



We always thank God for all of you and pray for you constantly. As we pray to our God and Father about you, we think of your faithful work, your loving deeds, and the enduring hope you have because of our Lord Jesus Christ. —1st Thessalonians 1:2-3

Saludos (Greetings),

We trust this prayer-letter finds you well. We are thinking of you and praying for you often. We continue to enjoy the process of getting to Paraguay. Our language study is going well here in Costa Rica. Thank you for all your prayers and encouragement.

In this letter we hope to share some of the particulars of our daily lives. Karen writes about the “normal” day we experience. J shares about a special day we had this past October. We have several prayer requests and our “fun box” makes another appearance.

¡Dios le bendiga! (God bless you!)

J, Karen and Jeffrey Spurling
www.thespurlings.com

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www.cmalliance.org www.thespurlings.com
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A Day in the Life

In Costa Rica the sun rises early and so does our son Jeffrey. So every morning, between 5:30 am and 5:45 am we are awakened by the mournful cries of our son. By now we have established our routine. One of us dashes into his room to pluck him out of his crib while the other sprints into the kitchen to fill his cup with milk. Our efforts are usually rewarded with a quick smile before he grabs his cup and starts gulping away. And thus begins our day.



Our early morning activities are by no means extraordinary. We each take a warm shower courtesy of our “widowmaker” (an electrical device that is attached to the shower head and heats the water as it passes through), get dressed and grab a cup of delicious Costa Rican coffee before we are out the door. Those of you who have kids will understand when I say that we never seem to have enough time in the morning and it is usually a race against the clock to make it to school on time. Thankfully, our school is within walking distance and it takes about seven minutes to get there if J is behind the wheels of Jeffrey’s stroller and not Karen. As we enter the gates of the school and say, “Buenos Dias” to the guard we often hear the school bell alerting us to the fact that we Jeffrey says, “Buenos dias mamá y papá.”

have five minutes to get Jeffrey to his day-care and then get to our respective classes. Although the culture is typically laid back when it comes to time, punctuality is expected in the educational setting. So apologetically we stumble into our respective classes mumbling something about our son making us late. The teachers nod in silent understanding and then launches into the first class of the morning, Conversation Class (J and Karen are in separate classes).

Having to converse in a foreign language at 7:30 in the morning is not an easy task. But with the help of some caffeine I am usually able to follow the conversation and respond in an appropriate manner. Our conversation classes are quite small (about five students per class) so there is nowhere to hide. Today we are learning parts of the body. It's like being back in kindergarten as we touch and shake the parts of the body that our teacher names (in Spanish of course). The sound of the bell indicates the end of the period and I move across the hall to my next class, which is Phonetics.

My phonetics teacher's name is Yolanda. For forty minutes we attempt to mimic the sounds that she makes. I once heard someone say that if you want to be a really good singer then you should not care about looking pretty. I think the same can be said if you are trying to learn a different language. Our exaggerated facial movements are not a pretty sight but we are willing to do whatever it takes.

Our morning ends with a double dose of grammar. This is where we are given the building blocks of this beautiful language. Our respective grammar teachers are excellent by any standard and we know that we are truly blessed to have them. Daily they persevere in helping us to understand grammar rules that apparently largely exist in the English language as well. Every time we learn, understand and apply something new we feel as if we have climbed and conquered Mount Everest. And there is always great anticipation to find out where we are going next in our studies. Rumor has it that next in line is direct and indirect objects. We salivate at the thought of "overcoming" yet another grammatical mountain.

But before you know it, our final bell rings at noon and this signals that it is time for us to reunite as a family. So we make our way to Kinder, ensure that Jeffrey has been a good boy and then away we go. Back at home we put Jeffrey to bed for his midday nap and we finish up our day of study by completing our homework and doing some review. Then we look for a possible victim upon whom we can assail with all our newly acquired vocabulary and grammatical knowledge. Thankfully, there are many gracious Costa Ricans at grocery stores, fruit stands, in the malls, in taxis, and some even right next door that patiently converse with us despite our broken Spanish.

Well, it's the end of the day and it's time for us all to go to bed with the thought that tomorrow at the end of the day we will know more tomorrow than we know today. Isn't life great!



Los Guidos

Prior to leaving for Costa Rica a friend from our church approached us to tell us about a passion for ministry the Lord had given her—"to feed the children." She explained that she wanted to help feed the children in areas of the world where there was a great need. She believed the Lord was putting us together to help with this vision. Currently, money is being sent each month to "Feed the Children."

We had no idea how we would go about feeding the children in Costa Rica, so we began praying. During our first week of classes

Overview of a community within Los Guidos.



Fatima is happy for her new uniform and school supplies. (For more pictures of Los Guidos and our outing see the new pictures on www.thespurlings.com)

we met Keith Britton who is a missionary with Commission to Every Nation out of Kerrville, Texas. He shared his testimony of how he is back at language school to improve his language skills so that he could better communicate with those he ministers to in Los Guidos. Keith explained that in Los Guidos he ministers to the poorest children and their families in Costa Rica. Our prayer was answered.

Los Guidos is a community of Nicaraguan immigrants that have come to Costa Rica to escape economic, political and social difficulties. The land where the immigrants live is owned by a Costa Rican family with the last name, Guidos. Thus the name—Los Guidos.

These People have a difficult lot in life. It is hard to provide for oneself when you live in a country as an immigrant without an address you can claim as your own. Work is not easily obtained, and when one does find work there is little or no job security. Imagine

the stress of not being able to provide for the needs of your children.

We approached Keith and told him about the funds that are being sent to us and asked if he knew of particular needs this money could help meet. As you can imagine it didn't take Keith long to share an urgent need that these monies would alleviate. The cost to outfit one child for school for one year is approximately \$100.

One rainy day in October we were able to accompany Keith and a family from Los Guidos as they shopped for little Fatima's first year of school. We were able to purchase uniforms, shoes, pens, pencils, notebooks, paper, rulers, erasers, a book bag and much more for this little girl. It was an amazing experience to be a part of such a blessing. I can't express the joy that we saw on Fatima's and her mother's faces as we told them that these gifts have been given to them by God because He loves them so much.

I thought that this year was going to be more for learning than for ministering. However, God has blessed us with an opportunity to minister and has reminded us that He is always ready to dispense His grace.



Anyone wanting to give a tax deductible gift to the Spurling's outfit or vehicle fund can do so by mailing a check made out to The Christian and Missionary Alliance (with the words written in the memo "Spurling's Vehicle fund" or Spurling's Outfit fund") to:

*The Christian and Missionary Alliance
Attn: J and Karen Spurling's Outfit Fund
P.O. Box 35000
Colorado Springs, CO 80935-3500*

Pray for us...

1. Pray for the continuing transition to another culture. Pray that in all situations the fruit of the Spirit would be evident in our lives.
2. Pray that we would excel in their language learning.
3. Continue to pray about Karen's stolen documents. Pray that the Lord would guide us in the retrieval or renewal of the documents.
4. Continue to pray that we would be used to heighten mission's awareness in our home church and home district.
4. Pray for the raising of funds for our vehicle.
5. Pray for increased Great Commission giving.

When God's people pray they are given reason to praise. See www.thespurlings.com for praises to prayer.