



Etta and her friend Jenna at her going away party. Pigs got loose and they had fun. Wouldn't you?

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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 25th, 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.

At present the Comedor de Niño's 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 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. We are proud to announce that in mid 2005 we will be opening Etta II.

OUT OF HUNGER...ON TO HOPE

Too Much Fun was Had!!

By Larry Berebitsky

The second annual Etta's Auction was another success. There was plenty of food, fun & frivolity for all. The decorations were spectacular! How that Dean Lewis and Lynn Conroy turned that stuffy old hall into auction paradise is beyond me. The auction prizes were plentiful, varied and much sought after. Perhaps fought over would better summarize it. Kathy Hamlett and Mike Scully donated the homemade wine to the table decorations you took home. The best of live raffle gave everyone a chance to choose one of the pricey live auction items for only \$40. Those of you in attendance will never be able to forget watching Atticus Turner modeling auction jewelry and wearing that stunning dress and those heels. I know that vision continues to haunt me. The food from Le Garmache' was incredible. The empanadas, the prawns, the skewers were all delicious and plentiful. It was a struggle to save room for the brownies and coconut ice cream. Throughout the evening we were entertained with Andean flute music. After the auction we rocked out with the Rockodiles. The dance floor was full as the evening came to a close.



This event took the effort of a large cast who spent many long hours in meetings, procuring gifts and making preparations. The auction committee worked their butts off and I think we can all agree that their effort showed and was well worth it. Thanks to all of you on the auction committee. Now get to work on next year's auction!

Thank you to all of our donors. We couldn't have done it without you. We continue to get fun and interesting items to bid on. You really make the auction a success. We more than tripled the funds received from sponsorships. Please review your auction brochure and support all our sponsors and donors.

This year's auction netted us approximately \$45,000 after expenses. The money from this event is used as follows: \$11,200 of this will be in our feed a child, educate a mom fund and the \$33,800 will be used to fund the administrative budget for 2005 and into 2006. Please remember all individual and civic club donations throughout the year go to fund Etta I and Etta II so you know that 100% of donations go to direct services. The auction sales are used to fund our Administration expenses. We really appreciate all your support and hope you'll all attend our donor appreciation party on September 11th from 1:00 to 6:00 at Le Garmache' and at Etta Turner Park in Port Orchard. This time you don't need to bring your check books, just your families and be ready to have a fun afternoon and well what else would you have with us? Watch for your invitation.

Thank you, thank you, thank you! We had such fun with you!

I had the opportunity to go to Michigan/Wisconsin Rotary District 6220 Conference in May. My initial desire to go was to support Sarah Houghton—Etta’s friend who was on the bus with her and severely injured. Sarah has tirelessly advocated for Etta Projects through presentations between college breaks and sometimes classes. She raised \$13,000 with this district last year that helped us to build Etta II. Anyway, Sarah was asked to be a guest speaker and share the progress of Etta Projects at the big district conference. My intention was to go support her and let her know how much we appreciate what she has done for her friend and for her friend’s legacy. Sarah’s mom, Kathy got wild and threw a party the night before the Rotary function with all her friends to share the story of Etta Projects. The house was full and I thought they would buy all the mothers products before I got to Rotary. They were also very generous in their donations.

Then we got so much more on this visit. Rotary District 6220 gifted Sarah with \$5500 for Etta Projects this year. They then held an auction on their final evening to raise more money. An additional \$2600 was raised. Their support and devotion to Sarah with Etta Projects is incredible. Etta Projects would not have been able to accomplish what we have in 2 years without this districts support. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts Sarah, her family and Rotary District 6220.

I told you they were a pot of gold and still other supports surfaced as well. Besides cash, hospitality and very generous people in Michigan/Wisconsin, coincidentally, Kurt Paterson, an engineering professor with Michigan Tech had scheduled to take some of his senior students to Santa Cruz Bolivia to work on another humanitarian aid project. It happens to be during my visit there in August and he kindly agreed to come to Montero and fix all our engineering problems—mainly flooding when it rains.

My next score was John Wiley who works with a nutritional supplement that helps malnourished children process food better. I will be taking the first bucket of this supplement down in July and he kindly promised as much as we can use. Read more about this product on www.powerflour.net

So, I made friends, got cash, solved flooding problems and can quickly boost the nutrition of many children. Michigan/Wisconsin is a great place!

Here is a letter Sarah’s Mother, Kathy wrote once I returned and I want to deny the roaring comment as I am a very sedate person and would never roar but will reprint the letter in it’s entirety to honor her.



Sarah and me

Dear Pennye,

Ours is a friendship created on loss, but built on hope and your visit to the District Rotary 6220 meeting in Marquette, Michigan gave us the chance to meet in person. I do want to share our wonderful weekend with others:

For those who do not know, our daughters Sarah and Etta were exchange students together in Montero, and, as Pennye has stated they were "comrades in arms, cohorts, sister trouble makers." Sarah sustained serious injuries in the accident that took Etta, and since those first intense weeks, Etta's family has found space in their hearts for Sarah.

On to our weekend!! Thanks first to the women who attended our informal get together. It is such a reminder that mothers share a common bond. We understand that feeding and caring for our children is a driving force no matter our color, creed or country. Ours was a coffee sampling evening where we reviewed the Comedor's history and its growth, and examined and purchased products made by the mothers.

Then onto the District 6220 Conference and the gift of \$5500 from the Rotaries plus \$2600 raised at the auction. Sarah's presentation was warmly received by the Rotarians of this, her home District and Pennye's table of products from the mothers and coffee was nearly cleared. The support of individual Rotarians continued with donations accompanying their purchases. Rotarians also generously shared their expertise and experience ranging from food supplements to mini grants. Michigan Technological University Professor Kurt Paterson will be visiting the Comedor this summer. I might add that he and Sarah provided Pennye a late night tour of Lake Superior from which none of them has probably recovered. I say this as Pennye insisted on roaring out of the parking lot driving Kurt's little blue mini. Despite this, Kurt still promises a visit to examine some of the drainage issues at both Etta I and II.

Pennye arrived from Minneapolis looking like a bag lady; her rental car filled with Sarah's school paraphernalia plus duffels of product and coffee. She left with only her bag and money ready to send to the mothers and donations which will go directly to the children in the form of food, educational and medical assistance. What a great visit.

Kathy



Selling products at the conference

A Snapshot from Etta II

By Penny Nixon-West

We plan for Etta II to open in just a couple of weeks. Everything will not be ready and it is likely to be a chaotic couple of months before we are well organized but we will be able to begin to feed children. Eighty Six families have been interviewed. From there we will take only 100 children and start with only 50. We will add up to 100 as quickly as we can due to the dire need in this area.

We have not had the resources that we did with Etta I as there is no free clinic next door that knows the most malnourished children and there is no church across the street that has provided infrastructure to an area for decades. We are out there on our own and as our new social worker/coordinator tells us the women and children in this area live in "misery". Poverty is bad here—with lots of hunger, abuse, lack of sanitation and sense of hopelessness.

Our administrators began doing interviews May 20th. Interviews, family evaluations, basic measurements of the children and home visits are the tools in deciding which children are the most mal nourished. Keep in mind it is not a question at all if every child interviewed is anemic and malnourished. That is a given. They all qualify but the most at risk children will be chosen. We will not only be screening for parasites, anemia and malnutrition but also for TB. In America we rarely see this, but here in Bolivia it is all too common. Unfortunately if they have TB we then have to put them back on the waiting list until they have been treated even though they need good nutrition with the medication to fight the illness.

So imagine yourself working for Etta Projects as one of the administrators. You must interview each woman or man who presents their child— you must weigh and measure each child— they are all under weight, some have rotting teeth, some have brittle hair and dull skin, all are anemic. It is your job to look at some and say you are not malnourished enough, we have to take someone else. You realize that this is not a great job. It is hard and painful because each child and parent needs your service. They are not poor from lack of hard work or effort. These women wash each piece of clothing by hand in a bucket, they cook where they can, some have stoves some don't, they pay rent on a shack none of you would find bearable, they pray to not have to put their children to bed hungry. They live on less than \$1 a day. You look at our new building and you realize we could hold 200 children but we don't have the manpower or the funding to fill her up yet. We will— but not yet. I bet none of you want this job.

The reality for Bolivia is that it is the poorest country in all South America and in 2004, seventy percent of Bolivians lived below the poverty line. According to the United Nations World Food Program, only twelve percent of the families consume the minimum daily requirement of 2,250 calories (that's a family, not a person). UNICEF reports that children and women are the groups most affected by high national levels of poverty. According to the 2002 Poverty Map, 2,500,000 children and 2,600,000 women live in conditions of poverty. Etta Projects is working hard to address this as best we can. Unfortunately due to the political crisis in Bolivia in the last few months these families are struggling even more. Food prices have gone up over 20 % but their incomes have not changed. They are poorer this month than they were last month or the month before. Hard to believe huh?

We are excited though to do what we can and to do it well. Maria, the social worker for Etta II already sees that we have a much higher illiteracy rate than in Etta I. This means two things, one is that we will need to put into place supports to help these women learn the basics, and two, our tutoring program that was not complete to Etta I until this year is immediately necessary here for the children. We will be looking to see how we can make these things happen. A bright spot is that we have much more property here and the families live in rural areas so growing more of our own and their own vegetables is a way to quickly help. We also will look for more farming partners and opportunities related to agriculture. Christina, our new SIT intern and Program Coordinator for Etta II who leaves June 28th spent two years doing this in Niger so aren't we lucky?

Etta II is happening though and only 2 years and one month from opening Etta I. That is exciting and brings hope to a group of people in this world who so desperately need it. I will say once again that we have it very easy here in the US. So please consider that and help those born into a family and a culture that has nothing. I truly believe those of us who have so much were given it to *choose* to help those who don't. It is our privilege to be gifted with this opportunity. Take a tiny piece of your gift and give it. Remember, 100% of any donation goes directly to the projects.

Christina DaSilva, remember her name for you will hear me talk of her. She is the extraordinary intern I was able to get to take the poorest paid job around. She has taken the position of Program Coordinator/ Manager for Etta II. Christina has a Master of Arts in Sustainable Development from the School of International Training in Brattleboro Vermont. She spent 2002-20004 as a Health and Community Development Agent with Peace Corp in Niger, West Africa. She worked for Oxfam and was an intern for Patrick Kennedy She has studied in Portugal and Spain and taught in the Dominica Republic. If you aren't impressed yet, you are a fool. On the day I interviewed her she was offered a job that would have paid her 5 times the salary. She is an incredible addition to our staff and her experience and education will be invaluable at Etta II. She is not your typical individual. She gives more than she gets and yet our hope is she will find this to be one of the best decisions she ever made. We are truly blessed to have her and we know it.



It is every man's obligation to put back into the world at least the equivalent of what he takes out of it. Albert Einstein

It has been two years June 25th since opening Etta I and this all started. We have come a long way. I haven't had room to add poetry to our newsletter for a while so I thought I would this Issue. Many of you read Etta's Poem at her funeral but we have many new friends now so I thought I would reprint her poetry to celebrate the opening of Etta II and two years of Etta I, and of course Etta, . It will give those of you who did not know her a glimpse of her.



" SENSE"

By *ETTA*

As a symphony of water
Cascades in a never ending
Promise over stones;
I see.

As the wind whispers
Secrets to the grass;
I hear.

As the trees leave
A silent music
On my tongue
I taste.

As the blossoms leave
A ballet of perfume in my nose;
I smell.

And as I look into my mother's eyes I see
A never ending abyss of secrets in hiding;
Then and only then;
I feel.



Remembering Etta
by Cheryl Hanna-Truscott

Etta Turner, Grade 7. Published in: A Celebration of the Northwest's Young Poets
1999



Return of a Weary Volunteer

By Penny Nixon-West

Lindsay Kuennen emailed me last year wondering if there was a place for her with Etta Projects. She was wanting to take a little time off from school at Western Washington and enhance her already good Spanish and experience something of life that she hadn't yet. She had tons of experience with summer camp and her references said she was not only reliable and motivated but "just plain cool." We had been looking for a Bolivian to fill the role as Children's Coordinator but had yet to find anyone to fill the bill that could manage the structure and be fun too. This position was open until we found a Bolivian to fill the shoes. I told her it would be hard, that there was little structure in place for these children. I told her they could be wild and that there were a lot of them. I told her they had few interactions with adults where they got much attention so when they did they tended to overwhelm that person. Their mothers and fathers are always busy trying to make a living, feed them, and keep them in school, they have little time for anything else. I told her it would be hard. She went anyway. I told her it would be hard. It was way hard, harder than she ever imagined. Lindsay plugged away at it through each day. She was definitely the right person for the job because she never gave up no matter how frustrating or difficult it got and believe me it got very chaotic and difficult. Lindsay had to start over several times. One time I even had to have her fire all her student volunteers and start over again. She did it and slowly created a program that even though is still being developed, is well on its way. I am proudest for her finding a role for our 12 year olds who are too old for the Comedor but still get to eat because they are now the volunteers that help with the younger children. Lindsay was essential in making this component of Etta Projects work. It truly moves this age group of children from being receivers to having a way to give back to their community. About 2 months ago a 26 year old wandered into the Comedor wanting to learn to play the guitar from Lindsay. She could not find a job in Bolivia and spent time helping her mother run a home store. Lindsay saw her skills with kids and asked her to help her out with the children's program. Fabiola began volunteering to discover that she and Lindsay made a great team. Fabiola now has a job with Etta Projects as the Children's Coordinator, thanks to Lindsay. Together they have been doing some very good things. Lindsay is back in the US now and Leslie Benjamin from Olympic College has gone down to replace her. Lindsay has made her mark at Comedor de Ninos, Etta Turner though. After she finishes all her education I am hopeful we will maybe see her back for a repeat performance, maybe it wont be so hard next time. Thank you Lindsay from the bottom of our hearts.

Lindsay and Daniel Gomez



Here are her words to describe a piece of her experience.

Changed by the View from Bolivia

By Lindsay Kuennen

A week and a half ago I was in the Santa Cruz airport with Josué, a twelve-year-old boy from the Comedor community. (Josué is one of our 12 year old volunteers, he loves books but we don't have enough to keep him happy) During my experience there I was one of perhaps eight Caucasians in the town of Montero, Bolivia which explains Josué's excited exclamation upon his first sighting of an enormously tall North American, "¡Lindsay mira – un gringo!" ("Lindsay look, a gringo!"). I left a week and a half ago but the hilarity, innocence, and love that surrounds the kids of the Comedor is still with me.

For four and a half months I spent nearly every day with the Comedor youth. In an attempt to describe them with words I can tell you that these children are real. Carmen would bring us flowers at lunch almost every day, Cristian knows how to do every bracelet braid in the book, Shirley has one of the best laughs on the planet, Arselio loves to read, David is better than all of us at soccer, Beatriz is a close second, Noelia prefers to whisper things to you, Erik says, "no ves?" ("you know what I mean?/right?/don't you see?/eh?") after almost every sentence, Julio Cesar always has and is tirelessly doing his homework, Josué and I have four secret handshakes, and Daniel cries during movies.

It is easy to look at a picture of a child in a struggling situation and only imagine the struggle – the hunger, the pain. Though that is the reality for many of them they are still real children with real emotions, jokes, laughs, and dreams. The Comedor is a place where they can be supported, appreciated, and challenged to share all of that with positive role models and one another.

To me, the energy at the Comedor made me feel part of a healthy, growing community more each day. Even kids that weren't in the program would flag me down on the street to ask how they could get involved – some didn't even care about eating they just wanted to hang out with us. Daniel's mother Claudia told me his teacher was so impressed by his progress with reading and math and wanted to know what was different. Claudia told her that here at the Comedor there is a homework help program. She said she wanted to send all her students there, Claudia said she didn't think there was room for a hundred more kids. Wow no ves? Great things are happening.



left to right -top to bottom: Dallan, Erik, Brian, Enrique, Rafael, Enrique, Daniel Gutierrez, Emperatriz, Patricia, Lizbeth, Leslie, Noelie, ?, Carmen, Carlos Eduardo, Israel, Daniel Gomez, Me! We had just got done cleaning up trash in the plaza which is across the dirt road from Etta I. You can't see it but there are three enormous bags of gross things at our feet.

left to right: Diana, Noelia, Shirley, Erik, Emperatriz, and Stefani. This was during a week of teacher strike - the kids had no homework to do so one of our 12 year old volunteers, Emperatriz, is reading to the others from a fairy tale book.



Patricia, Leslie (the new volunteer from Olympic College), Jovencito (Ruben Gomez), Me! - in the plaza having recently met a woman who mistook Leslie for Ruben's mother. Ha!



Carmen tracing a sentence in cursive. Homework practice she actually gave to herself because schools were cancelled for two weeks do to a teacher strike



A personal note from the Director of Etta Projects.

Please see what I see in these photos and in Lindsay's stories. These children want to learn and work hard even when they don't have to. This is the spirit I see in most of our children and mother's. I am honored to have the opportunity to work with and give to these lovely industrious people.