuming this responsibility. You will find here a brief summary of the profile of the female volunteer profile that the Marianists are in need for 2009, written by Fr. Javier de Aguirre SM.

We truly appreciate all the support that you have always given to the MIV initiative, and we remind you of our habitual request to help us spread the information provided in this Newsletter, whether in printed form or via e-mail. Many of our volunteers have learnt about the MIV thanks to this publication.

May the Baby Jesus be reborn in our hearts, of our loved ones, and of those we serve with our time, talents and dedication during this Holiday Season, since only He can give us the Peace and Hope that our lives need.

And may the new year 2009 find us more involved in activities and attitudes in solidarity with the less privileged in this world.

José Luis Pérez
MIV Coordinator

Anthony Garascia
 President, International
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 MIV at the World
 Council of the Marianist
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Evaluation of the MIV.



As a member of the World Council of the Marianist Family it is my good fortune to work with José Luis Pérez, who is the coordinator of the Marianist International Volunteers. Perico has been a tireless promoter of Marianist volunteers all across the world as he seeks to provide an information network for young adults who wish to volunteer as part of their vocation.

Recently, the World Council met in Rome in the month of November. The following is a quote from the report of our meeting and speaks to the important ministry that he is coordinating:

(...)

José Luis Pérez, coordinator of the Marianist International Volunteers, whom we congratulate once more for his contribution and dedication, sent his annual report to WCMF. At this time, he is developing a series of documents that will permit a better definition and spreading of the special character and the mission of this entity, as well as the characteristics that each Marianist volunteer should have and the work that has to be done.

(...)

We look forward to the development of the characteristics of what it means to be a Marianist volunteer.

Luciana Coviaga
 Prospective MIV
 Volunteer from
 Argentina

Open your eyes.

On September 28th, 1988 I turned 9, and my parents, with a great effort on their part, gave me a pair of simple white sneakers as a gift. As I saw them, I furiously ran to my room, because they were not like the trendy sneakers that my friends would wear, which made a particular noise as they walked with them. A little while after I started sobbing, my grandpa Luciano showed up in my room. He sat by my bed and he reassured me as he held my hand and said: «daughter, give thanks to God that you can have a pair of sneakers, sometimes in life we need to look behind to see that there are other children like you who walk around barefooted, because their parents just don't have the means to buy them a pair of sneakers.» Soon afterwards, I told him that on weekends, when I went with Father Sabino to give bread and milk to the people in the slums, I saw some children who would run barefooted to our truck to get the stuff we gave them. Then my grandpa opened his hand and gave me a gift, it was an image of the Virgin Girl.

That day left a mark on me for the rest of my life: going to the slums on weekends with Father Sabino became a lot more meaningful, as well as the many missions organized by my school where I went for many years in different areas in the Province of Neuquén (Argentina). Then when I chose my grandpa as my confirmation sponsor, I wanted to show him a token of appreciation for the lesson he once taught me, as he walked beside me along my faith journey.

As a result of these meaningful life experiences, today I'm committed to my local community, and I'd like to join the MIV next year to keep growing and strengthening my spirit as I give myself to others.



Susana Córdova
Permanent Marianist
Volunteer in Peru

Marianist Volunteerism in Otuzco.

Our mission as Marianist volunteers is rooted on a Formation Center called «Mary Mother of the Good Advice». It was originally created to support the Catholic Marianist Mission carried out in La Libertad, and little by little it has been consolidated into a formation house for rural ministry agents, both for the children and for the youth. The Center offers catechist, pastoral and human formation, and it supports works of social projects.

What the formation house offers is an «option for the poor and forgotten of our country». These are people in search of God, who rejoice and become highly enthusiastic when they interact with the volunteers, generous young people who give up their lives for them.

The Center is also characterized by its family spirit, since ours is mixed community: lay and religious live in the same house, and we all have the same goal: to be and to act as a missionary community, through our own lives, rather than through our words.

This year we had the blessing to have Fr. Manolo Madueño SM with us, and we truly appreciate his openness, availability and willingness to cooperate with us in our mission.

For 2009 our community will grow in number, and our work will be focused on the formation of missionary communities inside the villages we visit, so they can later become a missionary community themselves, and they can spread the Word of God.

In 2009, our community will be made up of: José Luis Infante Llanos, his wife Isela, and their kids José Mariano (5) and Sebastian (1), together with Susana Cordova, Teresa Ibáñez and John Castillo, all of us Peruvians. And we will also have Miguel with us, an MIV volunteer from Spain. We are all lay people working for the Lord, and our community is also animated by Brother Douglas Ropper SM.



Only our God
who does not need to show his greatness



can become a child **to live with us**

i Merry Christmas and Happy New Year !



María Pilar Liz
MIV Volunteer from
Spain in Kenya

**And you,
what are
you waiting
for to
volunteer in
Kenya?**

Immensely joyful, with the bags packed to go to Kenya for the 5th time on this Christmas Season. This is how I feel today: fulfilled, determined, joyful.

Volunteering is not an easy thing; it requires much dedication and illusion. But the necessary energy to carry out this mission appears once you arrive there.

The projects of the Marianists, not only in Kenya (Nairobi and Mombassa) but also in Zambia and Malawi are very vast. And what counts is not only the activities you can do there, but rather your presence there, with these people, who need you so badly! They need your hands not only to work, but most of all, to caress them!



There are many things that can be done in these projects. Many hands are needed, everybody's hands, and the more, the better!

The first time I went to Kenya was in 2006. I didn't know what I was going to do, but I was sure I wanted to go there. Once I got there, I opened up to any need that cropped up at the moment. And since I work as an English teacher here in Valence and I'm a woman, every time I go to Nairobi I teach at the school in the slums, and I share my experience as a woman with the girls and women both at school and at Mary's House.



And you, why don't you dare go to Kenya too? You'll love it! And what can you do there? A little bit of everything. Of anything you like. Your hands are very useful, both to work and to love. And like Saint Camille said: «you have to put love in your hands». A caress can also make a difference in somebody's life!



Liz Ramey
MIV Volunteer from the
US in Kenya

**Two years in
Kenya!**

Greetings from Kenya again!

My plans have changed (as plans tend to do), and I will be serving as a volunteer in Nairobi rather than Mombassa for the next two years. I am continuing to assist at Our Lady of Nazareth Primary School, a wonderful oasis for students in the Mukuru slum of Nairobi.

In addition, I will be volunteering with a new Marianist project in the slum, a family center that will provide educational and social services to the parents of OLN students and other families in the community.

I look forward to all the lessons, challenges, and moments of inspiration that lie ahead!

P. **Martin Solma SM**
Director of the Our
Lady of Nazareth
(OLN) School

Volunteers making an impact



Over the course of the last several years, Our Lady of Nazareth Primary School (OLN) in Nairobi has received a number of volunteers. Some come for a month or two; some come for a year or more. In all cases, the school and its students have benefited greatly by the presence of these young men and women.

Some of the volunteers come after they have completed their university education and before they begin a formal employment of some type. These are generous young men and women who want to give of themselves and want to make a difference. To a person, they all find that their presence in Kenya and their contact with the students at the school effect them in ways they could not have anticipated. But, they also leave a mark and have contributed in some significant ways to the growth and development of the school.

Matt Eggemeier and Scott Wagner, students at the University of Dayton, spent two months at OLN in 2000. Beginning with two old computers, they began a computer education program that has developed into a state-of-the-art Computer Lab that is the envy of everyone. What a gift! Even if the children at OLN come from the slums and are poor, they need to be computer literate.

Keith Pfaller, also a student at the University of Dayton, spent two years in Kenya, helping at both OLN and other Marianist ministries in Eastern Africa. He continued development of the computer program and was very helpful in working one-on-one with the students. When volunteers are open and receptive to our young students, they respond with warmth and friendship.

Ray and Julie Harter spent five weeks with us in 2006. Ray is the Director of the Marianist Service Leadership Program at Chaminade Prep in St. Louis, USA. This young and dynamic couple brought excitement and great creativity to the school compound. Now, they have organized an immersion program for 20 students and parents from Chaminade who will come to OLN in June of 2009. What a gift!

Then we have Maria del Pilar Lis-Vinuales, an English teacher at the Marianist school in Valencia, Spain. Maria originally came in 2006 and has been back four times since. She has developed a very good girls' basketball team. But, more than that, she has really connected with the older girls in the school, sharing with them her own experiences and helping them to deal with some of the issues they face as young women in Kenya today. Maria has decided to take a leave of absence from her position at the Marianist school in Valencia and to spend a full year in Kenya, beginning in July 2009. Besides helping at the school, we hope that she will also be able to assist in the new Marianist Family Centre which will serve the needs of the parents of the OLN students.

Liz Ramey, a graduate of George Washington University in Washington, DC, first came to Kenya in June of 2007 and spent two months, working on a research project and assisting at OLN. She has now returned for two years. Her background study is in management and economics and she has proven to be a wonderful asset in the administration of the school and, hopefully, in the new Family Centre. In August 2009, she and Maria del Pilar organized a «mini-Olympics» which was a great hit with the students.

All of these young people have brought their own gifts and talents to OLN and to our children. These children are not the privileged of this world and could, in fact, be considered among the «least». But, as Jesus said: «When you did it to the least, you did it to Me.» That's the real meaning of what these volunteers have been for us: serving the needs of the Lord in the most needy parts of the Body of Christ.



Marianist Volunteer Program in Argentina.

Place

General Roca, Province of Rio Negro (in the Patagonia, at about 650 miles south of Buenos Aires).

Term of service

From March to December every year.

Ministry

- Support to the girls who come from the country and live near the parish during the year to do their studies.
- Visits to the families who live in the farms (which are very distant from the city of Roca).
- Responsibilities in ministry and catechism in the local parish (animated by a community of Marianist brothers).

Requirements

- Minimum age: 21.
- Previous missionary experiences.
- Recommendations, especially from Marianists.
- Excellent proficiency in Spanish and deep knowledge of the reality in Latin America.
- The most important one: availability and flexibility to get involved in any activity that the parish, the local community and/or the Marianists may need.
- Emotional maturity and independence (there are few Marianists and they are in charge of many activities and responsibilities).
- Disposition to live with the girls in their home.

What is offered

- Individual room and all meals.
- Support from the Marianists and the local community.

Important

- The volunteer and/ or the community that commissions him/her needs to pay for his/ her traveling expenses and medical insurance.



The MIV offers the possibility to volunteer for six months to a year or two in pastoral ministry and/ or development projects animated by the Marianist Family in different parts of the world, such as the ones presented in this newsletter. For further information, contact the MIV Coordinator, Mr. José Luis Pérez at joseluisperez@sinectis.com.ar