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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 priest of the Salesian Catholic Church in Montero, who was also Etta's principle, 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 Niño's 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 similar projects, 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.

Etta I opened in June 2003 in La Floresta, one of the poorest neighborhoods in Montero, Bolivia, where Etta lived. We began by feeding 100 children per day but our mission has come to include helping their mothers acquire the skills to support their own families.

In July of 2005 Etta II opened its doors in Pampa de la Madre, a much more rural section of Montero. Here disease and poverty are even more acute and Etta II is one of the first humanitarian aid projects in this area. We now feed 200 children and service 120 mothers and families. Our local partners in these projects are the Salesians of Montero and the Rotary Club of Montero.

Etta Projects provides the funding for operating expenses, with our major donors being Rotary Clubs from the Puget Sound region in the state of Washington and in Michigan & Wisconsin, as well as friends and family of Etta.

## *Christmas Gratitude*

*We want to thank you for responding so generously to our holiday appeal. We all shook our heads at the cost of those cards wondering if it was the right way to spend our money, but your response proved it was. Thank you. We are grateful and the children are grateful for they worked hard on those cards. Those of you who donated got the originals. If we had made them make one for each of you it would have been cheaper but someone would have arrested us for child labor abuse. Again, Thank you, thank you, and thank you.*



## Looking Ahead to 2006 at Etta I and Etta II

It is already a very busy year for us but we have to back up before we go forward to catch you up on things. In November we opened the before and after school program at Etta II. We really didn't have the money yet but the children begged us to start. We hired two teachers. Well they aren't really teachers. They are young adults from the Pampa neighborhood who have been dedicated in volunteering and have shown a desire to be a part. Flora is 20. She finished high school which is huge for her poverty level. She has had no chance at a real job and is unlikely to so she decided to spend her time volunteering when she heard we were opening. Since the day Etta II opened Flora has never missed. She washes dishes and feeds kids too anemic to feed themselves. She smiles, she teases and is a joy to have around. She seems to love being around the kids and they seem to like her. She is now our morning tutor.



Flora & Luis

Yimy is no stranger to us. He is about 27 and has worked with one of our partners for some time as a parttime computer guy. His real passion is art and he too is great

with kids. He tutors in the afternoon —with a lot of art thrown in , of course.

Despite not having the money we hired these two, and the “Field of Dreams” concept of ‘if you build it they will come’ worked again. We hired them and by December 5th we were fortunate to receive our first foundation grant from the AMB Foundation. The money is designated to pay for before and after school teachers at both facilities and for the children’s parasite treatment. So even though it wasn’t there when we dreamed it , it is now.

The board had also begun to worry about the money to pay for the women’s workshops at Etta II. Since opening in July we have offered health, nutrition and self esteem workshops but only one occupation workshop, sewing. ( By the way if anyone wants to donate a well working sewing machine, please contact me). The women have needed more and were ready. Back in October we were able to apply for a Rotary Foundation International Grant in collaboration with the Montero and the Pouslbo Rotaries . At the beginning of January we were approved for \$19, 398.54. This grant will pay for 7 workshops with complete equipment at Etta II. It will provide additional equipment for Etta I. We will be able to create several community gardens to include women, men and children. We are also very excited that this grant will provide for small libraries at each facility., please keep donating any Spanish books., our kids can’t have enough! Finally one of the most important benefits of this grant will go to providing literacy classes both to women and men at Etta II. The majority of our participants there have less than a 3rd grade education and some have never been to school.

Yep this is pretty awesome and so now you can imagine what we will be doing in 2006. It will take us the whole year to initiate all these programs. Anybody need a job?

## Coloring a Better World



By Kurt Paterson

Arrived November 25, 2005—3 years from the day Etta died.



For many Americans crayons mark a time in our lives filled with creativity, innocence and hope. For elementary students in Negaunee, Michigan they are a way to share a much-loved activity. Knowing the needs of children served by Etta I and II, Kathy Houghton, a teacher at Negaunee's Lakeview Elementary, and also Sarah Houghton’s Mom (for more on those two check past newsletters) challenged her students to come up with a way to help - their idea to collect crayons seemed like a perfect one, until the children responded. Thousands of crayons were collected. Now the challenge was delivery. As chance would have it, an engineering professor picked up the cause. Kurt Paterson, an environmental engineering professor at Michigan Tech, happened to be traveling to Santa Cruz a few weeks after the crayon collection. Paterson was heading to Santa Cruz with several of his students to work on a water development project with Michigan Tech's chapter of Engineers Without Borders, and over a conversation with Houghton learned about her students' efforts. Paterson, also a member of Rotary International, (and on the entertainment committee for Penny when she visits Michigan) remembered his District's continued support of Etta Projects and jumped at the opportunity to be the courier for the 90 pounds of crayons. In the photos Paterson arrives at Etta I with a crayon-loaded backpack. Inside, some of the kids try to contain their excitement over the gift from afar. Within each bag of crayons was a photo of some of those thoughtful kids back in Michigan. Maybe the children of the world have it figured out. *Color makes the world beautiful.*



Kurt and Negaunee kids

And all the crayons



Etta I Kids



Just a note inside a story. During Christmas, Etta Projects received many lovely donations from Sarah Houghton’s Michigan. That horrible bus accident has forever tied Sarah & Etta together. We thank the many Michigan supporters for loving and admiring Sarah and Etta.

## Clockwork in La Pampa de La Madre, Etta II

Jacob Pederson

The second Comedor in La Pampa de la Madre is fifteen short dirt-road minutes from the Comedor at Plaza Floresta. There in the Floresta and all other corners of inner Montero people begin sauntering about early; the motos go to work and the shoe-shiners weild their kits. Passers are waylaid by a dependable array of salteña stands where they stop for a quick bite and refresco on the way, perhaps, to one of Montero's plazas, which always seem to enjoy at the least slight crowds no matter the time of day.



But it is morning in the Pampa as well, and there is no plaza. Neither is there the general commotion of people and traffic that might compete with the sound of a solitary hammer falling on a nail against the backdrop of the land's quiet soundscape. Less streets, less people, the vagrant wandering horses and cows don't seem out of place in the equatorial wetland, high grasses and scattered palmas. The reeds bow to the wind and keep their colors, making the more developed parts of the city appear all the more dusted and dry, everything being relative.

So these are the morning noises--the call of a cow, the hammer, the intermittent word caught on the unobtrusive wind, a cart or tractor moving slowly by, and the play of children. Only a handful here this early, they pass the time reciting the lyrics to an Argentinean musical that every one of them seems to know by heart. Otherwise they compare and trade their sandals and turn circles around the pathway that surrounds the dining room. The boys and the girls are always somewhat separated, but count on

the two groups bouncing off of each other wherever they go, and they are always moving. Everything still being relative, this place becomes the "plaza" of the Pampa. The morning bread is inside the kitchen just the same, the Nester, and the same people sleepily blinking up at the same sun. And the children are still playing, beautiful self-sufficient producers of their own entertainment. Who are they? Some are the daughters and sons of the Comedor employees, and have come along early with their parents. The others are here because they have been abandoned by their parents.



Behind every innocent face is an all-too-real possibility of a not-so-innocent story.

At lunch Juan Daniel Chama Basan sits in front of his cleaned plate and clings to a yellow plastic cup of lemonade. Asking him if there is any news from his mother he draws in and his instincts come bare, as if he is gathering the shackles about in preparation to use them as weapons. "No," he says quietly, and nothing else. Moments later a small miracle happens, and Juan is smiling again. He now calls his grandmother "mamá."



The early afternoon, and the plates are being cleaned up, and the sun has begun its work drying the dark soil in anticipation of the next rain. The mask of the fresh morning is being lifted. It's tempting to look at this place and see something preserved, almost lucky, in contrast with the rest of Montero. But the Pampa is not an island. Less buildings and streets mean less infrastructure, less water, less sanity, less money. Asking the children--in the midst of their play--if they like it at the Comedor, they say, raising the vowel slowly, "Sí..." Asking them why, the children uncover the bottom line: "Because they give out good food!" This is the poverty, the rule of law that seeds the land like the soya beans and the sugar cane.



The Pampa's people are subject to the same economic paradigm as their neighbors on the dusty grid of inner Montero streets despite the guise of the green land. But a remnant of the peaceful morning Pampa is left over after reality hits, and it rests within people. The Pampa is a home, a land of individuals. They are Walberto and his younger sister Lisbeth who do everything together. Before lunch is served they wash their hands, and then they sit down side-by-side. And afterwards he helps her brush her teeth. They are Joaquincito, the one-year-old child who delivers as much rice onto the floor around his highchair as he does into his mouth. They are the cooks, the mothers,

the brothers and the builders.

The hammer falling against in the background of the Pampa's soundscape is building a kindergarden. As the building comes up, so are the children, the people, the Pampa. Months ago before the Comedor opened up this new school would have been a bittersweet place, an idea rather than a resource. When it is finished, it will be a walk of seconds from the kitchen, the educational facilities and workshops of the Pampa de la Madre Comedor. At the end of the day the resources are coming together. As the sun sets lower in the sky, allowing the Earth to cool again, perhaps there is a bit more hope under the stars in Bolivia.



Jake Pederson, a student at Western Washington University, joined us last October. He is the children's coordinator intern at Etta I but gladly floats to Etta II when needed. These interns enrich the lives of our children and our children enlighten and give these interns tools and knowledge to return to our world of affluence and hopefully enlighten others and make the world a better place for us all. We are lucky..they are lucky. Thanks Jake for letting others see from your eyes and heart. Jake leaves us in April.

# Etta's Auction: It's Looking Good

Some of you may have already gotten your Auction date reminders, at least those of you in the state of Washington did. We welcome out-of-staters to attend and will actually rig the door prizes so you get one if you show up, but we figured you'd be few and far between.

Anyway, the big day is **MAY 13th** and tickets go on sale March 13th after I return from Bolivia. Remember the Auction is how we totally fund the Administration of Etta Projects. If you have never been, everyone I know agrees it is the funnest fundraiser in the world., yep I said the world! We have the best food, the best entertainment, the best decorations, the best purchases, the best models, the best drinks, the best check out, the best dancing (well maybe not the best dancing but the best Dance Band). You just can't beat it with a stick for a great time and to put your two cents in to change the world.

We have enclosed a sponsorship form and a donation form if you want your name or your company's name up in lights, or if you have something you want to gift to the auction. We are known to get honey from Tennessee, pottery from Spokane and handmade gazing balls and stepping stones from Idaho. So look around and see what might fit our auction and consider gifting it. (no old washing machines, please.)

A sneak preview for this year includes: A 1992 hot red Miata; 10 Reiki Healings; A trip to Cabo; The Rockadiles to dance to, signed Ty Penington stuff, YMCA Passes, Le Garmarche Food, a tool box stuffed with tools, an Andean flute band, and believe it or not a complete do it yourself dread locks kit! You are not going to want to miss this. Put it on your calendar and we promise a good time! If not someone from the board will clean your house.

A final note: If you have been to our web site recently you will notice that we have pulled all the mother's products and coffee. Unfortunately due to taxes and import laws we need to redesign how we sell these items. If you want to buy something you will now need to just call me. We will create a page showing the women's items and will continue to sell at events throughout the year. Sorry for the inconvenience but we hope you will still consider their products when you need a gift to give, when you just want to fashionably deck out, or when you want a really good cup of coffee.



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