

## Knowing God is Watching Over Us, by Carlos Perez

The first Sunday in August, after our Sunday worship service, we were found with an unexpected thunderstorm. Many times in my own spiritual journey, I fail to pause and see God's hand at work. On this particular day, I can attest that Sandi and I could not fail to see His care and protection over us.

Unbeknownst to us, a powerful storm was headed our way. About 15 minutes before the storm hit, Sandi headed out to the store to pick up some food for our incoming missions team. While Sandi was at the local grocery store, I was surprised to see the sky quickly change from a sunny day to a completely dark horizon. Though surprised, I continued to prep for my training session that I had to facilitate that evening.

All of sudden hail began to fall and continued to get stronger and louder. The thunderstorm roared through the neighborhood. Our kiddos all woke up crying from the noise of the pounding hail. As I tried to comfort the kids, we heard the strong gusts of wind hurling the rain against the windows.

The storm lasted at least 10 to 15 minutes. As the storm died down, the four of us made our way to the living room windows. To our surprise there were dozens of large tree limbs on the streets, laying on top of cars, and on the house rooftops. There was even a 10 foot tree limb in the exact parking spot which our family minivan was just in 15 minutes before the storm hit! There is some risk taking in serving the Lord in ministry but we can always be sure that God is watching over us, especially when you are right where God wants you to be in any given moment.



### Staff Contacts

**Rev. F. Scott Manke**  
Executive Director  
scottm@familyempower.org

**Brandie Pavon**  
ESL Director  
brandie@familyempower.org

**Charles & Ruth Amoh**  
Envision Site Coordinators  
envisionchicagoL@gmail.com  
(Ruth is also a part time  
Admin. Assistant )

**Carlos Perez**  
Associate Pastor Spiritual Formation – Latino Community  
c.antonio.perez@gmail.com

**Tony Silker**  
Graduate Intern MBI—Pastoral Assistant

### Board of Directors

**Tony Moore**  
Chairman, Treasurer

**Eric Field**  
Secretary

**F. Scott Manke**  
President, Founder

**Joe Denner**  
Board Member

**Jon Rich**  
Board Member

**Ryan June**  
Board Member

We will begin a search for new Board Members this fall. If you are interested in serving in this role, contact Scott Manke by phone or e-mail and he will inform you in greater detail of the process and requirements for Board Members.

### Prayer Support

We believe that our ability to do what we do comes from the grace of God providing our team with wisdom in making decisions and guiding our daily activities. Praying for us daily would be great encouragement to our team.

### Contacting Us

Family Empowerment Centers  
1533 West Devon Ave  
Chicago, IL 60660  
www.familyempower.org  
773-262-0760

Donate Your Boat  
1533 West Devon Ave.  
Chicago, IL 60660  
www.donateyourboat.org  
888-951-BOAT

### Electronic Giving

Visit our website for fast and secure giving options.

### Shop Amazon?

If you shop on Amazon regularly, you can support Family Empowerment Centers. When you shop using Amazon Smile you can choose Family Empowerment Centers as your charity of choice. Just shop Amazon Smile with us as your chosen charity and we benefit as Amazon will donate .5% of your purchase to us.

### Support a Child

It costs us about \$15 per day for a child to be in our after school program. We have been very creative over the years in funding the program and we have been able to keep our costs down by receiving a grant from CPS through SAFE HAVEN, utilizing work study students from Loyola University (they reimburse 75% of that cost) and having 13 PCM student volunteers from Moody Bible Institute (more than 1100 hours over the year). Despite that, we still need to raise \$1500 a month to help cover the costs of this program. **Would you consider supporting a child by helping us reach that financial goal?**

### Volunteers Needed

We can use volunteers in multiple areas at the Center. Below is just a short list of needs that we have. Call us if you would like to connect more.

- Tutors for after school and ESL program
- Technology help; server concerns, e-mail, and updates
- Fund raising help
- Cleaning & upkeep

## Family Empowerment Centers

September 2015

### Inside this issue

Summer ESL Praise .....	2
Experiencing God.....	2
Spiritually Forming the Next .....	2
Welcome Carlos & Sandi.....	3
Envision Team Photos.....	3
Knowing God is Watching .....	4
Financial Partnerships.....	4
Contact Information .....	4



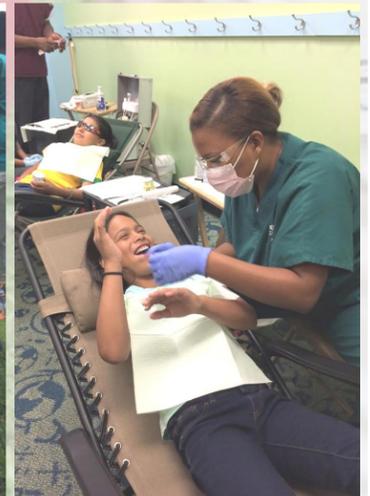
Left: 3 teams from Chinese churches in America came to serve with us and they were a great blessing to our Day Camp Children. Right: Flora & Shkelquim were baptized in August with their son and grandchildren present. Their son said, "Living in Albania we never knew what to believe with the government changing so often...my mother is so very happy now."

## A Busy Summer of Purpose, by Scott Manke

I really am not sure where to begin, but what an exciting summer it has been at the Family Empowerment Centers. I also am not sure how I can share all that I want to in 4 pages of a newsletter, but lets give it our best shot. Here is a sampling of how God has been at work in our kids camps:

**Soccer Camp, VBS & Day Camp:** For four weeks in June we operated a soccer camp in the evenings from 6:00 – 8:30. We saw a consistent number of children come out as they learned soccer skills, played soccer games, were taught about Christ, and had a safe evening alternative to being at home or in the streets. For 6 weeks following our soccer camps we operated a Day Camp for children in our community. There were two programs in which 100% of the kids in the first program participated in the second. The first program ran from 9am-10am and was a VBS program which was geared towards creating opportunities for the children to experience Christ and be spiritually formed into the image of Christ. The second program was run in partnership with the CPS Safe Haven program and ran from 10am – 2pm.

- 85 unique children registered and participated in our Day Camp program and 90% of those children participated in multiple weeks of the program.
- Curriculums utilized: Financial Management, Healthy Eating, Personal Health & Gymnastics, Sign Language, C.A.P.S. programming
- Free dental screenings were arranged for the children.
- Sports Curriculum included: Soccer, American Football, Kickball, Gymnastics, and Field Sports.
- 3300 meals were provided free of charge to the children of the program.
- Response from a mom, "We go to another church in the area but my kids tell me this is where they want to go to church."
- During one VBS time a small group of children (children are separated into smaller groups for discussion) totaling 11 received Christ as their Savior, independent of any planned response time or teaching. One child asked a question regarding sin which led to other kids asking more questions and before the end of their time together they all wanted to ask Jesus to come into their hearts.
- Children received up to 50 hours of religious instruction this summer. If you consider the average Sunday school program operates 1 hour a week for 52 weeks. Our children received the equivalent instruction in a 2 month period of time.



## Experiencing God, by Sandi Perez

Our family moved to Chicago this summer to work with FEC. On one of our first Sundays, my husband Carlos was preaching and at the end of his sermon he gave everyone some time to pray quietly and also offered that if anyone wanted to be prayed over, they were welcome to come to the front.

One couple came up immediately and wanted prayer for their family. They wanted prayer to lead their children in a godly way and wisdom in making choices. As Carlos and I stood with them praying over them, their family, marriage, choices; God's peace surrounded me and spoke to my heart, "This is where you are meant to be. Praying with people, over them, loving them where they are at."

That moment is one that I will look back on during the times of doubt. It is one of the times in the process of leaving all that is familiar and moving to a new place that I will hold on to. God moved in my heart and his is moving in so many others at FEC.

## Summer ESL Praise, by Brandie Pavon

This year we held summer ESL Classes, and here is just one story of how God was at work.

Yolanda has been coming to our ESL classes for the past year. She has 3 kids; the eldest loves participating in the child care activities, but the youngest two have always kicked and screamed when they aren't with their mom. This summer, Yolanda (and her kids) attended our daytime classes, and slowly I saw the middle child, Jesus, opening up to me as I played games with the other kids. Finally, we could get him to stay in the child care program and he loved it!

Towards the end of the summer, Jesus had to have his tonsils removed. It was pretty scary for Yolanda and Jesus since he is only 3 years old. Thankfully, a few of us had the opportunity to go to the hospital and visit with Jesus after his surgery. We talked with and prayed for the family, and they said they were very grateful for our visit; we were the only visi-

tors who had come to see Jesus. Yolanda even told me that Jesus was asking if I would come see him in the hospital. I know it may not seem like a lot, but finally having a 'breakthrough' with this sweet little 3 year old has been such an answer to prayer! I look forward to getting to know Jesus more as ESL classes continue this Fall.



Jesus is a lot of fun to be around, can't you tell?

## Spiritually Forming the Next Generation, by Scott Manke

**Hosting Envision Mission Teams:** In a partnership with Envision, we hosted 14 different teams this summer. Through those teams, we operated our summer camps which allowed us to share the Gospel through 10 straight weeks of VBS, serve the community in various ways, create relational capital for us organizationally, serve other churches & ministries in meaningful ways, and help us with our own facility maintenance and up keep. We have also been able to encourage future leaders from the visiting churches through our trainings as we try to balance service and the spiritual formation of our participants during the week they are here.

- 93% of respondents are **highly** likely to recommend this trip to someone else (100% would recommend)
- More than 85% of respondents gave the trainings the **highest** possible ratings (5)
- 95% of respondents enjoyed their Envision experience a great deal.
- 97.5% of respondents believed their volunteer work had a direct impact
- 97.5% of respondents believed that our leadership team of Scott, Charles, and Ruth met or exceeded their leadership expectations.
- 100% of respondents feel more equipped to do ministry in their context as a result of their experience.
- The greater majority of respondents believed we had a good balance of spiritual formation and ministry work/service.

### Testimony of a leader

*"Though I ultimately planned this trip for my youth group, I was excited to find myself being equipped to minister more effectively along with them. What I personally experienced on this trip was incredibly valuable and I saw our teenagers being shaped in the process which was a real blessing. Thank you guys for all that you do!"*

## Welcome Carlos & Sandi Perez, by Scott Manke

We are excited to announce that Carlos & Sandi Perez have joined our staff here at the Center along with their children: Josiah, Gracie, and Adiella.

Sandi visited the Center in the spring of 2014 on an Envision trip and expressed how much Carlos would enjoy the ministry that we do here at the Center. Well, through a series of events in the fall, we began talking about what it would look like for them to join us at the Center. Before long a plan was put into place, and on August 1st Carlos began working full-time at the Center.

Through our Envision partnership, Carlos and Sandi have been raising support as Envision Residents with a specific focus here at the Center. Carlos has already made a huge impact within our Spanish speaking community, bridging the gap with our families that are non-English speaking, building trust with them, and offering pastoral care to these households. He is focusing much of his time on creating and implementing some spiritual formation tracks within the after school program and among the faith community that gathers here, again with a focus on the Spanish speaking community.

Sandi is also jumping in through supportive ways as she gets her children settled into a home schooling rhythm and by helping with the women's and children's ministries of the Center. They continue to raise support, so keep them in prayer in this area.



Josiah, Sandi, Gracie, Carlos & Adiella

*"Carlos has already made a huge impact within our Spanish speaking community bridging the gap with our families that are non-English speaking.."*

## Envision Team Photos



**Testimony of a Participant** "This week has been a wonderful, humbling and refreshing week! I've always wanted to be a missionary all my life, and this week confirmed it once again! I was able to really just let the Holy Spirit work within me, especially during the soccer camp. The lessons each night that I taught were sometimes rough, but when the Holy Spirit took over when the kids asked deep questions; it seemed that I was able to just use the knowledge that I had learned all my life growing up at these moments without hesitation. It was great see God working through the kids as well!! Now that I'm back at home, I am really missing being involved with that neighborhood and with the kids!"

**Testimony of Participant** "I learned humility, patience, listening, having an open mind and heart, and so much more. I still have not had time to completely process all that the Lord did. One really cool thing that happened was a confirmation for my calling to teach. It was a wonderful feeling."