



Transforming the lives of the poor through education.

THE JOURNEY

A publication for the community of Friends of Chimbote supporters.

Volume 4 | Issue 2

Winter 2023



**COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT
&
TRANSFORMATION**
Transformation
(pages 10-11)



FoC Executive Director

Mike Smith



“Are we making a difference?” This question loomed large in my mind as Katie and I headed to Chimbote for the fourth time, the first time in my new role as Executive Director with Friends of Chimbote. As we left Minneapolis for a two week trip as part of a 40 person group, we were a bit anxious about how we would approach the giant responsibility of empowering and transforming the lives of those living in extreme poverty in Peru.

Armed with prayer and the very best expectations for a successful trip all anxiety melted away as we were greeted by the warmth and passion to do good from the people on the ground in Chimbote. What we found was a professional team of Peruvians filled with faith and enthusiasm for service! Indeed, the spirit of the people on the ground doing the great work the readers of this newsletter make possible is inspiring and infectious.



It is difficult to adequately describe all that we saw, but the impact of the work was felt when we had the opportunity to speak with Bishop Angel Ernesto, Bishop of Chimbote. Speaking with him in his living room, his eyes welled up with tears as he expressed gratitude for the work currently being done and for the commitment Friends of Chimbote has shown to the people of Chimbote for years. His words of thanks were echoed when a few days later on the side of a dusty hillside his blessing of the new water system along with FoC members and community locals was made a reality.

Water is the source of life and with it now flowing in the desert community lives have been changed. There is no doubt about the need for more prayers, work and service, but the question that echoed in my mind, “Are we making a difference?” was silenced when water flowed and the community members of Cambio Puente received this most basic of resources and celebrated with music and prayer!

Now back in WI and a few hot showers into the return, we cannot help but think of our Peruvian friends that we got to know in our time there. The small children, the mothers who desperately want a better life for their children, the workers on the ground day in and day out working tirelessly to make a difference, and Bishop Ernesto Angel who expressed deep gratitude for our collective effort in transforming and empowering lives!

Blessings, *Mike & Katie*



FoC Welcomes New Board Members



Connie Altringer

Connie is recently retired from her decades of work and management with Great Plains Software/Microsoft in Fargo, ND. Her love for the Mission and work in Chimbote have been evident since her Mission Trip with her son Brayden and the Shanley High School group in 2018. She looks forward to working with the network of volunteers and donors who have kept this program so successful while attracting new participants from across the region.

Connie has two grown children, living in the Minneapolis area. Connie and her husband Glen are looking forward to more time in Arizona in retirement.

Connie recently took on the responsibility to oversee the container program that is based out of Shakopee, MN., please read her comments on page 6 of this newsletter.

“Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms”. 1 Peter 4:10

Brenda Krueger

Brenda Krueger's younger years in Fargo instilled in her a deep awareness of the adversities faced by the community in Chimbote, a cause close to her family's heart since its inception. Her dedication to the mission was further cemented through her first journey to Chimbote in 1999, accompanied by her husband, a trip that marked the beginning of many meaningful visits with her family over the years.

After a rewarding career spanning 27 years in education—first enriching young minds in Moorhead, MN, and later at Nativity Elementary in Fargo, ND—Brenda has since channeled her nurturing spirit into property management, overseeing four fully furnished residences in Fargo. She brings her passion for service, community and education to her role on the Board of Directors. With her wealth of experience and enduring dedication, Brenda is poised to assist the organization's mission moving forward, fostering its growth and outreach for years to come.



Friends of Chimbote Board of Directors



Eric Krueger, Fargo, ND
Board Chairman

Brian Berg, Fargo, ND
Vice Chairman

Michelle Jirik, Jordan, MN
Treasurer

Dan Mahli, Fargo, ND
Secretary

Fr. Phil Ackerman, West Fargo, ND
Tammy Campbell, Fargo, ND
Margaret Crary, Chicago IL
Lucho Espejo, Fargo, ND
Fr. Thomas Graner, Anamoose, ND
Kelli Kester, Minneapolis, MN
Brenda Krueger, Fargo, ND
Dan Kunkleman, Charlotte, NC
Dan Kuzlik, Minneapolis, MN
Joe Mikrut, Clifton, VA
Mathias (Matt) Samuel, Edina, MN
Hubert Seiler, Rugby, ND
Bill Seiler, Fairfax, VA

The Friends of Chimbote Board is deeply committed to the mission of transforming lives of the poor including an annual meeting in Chimbote engaging in our mission work. The broad and diverse nature of challenges facing our mission is met head on by the amazing skills, knowledge, advocacy, and passions of our Board Members.

Friends of Chimbote Staff

Mike Smith
Executive Director
mikes@friendsofchimbote.org

Todd Mickelson
Development Director
toddm@friendsofchimbote.org

Julie Dolbec
Mission Visit Director
julied@friendsofchimbote.org

Cari Rauch
Accountant
carir@friendsofchimbote.org



Asociacion Civil Apoyo Familiar
(Civil Association Supporting Families)

The Peruvian faith-based, civil association was created in 2005 to administer Mission programs. Over 80 Peruvian employees of ACAF utilize the donor funding secured and managed by Friends of Chimbote to combat the daily affects of poverty while empowering the poor through education and transformation opportunities. Meeting the diverse needs of the poor are a dedicated staff of social workers, psychologists, teachers, attorneys, lenders, construction workers, carpenters, trainers, guards and maintenance personnel.

ACAF leaders are in the community each day to assess needs, manage employees and visitors working in the programs and collaborate with community leaders. The ACAF Board is a qualified group of community leaders and a Friends of Chimbote liaison. Friends of Chimbote and ACAF staff and leaders interact dynamically each week to effectively deliver Mission programs.



ACAF Exective Director

Jorge Villar



This year has been a journey filled with dreams and challenges for our organization and the communities we serve. We have faced heart-wrenching weather issues and political instability that has left its mark on our country. However, despite these obstacles, we have found strength in solidarity, generosity and gratitude every time our staff members went to bring hope and support through our different services, projects and campaigns. !We felt blessed!

Our focus has been on assisting the families that need it most, especially in the Cambio Puente community. I am so grateful and happy that the dream for this community to have access to water is now a reality. We have provided water to hundreds of households, thanks to the commitment and hard work of the community and our generous donors. This year we are continuing to build homes, supply food and generate access to education to those facing the harsh realities of poverty every day.

We are proud of our work as the transformation in Cambio Puente has taken root, driven by the passion of its residents to propel their community forward. Collaboration and joint efforts have been our greatest motivation. Together, we have achieved remarkable things, making a tangible difference in our beneficiaries lives.

I want to express deep gratitude to the visiting groups that have played a crucial role in our journey. International solidarity has been evident in the numerous visits from brothers and sisters of various groups from the United States. These visitors have not only brought tangible assistance but have also become

valuable allies, sharing our vision and committing to continue helping.

In particular, I wish to highlight the visit of our benefactors and members of the FOC (Friends of Chimbote) board this past October. Their presence and ongoing support have been instrumental in our progress. They have witnessed firsthand the realities we face and have significantly contributed to our efforts.

As we reflect on this challenging year, we rely on Jesus Christ, our faith and prayers that has sustained our work and will guide us in the coming year, reminding us that, despite the challenges, that His love and grace can overcome any adversity.

Thanks for your kindness and generosity! Thanks to everyone who has been part of our journey and trust that the next year will bring more opportunities to grow, learn, and continue making a positive difference in the lives of those who need it most.

With deep gratitude,

Jorge Villar

Michelle Jirik

FoC Board Member



As our 2023 Fall FOC Board trip was ending, I was experiencing, once again, many emotions leaving our dear friends in Chimbote. This year was especially emotional as our board made a commitment to have this trip as a celebration with friends and family. 40 passionate people descended onto Chimbote for a week of learning, service, and fun. Our board members brought partners, children, and friends to share in this special trip.



I was blessed, for the first time, to share Chimbote with my sister Pam Powers and children David Jirik and Kimberly Gehling. I also was blessed to share this week with my father, Patrick Klein who was making his 15th and final visit to his friends in Chimbote. It was important to share this trip with him, along with all of us, to experience the amazing growth ACAF has worked hard on over the last several years. It was special to show what his leadership over the years, as Chairman of the FOC board, has accomplished. I truly believe the Holy Spirit made this trip possible for Dad. As an 80-year-old who is suffering with Parkinsons, to make this lengthy trip, is only possible with guidance from a higher being. It was amazing to witness his inner strength which allowed him to travel, participate, and share his wisdom with us. A true gift to witness.

As the week started, we settled into mission activities with building two homes, fish and loaves distributions, baptisms, visits to recipients, and seeing the Cambio Puente water project in action. Each activity was a gift of transformation for families who received homes, food, and water but I also believe transformational for all of us. I watched as my sister and dad, my children, and myself experienced this gift. To be reminded of what is truly important in our lives - family. What a gift as we move into the holiday season, to be reminded that you can accomplish anything when surrounded by your family.

I also witnessed this week a rejuvenated FOC Board in our commitment to Chimbote, ACAF and the poor. Our Board members are committed to service in our projects and community development. These passionate board members were given the opportunity to see what dedication and hard work can accomplish with our support. This knowledge only strengthens our passion to help the people of Chimbote and Cambio Puente. This week also reminded me of the gift our current board was given from past FOC boards. Their knowledge and directions have allowed the creation and implementation of many programs that are transforming lives. Without the passion of past boards, we would not be seeing the growth of community development in Cambio Puente. Their legacy is a true gift to us and the people of Peru.

I started my letter sharing how I was experiencing many emotions with the completion of our trip. Dr. Seuss stated "Don't cry because it is over. Smile because it happened." Wise words. I can only smile in remembrance of seeing our home build family's smiles of joy when opening their door, knowing their family is in a secure place. I can only smile when witnessing the first drops of water pour out of a faucet and see families know that they no longer need to carry gallons of water up the mountain. I can only smile as I listened to stories of children's health improving with our anemia bread projects. But mostly I can only smile as I watch my father and mother's dedication to serving the poor of Chimbote, live through another generation in our family.

I challenge anyone who is reading this to experience a trip to Chimbote and a chance to smile in a transformational experience of service.





FoC Container Arrives

Connie Altringer - FoC Board Member



Did you know there are over 50 bible verses that reference 'to whom much is given, much is expected'? Luke 12:48 has always spoken to me - From everyone to whom much has been given, much will be required; and from the one to whom much has been entrusted, even more will be demanded.

I have been blessed to retire early from a great career at Great Plains Software/ Microsoft and find my adult children moving on with their lives. With both my parents recently passing, I was at a bit of a pause in my life. What was God calling me to do since I had been given so much and how could I make an impact in others' lives? It only took one meeting with Todd Mickelson to help me hit the play button toward an enormously fulfilling volunteer opportunity.

As Todd and I talked that day, I was fondly reminded of a mission trip to Chimbote, Peru in 2018 that my son and I took with a group from Shanley High School. Our family also chose Friends of Chimbote (FoC) as one of our charitable organizations over the years. Todd and I talked about my organizational skillset and how that could fit into FoC's needs. We talked about my family's passions in supporting FoC including areas of technology and community building. And viola – I found my niche!

In June, I was approved on the FoC Board. My daughter and I recently returned from the FoC Board visit and mission trip to Chimbote. We had the opportunity to

help build a home, distribute fish and loaves, and revitalize a church garden. Our family also sponsored a park beautification effort. Our entire group planted 100 trees, built benches, and added playground equipment. The next day we went back to the area for a baptism celebration and I immediately was brought to tears as the park was full of community members enjoying the updated surroundings. My desire to volunteer with FoC and help the poorest of the poor was greatly reaffirmed!

I am currently transitioning to manage the Container Program. This vital program is an annual shipment of a 470" long x 93" wide x 105" high shipping container filled to capacity with electric wheelchairs, manual wheelchairs, crutches, canes, clothing, blankets, diapers, backpacks, school supplies and other necessary needs for the people of Chimbote and surrounding barrios. Donations are collected throughout the entire year in the Shakopee, MN area. I have set an aggressive but achievable goal to send a second container from the Fargo, ND area in 2025. Each year, we work with our sister organization in Peru (ACAF) to create a prioritized list of the needs. In addition to the above mentioned items, we would like to send more computers, a large emergency tent, a generator, office chairs, a skidsteer, an air compressor and various tools.

Let me leave you with one thought... picture a family living in a one room hut in a desert with dirt floors, no electricity, and no running water. El Nino unleashes torrential rains (as it did March 2023), their home is flooded, and their belongings ruined. Where do you turn to start over? One of the donation opportunities we send on the Container is called a 'Home in a Box.' It is a plastic tote containing tarp, rope, duct tape, plastic dishes, silverware, towels & other necessities to build a shelter and prepare meals.

If you are interested in donating a Home in a Box, tarps, blankets, quilts, or other vital items, please reach out to me at connie.altringer@outlook.com.

I am very interested in engaging with church or civic groups who would like to add this international component to their philanthropic mission. I am also looking for coordination assistance in Shakopee and Fargo. Thank you for considering your blessings and sharing them with the people of Chimbote!

2023 Container just arrived in Chimbote October 31st



St Michael 2023 Mission Trip

Over Two Decades of Support



Members of St. Michael's Church in Prior Lake, MN have been traveling to Peru for over 25 years and dozens of trips, but their trip in June of 2023 was unique from all others. Led by Father Tom Walker and a diverse group of first time, recent and long-time visitors, this was their first trip in over 4 years due to the pandemic.

However, the trip hiatus during the pandemic did not slow their beating, mission hearts. Instead of cutting back on their giving during the financial and medical uncertainty and reduced in-pew presence, they increased their support significantly!

Their message and fundraising campaigns, with support from Friends of Chimbote and ACAF, shifted to the increasing needs of the very poor who were suffering greatly; quarantined to their homes, unable to work and not receiving any government assistance. Over the next 3 ½ years, the parishioners donated \$629,000 for ACAF staff, humanitarian aid, medical supplies, oxygen tanks, soup kitchens, housing, food and water.

Their response was not one of sending money off to a faraway, natural disaster. While the recipients were 4,000 miles away, this was family. The people of Chimbote and Cambio Puente were brothers and sisters whose lives have been intertwined for over 25 years. This trip was not only going to be to build homes, deliver fish and loaves, provide and assemble furniture and worship together, the St. Michael's visitors were going to witness the many projects and meet the people who were lifted up during the pandemic when there was nowhere else to turn.

The magnitude and meaning of the impact of St. Michael's was the impetus for Angel Ernesto Zapata Bances, Bishop of the Diocese of Chimbote, to invite the St. Michael's visitors and Father Tom Walker to a special Mass of Ceremony and Recognition with Bishop. He shared his feelings in a letter to Father Tom and St. Michael's:

"With my highest regards,

Dear brothers and sisters, may this letter offer my sincere greetings to you, on behalf of the Diocese of Chimbote, Peru.

"... Thank you"; I begin with the most beautiful words, with the words that best express my sentiments, because you have shown us that we have never been truly alone, whether through your prayers or acts of solidarity. These acts have been of great help and we have felt the beating of our generous hearts with each act of support that you have provided to the hundreds of families living in poverty in our city. ..."



What happened on that trip was what we pray for, the family of Christ grew even larger. Love, gratitude, hope and joy filled each day. New members of the family got to know each other – Bishop Bances, Father Erasmo, community leaders, beneficiaries and the ACAF team welcomed their St. Michael's brothers and sisters with open arms and hearts. All involved look forward to a family reunion next summer.



Joe Mikrut

FoC Board Member



My wife, Chris, and I were introduced to the Friends of Chimbote and the meaningful work they do for the underserved in Peru by Bill and Pat Seiler of St. Mary of Sorrows Parish here in Fairfax, Virginia. For several years, we were content to be “Friends” by listening to the Seilers’ stories, making financial contributions, advocating within our parish, and hosting the visiting Chimbote choir group and gatherings for other Virginia Friends.

A few years ago, I was honored to be asked to deepen our commitment to the mission by becoming an FOC board member. However, because of COVID travel restrictions and work commitments, I had not been able to go to Chimbote until this October. I had witnessed the passion and dedication the other FOC board and staff members expressed for the Chimbotanos in various in-person and ZOOM meetings. But I wondered if this could be attributed to North Dakota eccentricity. After all, one had to be a bit different to annually endure Dakota winters, eh?

My inaugural trip to Chimbote was a great awakening. I am still overwhelmed even as I try to write this reflection. Everything I experienced last month was beyond what I expected. I did not

understand until I took the six-hour bus ride from Lima to Chimbote (through my own ignorance) that the Peruvian coast was essentially a sand and rock desert, broken up by isolated slivers of green where the rivers came down from the Andes. Further, I could not understand why families would choose to live in such desolation until it was explained that the opportunities were even less elsewhere, at least for their children.

Chris and I are fortunate to participate in a parish that engages in many social action programs. We have seen families in poverty. But nothing here prepared me for the need in the outskirts of Chimbote. The governmental safety nets that we expect in the U.S. do not exist in Peru. Without FOC and ACAF – the Peruvian operations arm with whom we work – the folks in Cambio Puente would have nothing but themselves. And yet having each other, and their hopes and dreams, are perhaps their greatest assets. The people of Cambio Puente do not want



handouts. But they need and greatly appreciate hands up. The work done by ACAF, using the financial resources provided by FOC, is truly transformative.

Finally, I was in awe of two other things. First, the professionalism and dedication of the ACAF staff. Their ability to determine and administer to the needs of the community they serve is amazing. The second is how much good can be done with a relatively small investment. Where else can you build a home for \$7,000 or less, or provide a system to deliver water to several thousand people for not much more?

I now understand the enthusiasm of my fellow board members, FOC and ACAF staff, and anyone who has ever taken a mission trip to Chimbote.





ACAF Development Director

Todd Mickelson

My transition back into sustaining and growing our Mission with focus on development and sharing the stories of our impact, after 7 years as Executive Director, is most welcome. Your support, love and prayers are making it possible for our Mission to impact more lives, more deeply, than many people thought was possible. We are so pleased to share throughout this newsletter that your donations are not only impacting thousands of lives but through the growing success of collaborations in Peru, we are multiplying and leveraging your gifts.

The first and most significant example is the Cambio Puente water project. The municipality of Cambio Puente and water authority provided access to the well water main, right of way in streets and collaboration agreements for people who live outside the recognized boundaries of the city. Leaders and residents of the six communities receiving the water invested their hard-earned soles and thousands of hours of sweat equity to get the system installed. Friends of Chimbote and ACAF contributed engineering and coordination throughout the project and the final funds for the tank on the top of the hill and distribution piping to the six communities. Our investment of around \$30,000 was more than doubled by the members of the community in soles and labor. Even greater, the community residents will save over \$100,000 cumulatively per year for two to three times the quantity of water! The payback is even greater since we will no longer be funding dozens of water trucks per year to deliver water to each house. The wins are truly endless in economics, dignity, self-sufficiency, hygiene, health, time and future expandability.

Our Mission social workers will surpass the water project in the coming years. They are working closely with single parents like Domitila to register them with the government. Once they are registered, we guide them through the process of registering them for existing government programs that provide benefits that can double their current monthly income. We have dozens of families we are currently shepherding with many more in waiting. We need more social workers.

The San Miguel Soup Kitchen in Cambio Puente has been registered and qualified with the government through our support. They now receive supplies from government and aid programs, significantly reducing our expenses.

The daycare center, a very high priority for the community, was designed by our staff and funded and built by Mission Visitors. The key for sustainability is that the government Cuna Mas program provides all the staff, food and supplies to operate the center. The center provides employment for 6 mothers and a safe place for the children of 24 mothers so they can work.

The San Miguel Soup Kitchen, Learning Center and Childcare Center all received land from the city and community leaders.



We are so pleased and ready to continue to develop and deepen collaborations to access available resources and multiply your donations. In deep gratitude, we humbly ask for your continued support. We will work hard and smart to multiply your donations like loaves and fish.

In continued service and gratitude,

Todd
Todd Mickelson





A Year of Transformation...

One of the most destructive parts of living in poverty for the people in the areas we serve is isolation and the feeling of loneliness. Often it is the young mothers who face the harshest of realities. Providing safety and love for their children is too many times lonely and a daily burden we cannot imagine. With this harsh reality it only heightens our desires to remain United Together and continue to move forward making a difference in the lives of our brothers and sisters in Peru. In October, the FoC Board of Directors celebrated the amazing transformation in the Cambio Puente Community that has been accomplished in this past year. Pure joy and hope filled the air as we stood in front of a new playground, surrounded by newly planted trees and benches, and looking up at the hill at the new water tanks that will be supplying the community.



The projects in Cambio Puente are not only providing services that help empower and transform lives they are also creating community through the construction of shared spaces. The new learning center, daycare center, park, soup kitchen along with the vocational sewing program provide direct and impactful services of education and nutrition, but they also bring people together and give mothers a place of dignity in this hillside desert community.

People, nearly all young women, sitting, talking, laughing and exchanging perspectives on day-to-day challenges all are a key aspect of our projects

successes. There is no doubt that this “community feel” is as important as food and water. For all of us that lived through isolation in the pandemic, we know that being in the space of others is critical to our well-being. In Cambio Puente, the lack of any public spaces had been an acute factor of loneliness prior to FoC’s projects.

Two of our favorite observations of the October trip centered around women supporting each other and enjoying each other’s presence. The first is the mothers waiting to pick up their children outside of the learning center.

We sat, watched and then spoke with these moms who expressed sincere hope that their children were growing and learning inside of the walls of the newly built learning center. The second observation is the joy of watching the moms talk about clothing designs in the newly renovated sewing center. Their serious approach to learning skills of sewing were enhanced by the joy they had on their faces when looking at new fabrics that had been delivered.

There is so much despair in Cambio Puente and simply bringing people together will not remove all of the suffering.

...Creates Empowerment

CAMBIO PUENTE



Daycare Center



However, FoC's projects are providing people with spaces where they can learn, grow and even flourish together. They are places where mothers can be together and live with dignity while their children safely learn and grow. It is a true blessing to be able to watch and support women in raising their children with love from a shared community!

As we move forward together, please know that the support you give to FoC is helping bring positive changes in many diverse and empowering ways.



Learning Center

Centro de Aprendizaje



Soup Kitchen



Sewing Facility

All of these projects and their operations would not be possible without the generosity of the readers of this newsletter, thank you!

WHAT'S NEXT?

Looking Ahead - 2024 Cambio Puente



We experienced a very successful 2023 and are looking forward to an even stronger 2024. Our focus on the development of the Cambio Puente community helped to bring many assets together to create projects that empowered the people enabling them to transform their lives.

Both upper and lower parts of Cambio Puente received support from mission visitors and ACAF's integrated operations. Thank you to everyone who helped achieve these results that brought a new sense of hope and community spirit to Cambio Puente.

Among the successful projects as covered elsewhere in the newsletter: Water Project, Daycare, Learning Center, Soup Kitchen, Parish Space, Collaboration with Government, Mejor Casa Mejor Vida.

Looking ahead to 2024, we are planning for more projects that will build upon the great work from 2023. Our focus on the Cambio Puente area will continue. The tangible results will impact many lives and more importantly send the message of Christ's love as we wrap our collective arms around this community!

Our work will focus in four main areas highlighted below:

Social Services

- Adult education - Continued technical learning opportunities in areas like sewing and baking as well as education in areas of women's health
- Mejor Casa, Mejor Vida - The construction of more houses and the support to use this new stability to take further steps in transformation
- Connecting with resources - Using the professional social workers and their networks to access social services
- Seed Capital - Further explore sustainable expansion of seed capital and micro-loans

Education

- Early Childhood Learning - Expanded early childhood education opportunities
- Scholarships - Pair more beneficiaries with scholarships
- Student Agency - Provide students more independent learning opportunities from the learning center
- Container Items - Connect children with supplies from the container

Health-Water

- Water Purification Building - Construct water purification space and connect new technology for purified water
- Water Extension - Plan for wider access of water through additional tanks, lift station, tubing and other infrastructure needed
- Anemia Bread - Continue to test anemia bread success
- Recreation - Further develop the upper Cambio Puente Park

Faith

- Cambio Puente Parish - Renovation of kitchen and learning spaces
- Chapel - Identify space and plans for a chapel in Upper Cambio Puente

Any questions regarding the direction we are taking in 2024 or if you would like to visit about any of the projects listed, please contact Mike Smith at 701-799-8589.



Dream of the Seed

Dan Mahli - FoC Board Member



In late October, our Mahli family (Kim, Elizabeth-16, Patrick-16, Katherine-14, Danny-10, and I) boarded a bus from Lima to Chimbote with our mission team to be part of new perspectives, lasting impact and transformation.

As we travel around the Ancash region of Peru, the faces of people moving about their day-to-day lives settle in my heart. These are the children and grandchildren of the survivors my mom and dad worked with in Chimbote after the Great Peruvian Earthquake of 1970. This natural disaster killed 70,000 people, injured over 150,000, and left over 800,000 Peruvians homeless.

It is here that our family experiences what it means to love our neighbor. That is to say, instead of looking at poverty and suffering as weakness and transgression, perhaps it is how we view our strengths to act on conscience and overcome indifference.

We are connected as family and friends in solidarity, helping deliver security in the form of clean accessible water, safe housing, education, job opportunities,

nutrition and healthcare. In caring for others, we are wrapped in the warm embrace of transformation. Transformation not only in the daily life of the good people of Chimbote and Cambio Puente, but in our own lives.

It is easy to see what this means when your 10-year old son sends a note home to a friend saying, "Peru is amazing. I became besties with a dude named Alexander and a dude named Nemo. I got to help less fortunate kids and I feel like I reached enlightenment. I love this place, but I also miss you."

Although our mission is to help transform lives of people experiencing poverty in Peru, the truth is our family is also transformed. Through their generosity, compassion and hospitality, the good folks of Chimbote and Cambio Puente make us feel cherished, lifted and protected.

This is a land of eyes that shine and people who dance. Peruvian warmth, humor and mercy carry into the lives of future generations. We are all called to be light, and although we fall short, grace may be as simple as showing up, reaching out and planting seeds of love.





Mission Visits 2023

A Year of Amazing Transformations



Heymans/Becker



Be the Light, Get Lit



I Am 24/7 & Waypoint Church



Holy Spirit Church



Waypoint Church



St Michael Church



Providence Presbyterian



F3 Nation



Ryan Sondrol



St Mary Cathedral

After a lengthy pandemic (over two years) and the shut down of the Chimbote mission visit program, 2023 was a welcomed year!

Unfortunately...as we began to welcome mission visitors back, Peru experienced some destructive political unrest which limited travel and created a sense of uneasiness. Then a very unwelcome cyclone "YAKU" hit Peru and closed the Pan-American highway for a few days and left massive destruction out in Chimbote and surrounding areas.

With many prayers and perseverance, missions teams began to arrive back in May 2023!

Because of these incredible teams, with their hard work and resources amazing transformations took place this past year.

- Over 16 families received the gift of a home.
- A Community Learning Center was funded and built.
- A Day Care was funded, built and now is fully operational.
- The Cambio Puente Parish was remodeled.
- Water Distributions took place and help with the water project occurred.
- Fish-n-Loaves distributions were held in the community providing food for hundreds of families.
- School supplies were funded and distributed to help children begin their school year.
- Startup businesses were funded and transformed families' lives

A huge thank you to our 2023 Mission Visitor Teams! The impact that you left in Peru will forever be remembered and cherished!



WINTER 2023



The FoC Board of Directors, along with past board members and special guests (40 in total) traveled to Chimbote for a week of meetings, mission work, discovery and reuniting with life-long friends.

Now Available....FoC Apparel & Accessories



We offer a large variety of items to choose from including women's apparel, men's apparel and accessories.

Go to the New FoC Website
www.friendsofchimbote.org

Support our ministry this giving season!
A portion of each item ordered goes back to the FoC Mission!





Health Screening

Building Awareness of Anemia

One of the successes Friends of Chimbote is most proud of is our collaboration with other organizations doing work in the communities we serve. Whether partnering with local parishes, other NGOs, or the government, we are striving to capitalize on synergies that can bring better interventions to the communities we serve.

A great example of this is the health screening event and anemia bread distribution during the Board visit on October 26 in upper Cambio Puente.

Immediately following the group baptism that was sponsored by FoC, a large contingency of government employees arrived donning the colored vests of the government agency they represented. The many workers proceeded to set up a series of stations for children from upper Cambio Puente to visit. These included hand-washing stations, vision and wellness checks. This carefully coordinated effort event brought attention and services to this very poor and often forgotten community. Without our social workers, education advocates and ACAF's respected name, events like this would not happen.

The FoC Board participated by helping children move from station to station and help provide some diversion for kids waiting to travel from station to station. Hand-washing and the other stations help support the young mothers and children with healthy habits that they can take forward in their daily routines.

In addition to the health screening, the event was supported by ACAF's exciting new anemia bread project. Still in its testing phase, but showing very promising results, the anemia project is a collaboration between ACAF's bakery and a young local engineer who through research designed a recipe that shows progress against anemia. Anemia is a difficult reality for the children in the area we serve. The anemia bread could very well turn out to be a weapon to combat this condition that dramatically slows down development of many children.

At this event, each family was given a giant bag of this delicious bread. While on site, the FoC Board was able to try the anemia bread and found it to be very tasty! As we continue to test the results of the bread, we will keep our FoC community informed as we study the results and scalability of the intervention.

In all, 50 children were served at this event. There were education, health and dietary components. The event was a big success in its planned objective of screening and teaching. In addition, it demonstrated the results of strong collaboration, synergy when agencies work together, and sent a clear message to the people of Cambio Puente that they are not forgotten and there is hope!



Long Term Volunteer

Connor Carpenter



Connor Carpenter arrived in Chimbote this past September 2023 and hit the ground running! Connor has signed up to be a long term volunteer at our mission and will be staying in Chimbote until the beginning of July 2024.

Connor is from Baltimore, Maryland where his family still resides. He is an International Business & Marketing Graduate from Villanova University. Connor has study abroad at the Paris School of Business and the University of Barcelona, in Spain where he worked in the accounting department and studied Spanish.

Connor, in a very short amount of time, has been embraced by the mission and is adored by the children that he works with in the barrios, Learning Center in Cambio Puente and the Kindergarten at the Parish in Chimbote. He will work with mission visitors when they are on the ground and is also assisting the marketing department. We appreciate his mission heart and compassion for others.

If you are interested or know of someone that would be interested in a long-term volunteer mission stay, please feel free to contact the Friends of Chimbote office at 701-364-0162 or fill out our Online volunteer application at friendsofchimbote.org.



Over the past few years, we have received so many compliments on this newsletter, The Journey. Supporters tell us they read it cover to cover, especially enjoying the articles of transformation of lives. They tell us it is full of hope, opportunity, impact, transformation and faith in action. Thank you!!

We are very mindful of our expenses including printing, postage and also reducing our waste. We strive to maximize the funds impacting the lives of the poor in Chimbote. However, we also want to touch more lives of beneficiaries and benefactors alike. We believe you share these goals!

Will you help us reach these common goals? Will you pass this issue on to a friend, family member, co-worker or really extend our reach by sharing with your Pastor, Service Club, School or Fraternal Organization? Will you proudly share The Journey since you are the ones who make this amazing work possible? We would love to hear your stories of doubling our impact.

Please share them with us at support@friendsofchimbote.org

Strong Leadership

Introducing Education and Social Department Leaders

As Friends of Chimbote continues to develop capacity and transformative power within the ACAF team, one of the key components of success has been the addition of Ildania Arias Olivera and Gloria Bazán Guzmán. Ildania is leading our Education department and Gloria is leading our social services department. Having professionals with diverse experience and strong educational backgrounds has already had a tremendous impact on services to beneficiaries and greatly enhanced our ability to work with government and other NGOs. Under Ildania and Gloria's leadership, their teams have been able to secure substantial monetary contributions and services in programs and benefits to the communities we serve. These include government benefits for disabilities, soup kitchen supplies, staff for our daycare, health care screening for children with more collaboration being developed. We want everyone to know these two people a little more!

Ildania Arias Olivera

Ildania or Dana, as she likes to be known is a native of Apurimac, a region of the southern Sierra of Peru. She is an educator by profession with a degree from the Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos in Lima. She is married and has three children, Diego Jesús, 24 years old, and twins Sebastián and Esteban, 10 years old.

She has always been passionate about improving society through education and social services which is why apart from teaching in the classroom, she completed her professional training in management of social, health and educational improvement programs; thus working in State programs such as the Ayacucho Regional Health Directorate, with the position of Local Support Manager for People, the Elderly and People with Severe Disabilities. She has also worked in the QALI WARMA National School Food Program, among others.

She has a strong desire to help others with her resilience and positive attitude.



Gloria Bazán Guzmán

Gloria is a native of Chimbote. She is a mother of two adult children. She pursued her higher education at the Pontifical Catholic University of Peru. Gloria is a professional social worker and holds a Master Degree in Organizational Behavior and People Management. Gloria has over two decades of experience in her field. She has led and supervised community development and social responsibility programs in various institutions throughout her career. She also played a prominent role as the Coordinator of the national program in Community Management.

She brings developed competencies and experience conducting training sessions for social workers and local authorities to our team. Gloria has also been involved in forming executive groups and designing participatory programs aimed at identifying social projects related to sustainable development and social assistance. This experience is significant in supporting our efforts of expanding our service model to more of a community development approach.

She was greatly inspired by Saint John Paul II's work and life and sees our work with the poor and vulnerable as needing to address the whole person and their well-being.



BRING HOPE this HOLIDAY SEASON

“It’s the most wonderful time of the year!” The Holidays remind us to be thankful, reflect on our blessings and do acts of kindness that bless us in return. Christmas shop below at these heartfelt gifting selections. Whether you need that perfect gift for a loved one or are looking for an opportunity to make a difference. Give one of these special gifts that will benefit our brothers and sisters in Peru. Placing them one step closer on the path out of poverty.

PROVIDE EDUCATION and OPPORTUNITY

<p>\$279 (1 YR) Public Item # H1</p> <p>Initial 3 years \$837 Primary 6 years \$1,674 Secondary 5 years \$1,395</p>	<p>\$5,539 Item # H2</p> <p>Private Technical School 3 Years</p>	<p>\$2,633 Item # H3</p> <p>Public Technical School 3 Years</p>	<p>\$4,760 Item # H4</p> <p>National University 5 Years</p>	<p>\$11,215 Item # H5</p> <p>Private University 5 Years</p>
---	--	---	---	---

PROVIDE COMFORT FOR A FAMILY

<p>\$6,000 Item # F1</p> <p>House Provide shelter to a family in need.</p>	<p>\$100-\$1,300 Item # F2</p> <p>Furniture Purchase needed furniture for a family! Beds, tables, chairs, stove & etc...</p>	<p>\$27 Item # F3</p> <p>Christmas Package Give a family a Basket full of necessities and a panetone made in our bakery!</p>	<p>\$13-\$1,300 Item # F4</p> <p>Bible Purchase a bible for a family or for a community. \$13 per Bible</p>	<p>\$50 Item # F5</p> <p>School Supplies Support a child’s education! Supplies & a School Bag!</p>
---	---	---	--	---

PROVIDE SUPPORT FOR A COMMUNITY

<p>\$2,080 Item # S1</p> <p>Loaves & Fishes Provide 250 families with bread and fish in a community.</p>	<p>\$2,100 Item # S2</p> <p>Soup Kitchen Provide 1 month of meals for 200 people at the mission kitchen.</p>	<p>\$540 Item # S3</p> <p>Essential Package Provide 20 families with a package of food and essentials</p>	<p>\$10,000 Item # S4</p> <p>Social Worker Fund the operation of one of our Peruvian social workers.</p>	<p>\$50-\$20,000 Item # S5</p> <p>Where my dollars are NEEDED! Support Social, Health and Transformation programs!</p>
---	---	--	---	---

Donations can be sent in the enclosed reply envelope. Order form is on back page.
You may also click on the donate button on the FoC website at www.friendsofchimbote.org.
Any questions regarding these designated gifts please contact Mike Smith at 701-799-8589.



Join us in the fight against poverty.

Receive monthly email updates on mission news, programs and stories of transformation.

Sign up today at friendsofchimbote.org or call us at 701-364-0162



HOPE THIS HOLIDAY SEASON ORDER FORM

Item #	Description of Item	Qty	Price Each	Total Gift	Dedicated to...

Please place in the enclosed newsletter envelope. Attach additional pages if needed! **TOTAL**

Name: _____
 Address: _____ Email: _____
 City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

PAYMENT METHOD
 Enclosed is my check payable to "Friends of Chimbote" for the amount of \$ _____
 Bill this purchase to my credit card. Mastercard AMEX Discover
 Card# _____ Expiration: _____ Amount \$ _____
 Phone # _____ Signature: _____

DEDICATED GIFT
 YES! Please let my special person know I am sponsoring this gift in their honor with a card!
 Name: _____
 Address: _____ Email: _____
 City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
 Comments: _____

**Gifts made through the "Bring Hope List" represents a gift to the entire Friends of Chimbote Mission. Friends of Chimbote does not use its limited resources to track individual gifts. We use gifts where they do the most good. Your contribution to fight poverty, illness, abuse and homelessness are fully tax-deductable.