



Volume II Issue I

## 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.

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.



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March 2005

**LOOK OUT..WE ARE DOIN IT AGAIN & IT'S GOIN TO BE EVEN BETTER!!!! MAY 14TH**

By Penny Nixon-

Yep, It is time for that fun and crazy **ETTA'S AUCTION!!!!** Remember how you loved the music; Remember how the empanadas, shrimp, and coconut ice cream were the best auction food you ever had; Remember the cool champagne glasses; Remember the beautiful door prizes; Remember the laughter; Remember the beautiful Andean flute music; Remember the festive decorations; Remember how the bartender gave you 6 drinks in one; Remember the beautiful children's faces; Remember the Barbie's on a stick; Remember the tears; Remember the dancing; Remember the turquoise Emmy Lou Harris autographed boots; Remember your first real understanding of Etta Projects; Remember all the money you spent; Remember how it felt to feel like you were really giving to a charity that accomplished a lot and had its own guardian angel. Well it is time again and we promise even a greater time!

Etta's Auction is the complete funding source for Etta Projects administrative budget. Etta Projects operates with two budgets. We have a Comedor Account where all private donations go so that everyone knows that 100% of their donations goes directly to feed the children and run the mothers program. Our Auction funds the administrative costs here in the US and has it's own separate account. That means all paper, printing, rent, auction expenses, part time Director salary and stupid computer programs that the Director then has to learn to use, as well as web site funding and of course the list goes on, is funded in this one night. The auction's "Fund A Child" and all donations throughout the year go directly to the Comedor. Financial records are always available to any who want to see them.

We are also very proud to announce the construction of **ETTA II**. It is now under way in a section of Montero called

See back page for more on ETTA

# Dreams Becoming Reality

By Tiffany Thomas

In Montero, Bolivia a world away from the reality of the states, dreams are different. They are realistic and seemingly simple to most Americans but these simple dreams present a lot of challenges that Americans simply do not have. For example, after the first of the year the price of gas rose approximately 20% which has caused all prices to rise; the most detrimental of these is food. Meanwhile, some business owners are taking advantage of this by raising prices on goods that have not been increased for them. More than anyone this then affects the small, budding business owner who is trying to get ahead. The government had promised not to raise gas prices, so there have been multiple strikes. Of course no one wants to pay higher prices, especially since petroleum is one of Bolivia's highest exports. Not only is it important to the economy of the country but it is the only fuel to cook a meal, to run a small roadside stand, to bake your bread if you are lucky enough to have an oven. I would like to pose a question: how does a small hamburger stand owner get ahead when their food prices have increased but their customers will not tolerate a price change?



Claudia and her 2 children helping out with the noon meal at the Comedor.

Claudia, a mother in the Comedor, has been saving her earnings since the Comedor began in hope of earning enough money to buy an oven to sell bread out of her house. She is 28 years old and has three children ages 9, 4, and 1. One woman calls her one year old son the Comedor's baby because he was born shortly after the Comedor opened. From the last shipment of mother's products, Claudia received 780 Bolivianos (97 dollars) with which she was able to buy a used oven. Unfortunately, she found out that it spits out fire and unlike The States, there are no lemon laws to prevent this type of misfortune. However, Claudia perseveres. Her husband is out of work and she makes about 50 dollars a month with her business adventures. She told me she is going to try and take back the oven and invest in other opportunities, meanwhile the Comedor is letting her use one of their ovens to make her bread that she sells to local stores. Recently, she has



the Comedor's baby

invested the rest of her earnings to start a small business with two other wonderful Comedor women, Pura and Edith. They are currently making affordable clothing for young girls. Their plan is to first sell the clothing in Montero, and with the money they make they can then sell it in Santa Cruz. Claudia told me that because of the Comedor she has learned how to crochet, sew, make clothes and bake a variety of things – some of which she sells. She says the most important thing that she has gained from the Comedor is the opportunity to be independent and make great friends

To understand the financial climate here ----the cost of bread is \$.62 cents, tomatoes are \$.15 cents a pound, and the price of gas a gallon is \$1.76 (food is cheaper but the thing that allows them to cook the foodcost the same as in the US!). Men usually earn \$800-900 dollars a YEAR working construction or driving a motorcycle taxi. Women are limited in access to jobs and they are lacking in skills – this makes them dependent on husbands. This is why we offer job skill classes to motivated women, which gives them an opportunity to become financially independent. Some of the women have told me that the Comedor has helped by giving them confidence, a feeling of independence, and a place to go where there are other women who are ready and willing to help themselves and learn from each other

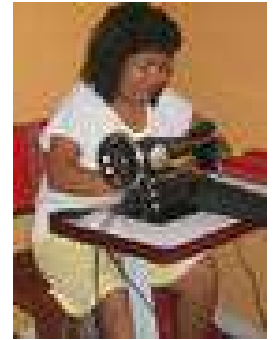
Pura is another woman that takes advantage of the classes offered at the Comedor. She is 38 years old, has 4 kids, and her husband earns about 3.50 a day building furniture. She used the money that she earned from the last shipment to buy a dresser (something she had never owned), an iron, and also invested money in the clothing business she runs with Claudia and Edith. Pura had the idea to make and sell affordable childrens' clothing because she knows what it is



Pura sewing little girls dresses at the Comedor.

like to have children that are constantly growing in and out of clothing and how this can become a burden on a struggling family. Pura told me that she originally came to the Comedor because of the soy milk

Edith Mendez is employed part time by the Comedor as the sewing instructor. She comes every day for about 3 hours. She and her new found friends(all of which she taught sewing) are involved in the children's clothing venture. Edith is 33 years old with a husband who works on a milk farm. Together, she and her husband make about 136 dollars a month. Before joining the Comedor, she worked at home, "...and that is boring sometimes, it's better to work outside of the home and meet people." Edith says she wanted to collaborate in this business to be able to save money for her children's education.



Edith

We have found that most of our women lived very isolated lives prior to their involvement in the Comedor. As with all human beings, it is sweet to have good friends. We are happy the Comedor has a hand in making friendships available.



Pura, Edith, and Claudia investing in a dream

Another reality of Bolivia is that the expenses for a child's education are high for the typical family. Each year they have to pay for a new uniform, books, school supplies, etc. For Edith, a steady income would be a great help for her family. All of the women have a role in the business; Edith makes one portion of the clothing (she has her own sewing machine), Pura finishes the sewing (using the Comedor sewing machine) and Claudia sells it in the market (with the breads she bakes). Together they are truly changing their families lives.



Emiliana finds her market

Emiliana, another mom at the Comedor, has been sewing uniforms for the school

kids who have recently started their school year... this should continue till march. She learned her sewing skills at the Comedor and has found a way to use this skill and to help other women buy more affordable school uniforms.

I believe the women that we work with have invested as much time, energy and hope into this program as you all have invested money. Everyday we are trying to make The Women's Program better and more suited to the mother's and community's needs. They are learning useful skills to market there talents and they have support and encouragement to make the transition into small-business women. One mother, after receiving her earnings from her products, went home and said to her husband, "You told me I was wasting my afternoons at the Comedor", and then added while holding up a pile of Bolivianos, "But look at what wasting my afternoons has given me."

These are only a few stories, there are more.... but please know when you give to Etta Projects you are helping to change the lives of families who have been stuck in poverty for many generations.



Volunteer extraordinaire!

*To our great joy Tiffany, our Master's level Volunteer has agreed to stay another year to continue the incredible work she has begun. We could not be happier. She has gained the confidence and the respect of our women, our Bolivian administrators and our partners. Her task has been difficult but she works hard and her work has paid off and benefited many lives. She is a wonderful humanitarian.*

*We are proud too to have sent Lindsay Keunen from Western Washington University to the Comedor in January. She works with our children's program she plays a mean game of soccer with them. She has had many summers as a camp counselor so I am sure the kids are loving her*

*She is busy organizing for the next 6 months. 19th birthday celebration at the Comedor. Hey, What she doing standing on the tables?!!*



It is hard to believe but the construction for Etta II broke ground in January, right on target and if any of you have been to South America you would know that that in itself is amazing. As usual, Etta waste no time and before Etta Projects is 2 years old she will have a completed second project. I will try to give a lay out of how this projects will work. The Comedor is being built by a Philanthropic group from Italy. Etta Projects is building the women's workshops and the social center area with the money provided by the Port Orchard Rotary and the 6220 Rotary District of Michigan and Wisconsin. There is another organization building a daycare hopefully within the next year. The Comedor will be named after *someone* named Mother Teresa but the whole complex will be named after Etta. Etta Projects role will be to administrate the whole project with the same formula as Etta I. This setting is much more rural so will have a few different features such as a large garden site and the workshops and social center can be built for their specific needs. We anticipate serving approximately the same number of families.

You may be asking yourself, "Where will Etta Projects get the money to run this project as well as Etta I?" Well we would answer with a grin and say, "We don't know... yet." Etta Projects has become very "faith " based, not in the sense of religious denominational, but in the sense of a Field of Dreams " build it and they will come". Our faith is based on belief in you who read this and those who will be touched by Etta throughout this year. I am always reminded how easy my life is when I think of the lovely women in Etta's project. My oven doesn't shoot out fire and I don't have to live with 10 of my relatives and my kids will eat every day and for the most part everything comes easy to me. We will find the resources and we hope you will be one of them. Your support thus far is changing the world.

Jim & Padre Pani walking the property in November.



The first few days of construc-



Etta II...She's going to be a beauty!



# Etta Turner Park

Just another bit of news for those of you who don't know. I would like to invite you to go hang out sometime at a quaint little place on the water front in Port Orchard Washington called The Etta Turner Park. Before it had such a cool name it was just a pile of rubble consisting of concrete, asphalt, weeds, briars and trash. Now it is a beautiful little strip of property with crocus, daffodils, tulips, park benches, pretty light posts, azaleas, picnic tables, rhodies and a sweet gazebo looking out over the bay. It is not big but it sure is special.



What a great sign!

It all began when the South Kitsap Rotary began looking for a project to honor their Rotary International's Centennial Celebration. (By the way Happy Birthday Rotary!) The idea came up to transform this ugly strip of property into a park. S.K. Rotary took on this challenge. This is a small club, (I call it the Burrito Club, they eat Mexican every Tues.), so they had to work mighty hard to accomplish this feat in the time they wanted.



Great entrance for a bride

Somewhere in there they kindly asked if they could name the park after Etta. We were very touched and most honored as most parks are named after great or not so great politicians or historical figures not 16 year old girls. The city agreed to the name and I think in the process they have given a great message to young people in the world that kids are important even if you never get to grow up and become what the world expects of you. I am sure Etta is beaming and you can feel her spirit in this park—whether it is through watching the water fowl gather, seeing the seals play right off the bank or experiencing the water main break that turned the park into an Olympic size pool for a day.



View from the gazebo

The Rotary Club put many work parties together from August 2004 and finished only on Tuesday February 22nd, the day they turned it over to the city. Etta's friends were always invited to help at these wacky work parties. We had fun digging, planting, hauling, ripping out, laughing with everyone whether they were Etta's teenage friends, work release folks or Rotary. There were always lots of laughs and sometimes some really good food. Now there is nothing to do but sit back and enjoy. This park will witness many special moments of first kisses, pleasurable walks, quiet lunches and maybe even a wedding or two. It is a good place on this earth.



A beautiful array of plants

Although all of you couldn't be invited to the dedication ceremony (Rotary couldn't afford enough lasagna for the 600+ people on our mailing list... cheap skates!) Etta Projects hopes to throw a 2 year Etta Projects Celebration for all our friends at the park sometime in June so watch for specific dates. We figure some cheap hotdogs, some watery lemonade and some good music on a sunny summer evening is the least we can do to say thanks for all of you, all of Rotary, and all of Port Orchard. Besides we are known for throwing good shindigs!

P.S. For those out of staters we will mail your hot dogs to you and someone from the board will call you and sing to you over the phone.



Bricks line the gazebo inside & out it with names of supporters.