

Volunteers Happy to Give

What always amazes me about volunteers that come and work with Shoulder to Shoulder is the ease with which they exude a spirit of fulfillment and happiness. I now know the key to happiness. Leave whatever makes you comfortable in your life and place yourself in a foreign environment. It seems it might be better if you don't speak the language. Fill your days with the frustration of not being able to communicate even the simplest of ideas and wonder why the people around you all act differently from what you have come to expect. Lastly, do all of this without any expectation of remuneration of any kind. If you do this, you will be amazed at the breadth and depth of your contagious smile.



Rethabile Moleka, who goes by the name **Thabi**, was already in Honduras, volunteering in La Ceiba, when she contacted Shoulder to Shoulder. Her commitment to volunteering there was coming to an end, but Thabi had already fallen in love with Honduras and wanted to extend her time. Having background and experience in the construction sector, Thabi made a choice to leave behind a flourishing career in South Africa and set out for the world, making Central America one of her stops. Visiting Guatemala, Belize, and Honduras,

Honduras captured her heart. She has committed herself to a full year working among the children at our bilingual school. We could not be more pleased with what she has accomplished so far.

This is not surprising as Thabi is living her personal philosophy, what she refers to as her 'giving back' ethos. Laura and I have personally benefitted from Thabi's life philosophy. Over the weekend that began Holy Week, we invited Thabi to spend some time in our home. As everyone would be off during these days, we thought Thabi might enjoy a rest and a change of scenery. We were away for the weekend, but when we returned home we were overjoyed that Thabi had decided to 'give back' by thoroughly cleaning our house. Thanks Thabi, for us that will last for a good six months. Seriously, Thabi considers herself privileged to have lived in a first-world country. Her wealth in credible knowledge and experience is something she generously shares in her volunteer work at the School.

Thabi has taken on the responsibility of the KALite instructor, the librarian, and a teacher assistant. She also works with some of our sponsored children and assists in the development of a sister class relationship with a fifth grade class from St. Mary's School in Lee, MA. Her personal goals for volunteering are to prepare digi-literate kids with a good grasp of English, to better her Spanish and to master Spanish cuisine!



Susan Xanthos came to Honduras to volunteer as a translator on a brigade sponsored by Brown University and Wingate University in Guachipilincito in February of this year. She had opportunity to see the bilingual school and heard much about it. She became very excited about what Shoulder to Shoulder is doing with the school and made plans to join us as a volunteer. She is only able to offer us two months right now, but who knows, she may be bitten by a good bug (unlike some of the bad

bugs we encounter here), and look for the means to come back again. In any case, we are grateful that she is offering us her valuable experience in teaching ESL, her generous heart, her integrity of faith, and her joy.

Susan tells us that the Lord put a love in her heart for Latinos and their various cultural backgrounds when she was 12 years old. She studied Spanish in high school. She taught English as a Second Language for a number of years in the local community college to both high school students and adults. She also taught Spanish at a pilot program to elementary children from Kindergarten through 6th grade. It was a great program until the money dried up. In the next season of her life, she found herself blessed with an adventurous spirit and she testifies that the Lord lead her to the uttermost parts of the earth – Papua New Guinea, Tibet, Greece, Mexico, and Central America, teaching ESL, interpreting for medical missions, and sharing her faith. “Since childhood, I have enjoyed traveling and learning about other people’s groups and cultures.”

Shoulder to Shoulder feels very fortunate for Susan’s presence over the next few months. Her arrival coincided with the loss of our 2nd grade teacher. In as much as it wasn’t what she was expecting, Susan graciously accepted to teach the second grade class. She explains that the position has offered her both many challenges and great rewards. “The school offers an amazing opportunity for the children living in poverty here on the Frontier.” Her goal has been to make a difference in the world she touches. At the school, living and working within the community, she sees opportunity to meet that goal.

**Thabi and Susan, our Good Shepherd Bilingual School, the students and staff,
the town of Camasca, are so very fortunate and pleased that you have
committed your hearts to service. Thank You!!!**