



# CHAMPION CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

*A program of the Christian Family & Children's Center*

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**April 12, 2013**

Dear supporters of the CCS mission to the Dominican Republic,

Thank you from the Champion Christian School Mission Team! We would like to thank everyone who helped make our trip to Santiago, Dominican Republic possible. It was an amazing and life changing experience for all of us. While there, we were involved in three main types of ministry: construction, visitation, and evangelistic programs in schools and churches. The various perspectives of the mission team members have been combined in the following letter to give you a glimpse into the trip and the many different activities in which we participated.

As you know, one of the major purposes of CCHS focusing on these annual trips is to help train leaders and students who will grow into leaders who understand how God is working around the world, and know how to serve, and put themselves into perspective. This trip has helped to accomplish that in so many lives. Several of our students renewed callings in their lives that the Lord has placed on them earlier, and several have become much more focused in helping others to understand how much we have been blessed with, and to become more committed to a thankful spirit in their lives. Listen to just a few of our stories.. and please check out our website at [www.champion.org/ccs/missions](http://www.champion.org/ccs/missions) and click on the DR trip to watch our videos and see many pictures of the great things that happened.

After a long and eventful bus trip from Donegal, PA to New York City (to take advantage of major cost savings on flights), we flew to Santiago, DR. For many team members it was their first plane ride and first time out of the country. When we arrived in the DR, we were immediately amazed by the heat. We met the Allyns and the Gundersons, missionaries who have worked with Calvary Ministries in the Dominican Republic for more than 30 years. They helped to orient us to life there and our ministry opportunities for the week.

Several ministry opportunities came through a Christian school that Calvary Ministries is involved with as a part of their ministry. The school reaches approximately 80 students ages three through fourteen. Many students come from underprivileged homes and receive scholarships to attend the school. This school was our main work site on Wednesday and Thursday, and we enjoyed getting to know many of the staff and students there. One group of our students and adults worked to repair and refinish the bookcases that house the school's small library. In spite of having to mostly sand the cases by hand because of the lack of electricity at the school, the construction team was able to make the bookcases look great. The kids of course loved our students and the many activities we did together. We cannot even begin to express the feeling that we received when we arrived the first time, and what seemed like hundreds of little Dominican hands and faces peeped through the balcony posts to see us as we came! Our teams all wished that they could have done more to help the school. One of the neat things we are able to do was to make a connection between this school and other ACSI schools in the DR. This should help make them stronger and more connected to each other!

Another small group from our school dressed as clowns and went visiting in the neighborhood near the school. They prayed with people and invited them to the Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday church services that we were involved with. One student reported, "I admit that at first I was a little nervous walking around this new place, but I'm really glad I did. It was really eye-opening and it showed me how lucky we are to have jobs, food and nice homes. I feel more thankful for what I have."

On Wednesday and Thursday, the rest of our mission team stayed at the school to do some programs with the children. When we got to the school all of the children were so excited to see us that they were sticking their heads through the banisters and waving. Our programs consisted of Spanish praise songs, puppet skits, dramas,

prayer and devotions. All of our CCS students were involved in giving devotions and testimonies at some point during our time in the DR. Our three South Korean students sang a Korean praise song and shared devotions with children at the school. The Korean students said later, "The children didn't even understand what we were singing, but they were grinning with delight. After we sang, they applauded for us and gave us big hugs. At that moment I realized again that God is Almighty." After the programs we did crafts and then had free time to play with the children. We played with jump ropes, hacky sacks, etc. The children appreciated even the smallest things that we did.

On Wednesday evening we were invited to be a part of a Haitian church service that was held in the new school building being built near the current school. The service started with the church members singing the hymns "The Love of God" and "How Great Thou Art" in Creole. You could hear the African influence in the Haitian music that was different from the Latin influence of the music in the Dominican churches. Our team shared our dramas and then two of our team members shared their testimonies which were translated from English to Spanish and then to Creole. The service concluded with the Haitian pastor calling our team forward to bless us and thank us for being there that night and worshiping with them. He told us, "No matter where we are in the world, or what language we speak, or how far apart we are, we believers are all brothers and sisters in Christ."

Our church service on Thursday night was unique in that it was held outside in a residential community. A small local church set up sound, lights and seating at the crossroads of two streets, and we were thankful that the rain stopped long enough for us to have the service and talk to people afterward. Before the service our mission team went out into the community to invite people to come. One student said, "I have to admit, it was little unnerving to walk around this neighborhood with its barbed wire and gates. However, it was my first time to see how the Dominican people live. Whenever we went to someone's door they would listen and they were extremely friendly. We were excited to see that many people that we invited actually came." Our program of music, drama and teaching went well and the audience was very responsive. At the end, the local pastor gave an altar call and one man came forward to accept Christ. We felt that we had truly seen God work through us.

On Friday we went to Sosúa Beach on the Atlantic about two hours north from Santiago. The water was so blue and clear and the weather was perfect. Almost everyone on the mission team had the opportunity to go snorkeling. One student who had rarely swum before said, "It was a totally amazing and marvelous experience to snorkel in the ocean. The colorful fish and the coral were so beautiful. I thank God that I had the wonderful chance visit a whole new world."

On Saturday morning we went to the Eternal King Church to give a community outreach program for the children in the neighborhood not far from the school. We had big plans for the day and were all very excited. We had been told to plan for about 200 children, but were amazed when 350 kids actually came. The dramas and puppet skits went well, and near the end the pastor's wife invited anyone who wanted to give their lives to Christ to come up front onto the stage. The entire stage was filled with children. Afterward we did crafts, balloons, face painting and games with the children. Things became very chaotic with so many children, but the kids said that it was one of the best days they've ever had.

On Saturday evening we went to play some basketball with high school and college students associated with the Eternal King Church. This was the first time that these boys had ever played basketball with girls, so it was very interesting. At first they were afraid to try to block the girls from our team, but soon they realized that our CCS girls can play well. It was nice to have fellowship with these guys, and to share a testimony and devotion with them after we played. A student who shared reported, "I was glad to share my personal testimony with these guys, and I think I gave a good message. This was my best day there and we all had a lot of fun and memorable moments."

The church service Sunday morning was very enjoyable. We attended the Eternal King Church where we had held the children's program the day before. We were blessed during their worship time when they sang "Forever God is Faithful," one of the songs that we had as a part of our puppet program. We did several drama specials during the service and then led the children's church while Mr. Skinner spoke through a translator at the adult service. Several of our team members realized new talent in being clowns as they helped with songs and crafts during

children's church. We were blessed to see many of the people from the school, church and basketball team that we had met earlier in the week. It was bittersweet to say good-bye to many new friends.

Later that day we had the chance to see Santiago from different perspectives. During the afternoon we walked around the city near our hotel and visited a grocery store and a small park. It was interesting to see the items that were sold in the store and the beautiful flowers that are so different from what we have here. In the evening the missionaries took us to a restaurant on a mountain overlooking the city. From that place we could see nearly into Haiti. We learned of the vastly different fates each county had received as the DR which had made several key decisions to follow godly principles and was now experiencing revival. Haiti, on the other hand had made a decision to make a pact with the Devil, and was indeed experiencing spiritual darkness throughout the land. We enjoyed the views of Santiago with a wonderful meal and then had a time of debriefing about our whole week. We give all praise to God and many thanks to the Allyn and the Gundersons for a wonderful mission experience. We are also very thankful to God for your help and support in making such a significant difference in our lives, and to help us impact in a small way the lives of others. You indeed are a part of the work God is doing there. We will put you on the Center's mailing list if you are not already on there, unless we hear differently from you.

In addition, we are still short on the funds that we need to raise to cover the trip by about \$2000. Although this is small in terms of the overall cost of the trip, it is important that we cover those costs. If you would feel led to support this trip in that way, please send your contribution to the Center marked missions.

In addition, the Center is thinking about taking a community trip (not students, but adults) to the Dominican again maybe in the fall. If you would be interested in being a part of that trip, please contact Brittney at the Center (724-455-2122x101 or [brittney\\_grimm@champion.org](mailto:brittney_grimm@champion.org)) and let her know. One of the many things that people say to us often is that they have a desire to go on trips, but at times don't have the opportunity. This is one way that we can serve the local community for those that may be interested.

Thank you once again for your investment in not only the DR, but in us! May God bless you richly.

Sincerely,

*CCS loves the Dominican Republic!*

**The CCHS High School Mission Team**

[www.champion.org/ccs/missions](http://www.champion.org/ccs/missions)

*P.S. If you gave a non-designated mission gift to the trip, we are including a contribution receipt with this letter.*