



Volume 1, Issue 2

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## The Etta Projects Story

Etta Projects is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization created to honor the life of Etta Turner. Etta died November 25<sup>th</sup> 2002 at the age of 16. She was a Rotary International exchange student in Montero Bolivia. She was traveling with friends on a bus when the driver fell asleep and drove off a cliff. Etta and six Bolivians died. Several months after this amazing young girl's death, the Rotary Club of Montero Bolivia and the Salesian Catholic Church in Montero, asked to name a nutrition center for impoverished children after Etta. As it became a reality, the sorrow of Etta's death and the joy of feeding many children combined to create the nutrition center called Comedor de Ninos Etta Turner. Etta Projects was a result of her family, friends, and the Rotary Clubs here in the states desire to honor Etta. Etta Projects hopes to give on-going support to this lovely center and if funding allows, to help with other projects like it, wherever they may be needed. Etta Projects is Etta's legacy: to give to the world in her death as she did in her life.

At present the Comedor de Ninos Etta Turner feeds 100 children per day and provides education and support to their mothers. It is a joint project run by the Salesians of Montero, the Rotary Club of Montero, and Etta Projects. Etta Projects provides the funding for the operating expenses with our major donors being Rotary Clubs from the Puget Sound region in the state of Washington and Rotary Club Montero as well as friends and family of Etta. The Salesian Catholic Church, as of November, owns the property. The Damas, the female lay volunteers of the Salesian community, lovingly provide the administration and daily operation of the Comedor on a volunteer basis.

## One Year Ago...

*By Penny Nixon-West*

One year ago Etta died. The grief spanned continents. The sorrow of her family and friends felt immense. How could someone with so much life and beauty and with so much to add to our world die?

One year ago a priest in a country with too much poverty awoke with an idea. Perhaps it came in a dream; perhaps it was an inspiration of tragic grace. This beautiful young woman he knew who died would help the poor of this country she died in. He must have thought it over long and hard. This child that had only been in his straight Catholic school 3 months, the one who caused havoc by putting on a skit with screaming and yelling and sugar cane sword fighting causing all the administrators to come running to the class-room fearing the worst. They found this tall blond crazy girl with her other American cohort ninja fighting in their sedate small school. This child, who during a parade with the whole school marching 2 miles, took off her high-heeled school shoes and walked barefoot only to be reprimanded by the priest due to the disrespectful nature of this act. This kid who always talked and passed notes in all her classes seemed to always be forgiven all. Should he dare complete his idea, to name a long dreamed for nutrition center for children after this irreverent child? Maybe he thought, "Well her irreverence really caused no harm, so why not?" Thank God he did—because it makes her death more bearable. Comedor de Ninos-Etta Turner was the result of his leap of faith.

Sweetly, just one year from the day she died, November 25, 2003, 100 children, all the Salesian Damas volunteers, Etta's loving Bolivian family and members of the Rotary Club met at the Comedor de Ninos-Etta Turner and walked across the plaza to the church where that same priest who took the chance on Etta said a mass honoring Etta. Fatima,

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**Etta Projects provides all the financial support for the daily operation of the Comedor. This includes food, rent, utilities, and salaries. You can help by sending a tax deductible donation.**



# Comedor de Ninos Etta Turner Update

By Pennye Nixon-West



Blessings seem to flow on the Comedor de Ninos Etta Turner. Just in November we got word that the Swiss Order of Salesians had sent money to purchase the property so that Etta's Comedor might have a permanent location. Soon after, the Italian Order of Salesians sent money to finalize that purchase. The Montero Catholic Church purchased the property and now we are excitedly planning the next phase of this project. Thanks must go to Father Mario Pani for his persistent efforts in trying to locate money to keep Etta's Comedor at its present location.

Here in the US we are sharing the Etta Projects story with whoever will listen. Our local Rotary Clubs here in Port Orchard were the first to invite us. I have since presented to Port Townsend and Port Angeles, and we are open to continue this. This year, not only do we hope to raise the money to continue to feed the children each day and educate the mothers, but we hope to be able to build a new dining hall and kitchen on the property. As you may have read in the last newsletter the present kitchen is about 9 feet wide by 12 feet long. If you think it was crowded in your Thanksgiving kitchen cooking for 20, imagine cooking for 100+ every day when the temperature outside is 98 degrees and 100 hungry children are standing outside your door. Jenni, our cook, and Marlene, the assistant, two of the most patient people in the world, will be delighted if we can accomplish our goals. We are grateful for the Bolivian architects who kindly donated time and talent to design us a lovely building. The dining hall is presently only 12 feet by 20 feet. Elbow room is limited but the kids are always polite and never seem to shove or push for more space. The new dining hall will seem like a mansion. If anyone knows of other clubs or churches that may be interested in helping us with this project, please let us know.

There is still time to donate for a tax deduction in 2003.

## Etta

Born Knowing,  
But never judging.

Animated thoughts,  
Without boundaries.  
Impatient with the world,  
Waiting for the right time.  
Ready to take on more,  
Understanding it was out there.

Being brave enough to go  
Toward it.  
Facing it.  
Facing it,  
When others look away.

Meeting her destiny.  
Words to say come so easily,  
Soothing  
Comforting  
Loving  
Accepting  
Spirit all around us.

*Written lovingly by Sue Wallace  
June 8, 2003*



*Etta's self portrait from photography class*

## Gratitude of Gifts to Etta

**Gratefulness is something of spirit and soul and our gratefulness for all that is done in Etta's name can never be expressed enough. From the depths of our heart and soul we begin our list.**



**Teri DeGroot**e, thank you so much for all your time, wisdom, computer savvy, and patience with the many, many, many versions of the newsletters.

**Tamara Hanks**, thank you again for your creative skill and donated time in designing the Etta Projects Logo. The comments and compliments have included the words "sweet," "symbolic," "sooo Etta," "beautiful," but mostly "perfect".

**Sue Wallace, Janice and Scott Bougher, Patty and John Holloway, Jack and Diane Tollefson, Cheryl Hanna-Truscott, Peggy Armstrong, Ten and Ron DeGroot, Patsy Randahl, Robin Ruotsi, Cedar Heights Staff, Julie and Rosemary Hall, Andrea Pollard, Chris Williams, Quinn Bougher, Molly Lafanierre, Colleen Williams, Leslie Benjamin, Victor Nixon, Mary Etta and Clarence Nixon, Guy and me** for 18 table and chairs sets for the Comedor de Ninos Etta Turner. They are apparently beautiful and we hope to get pictures soon. Each person wrote loving plaques, which were translated into Spanish and will soon become a part of each table. I cannot say thank you enough. I sent the word out and within 5 incredible days had enough money to give the go ahead to begin making the tables. Your generosity is unbelievable and you will be remembered in their prayers.

**Mindy Baade** kindly donated her time and skill to translate each plaque saying. Now each child can read where their table came from and share the thoughts of each person who donated them. They will know who to say their thanks to and believe me, they will. **Maliea Stowell with Kinkos (Silverdale)** arranged to have all our printing done at cost. She has been invaluable. She arranges for everything and just tells me when to pick it up. Thank you Maliea, we didn't know where to start or what to ask for and your guidance led us to the end result that makes us proud.

**Fidalgo Island Rotary** made a lovely donation that kept me from panicking until at least March. We can never thank the Rotary Clubs enough for all their support.

**Brad Potter with Printing Services of Port Orchard**, we thank you. Maliea Stowell also led us to this kind man who printed all the shells for our newsletter for free. Thank you, kindness abounds!

**Cody Wallace, Jenna Caires, Chris Williams, Atticus Turner, and Will Turner**, Etta's friends and brothers who came over to help do the newsletter mailing, thinking they were licking and stamping, to be roped into crash writing every single newsletter address because I couldn't get the labels to print. Over 200 newsletters were addressed in 30 minutes to make it to the 5PM mail pickup. We did it with only minor hand cramps. For all the teachers of Atticus, don't worry, we didn't let him write. Thank you, Etta's friends, you are always there for me.

**Jack and Diane Tollefson** donated a wonderful Sony laptop computer that we use to do presentations for Etta Projects. Jack will be glad when I stop calling him at work in a panic because I am computer illiterate and have to be walked through every step of the process—every time. The learning curve is high for me but I will get it eventually. Your patience and knowledge are greatly appreciated.

**Judith Jones** who also donated a laptop that we do many reports and work on. I am destined to become computer savvy and then watch out. Thank you, Judith. I never open it to write anything without thinking of you.

**Ms. Burns**, Atticus' Spanish teacher, to whom I mentioned wanting to collect some children's Spanish books for the Comedor, at Atticus' school conference. She said wait a minute and came back with a bag of over 20 children's books and handed them to me. We now have the beginnings of a small library for the Comedor. As books are a true prize in Bolivia, this gift is a treasure trove. I can't wait until they receive them.

**All of You** who have taken the time and given your money to help feed these children or prayed for this projects life and accomplishments. We could ask for no better friends.

### Etta Projects Board Members

Janice Bougher  
Bill Turner  
Pennye Nixon-West  
James Turner  
Fatima Paz  
Sue Wallace  
Jaime Paz  
Guy West



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Etta's Bolivian Mom, described it as lovely. They then all walked back across the plaza to the Comedor and ate lunch with those 100 children of poverty—who know each day they can count on one meal to nourish them. They all ate together and Fatima brought Etta's favorite cake to share with all—a rich chocolate caramel decadent thing that is indescribable. Etta is proud of this Comedor and its accomplishments in her name. I'm sure she was also smiling at Fatima for sharing her cake with these children who may never have tasted anything so lovely. She may have also been snickering at Father Pani but only in delight at his gift to her of naming this center after her when she caused him such trouble.

**An Amazing Year**

**An Amazing Girl**

**An Amazing Gift**

## Heifer Project

If any of you plan to give to Heifer Project this year as part of your yearly gifts from the heart, you may want to know that there is a Heifer Foundation Endowment dedicated to Etta and to my pride and surprise when I pulled the site up today my beautiful daughter is featured. You can see and read about another way Etta continues to give to the world. All animals are gifted to the country of Bolivia in her name.

The site is <http://www.heiferfoundation.org/>



We have clings (little plastic cling to the window things) with the Etta Projects logo on it for anyone who wants one. One will come to you magically with a donation of \$4.00 or more. Your tax deductible donation can be sent to:

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