

Dear Friend,

As you read this letter, China STEP 2005 will just have returned from spending the month of July in China. The 10 who made up China STEP 2005 will have spent two weeks interacting with orphans at an orphanage in Changsha and about 10 days teaching English as a second language at a camp near Beijing. Guatemala STEP 2005 will be finishing up spending nearly eight weeks in Guatemala. The three young ladies who are making up Guatemala STEP 2005 will have traveled throughout Guatemala in a variety of ministry contexts.

A summer team experience, such as OC's STEP, is a life-changing time. Kristen and Andrea were China STEP 2004 participants. Kristin wrote in an e-mail dated earlier this year: "It changed my entire world. What an amazing experience.... And our team was awesome. I am just so grateful for the experience."

Andrea wrote in a note: "I am so thankful for the opportunity God gave me to serve in China. He honestly used that experience to change my life." Andrea went to Guatemala this year to help out in an orphanage.

Carrie was a Guatemala STEP 2004 participant. After her time in Guatemala, Carrie wrote in a letter to those who partnered with her: "I witnessed God's loving grace as His plans erased mine, watching children play happily with the night stars shining around them, and experiencing the sights and sounds of a different culture. I want to say thank you for your part in allowing



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me to take advantage of this summer adventure. Before I left this summer, I was not sure if I really wanted to dedicate my life to teaching children, but by summer's end that had changed."

Our experience in 1976 on a summer team that we went with to Colombia was invaluable to us. Our time in Colombia helped bridge our arrival two years later in Bolivia 27 years ago this month. Our experiences on the nearly 30-member summer team that went to Colombia in 1976 underpinned what we would do over the succeeding years of leading summer teams in Bolivia and in Guatemala and now as I facilitate the assignments of summer teams. As we reflect back on our time in Colombia, what stands out the most for us was the heat, the hours standing on streets—selling Christian literature, going through a tract called *Cinco Pasos Hacia la Vida* (literally translated—Five Steps That Make Life) with whoever would stop—and witnessing and being a part of decisions of faith, a meeting every night in a different local church, my driving the small truck to transport the other summer team participants to different sites, Nancy having a favorite necklace stolen from around her neck as she was walking through a market area, Nancy discovering a potentially serious health issue early in our time in Colombia, and the daily devotional and debriefing times.

Nancy and I have been blessed with nearly 30 years of cross-cultural experiences. We are very thankful that our experiences are now being used here at OC's International Mobilization Center. From our prior experiences as a mentor couple during OC's annual internship, we know that we will just have had another very blessed time with a group of men and women who are just beginning their blessing-filled cross-cultural trek. Thank you again for being such faithful partners with us. God bless you.

Sincerely, in Christ,