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the ETHAN SHIELDS family

February 2024

Third generation missionaries assisting the indigenous church planting effort in Panama

AMAZING NEWS! The Matching Funds goal we announced in our last newsletter has been met! This means we have several construction projects like the hangar, bridge, and runway modifications already funded that we want to start. **Please pray for all of the plans and permits to come in as quickly as possible so we can begin building.** The rains have stopped and the ground is dry enough to work now, but rainy season begins again around May. Multiple professionals (lawyer, topographer, architects, & engineers) have been working on these projects for months, but we're still facing a ton of government red tape.

The nation-wide protesting against mining *finally* ended after full six weeks. It greatly affected our people since protestors blocked the roads allowing no one to leave town except on foot. People that were laid off just got back to work mid-December, but protestors are threatening to close roads again.

But God brings good out of bad situations. **Three women who faithfully walked to our services during the protests accepted Christ- a grandmother, mother, and daughter.** I also began a mid-week Bible study with the small group we met with during the protests. The class helps these believers get to know their Bibles better and become more grounded in the faith. Then after I preached our special Christmas Eve service, **our local coconut vendor told me he wanted to be saved and I had the privilege leading him to Christ.** Three of these new believers are now part of my Wednesday Bible class.

Our main church in San Félix started the year with **a 12 year old girl professing faith in Christ.** Then last week, a group from Costa Rica came to do VBS in two churches. We went into the comarca to Molejón each morning and then were back in San Félix each afternoon. Between the two locations, at least **three children got saved.**



Our team just finished a three day teacher training workshop in San Félix. Representatives from ten churches received materials and instruction for teaching Sunday School and VBS. Beth helped with teaching and translating.



Ministry prayer requests:

- ***FEB 9-11:** Evangelistic conference in San Félix.
- ***FEB 14:** Annual Valentine's Day banquet in San Félix. Last year a couple attended for the first time. Since then, both of them have gotten saved and Beth & I are actively discipling them.
- ***FEB 15-18:** Annual family conference in Molejón. This is typically a huge event where our team is able to train a large amount of people from multiple churches all over the comarca.
- ***FEB 19-27:** We are hosting a missions trip from Michigan. They are coming to help build a vehicle crossing over a stream to connect the aviation ministry property to the main road.

Family prayer requests:

- *Julia, our 7 year old, has enough hearing loss that doctors have recommended hearing aids. This results in a slight speech impediment in both English and Spanish and problems reading.
- *Our town's water service has been turned off a lot more lately and we're in the middle of a super hot summer.
- *For two weeks, music has been blaring almost non-stop due to a festival honoring our town's patron Catholic saint and also Carnival.
- *My back has been in constant pain again for two weeks. I've trying to avoid surgery, but I don't know how much longer I can.