

Letters | Tales from Latin America

Nicaragua

On our Nicaragua service visits, we always learn so much from the people there. Our base is Los Pipitos (idiomatic for “little children” and for that part of Central America). I worked with Indalecio, a health care worker who is part of Los Pipitos family center for children with neurological and muscle disorders. Indalecio is extremely dedicated and well-loved in the community, running his own therapy clinic on Saturdays and travelling each day around the area on his bicycle to visit children.

Interestingly, they no longer refer to the children as being “disabled” but as having “different capacities,” which is much more inclusive. We saw children who had diagnoses of polio, cerebral palsy, spina bifida, and a variety of neurological or muscle disorders.

The health care workers, with very few resources, manage to make a huge difference to the people they visit. Indalecio is like a sponge, taking in any info I provide and absolutely flying with it. It was so nice to visit more than once: he could request materials that they can't get there.

I was able to use the braces for many children, including a number of JumpStarts and shoe inserts for quite a few children with low tone. They made such a difference.

Thanks for your generosity. We were quite an attraction for the whole town!
—Anne Mele, M.A., OTR



This young girl was incredibly pleased with her DAFOs because she was able to walk with more stability and didn't need to hold on! She loved the sneakers, too. I often saw her walking about town with more confidence.



This adorable little boy had several orthopedic issues. With the DAFOs and some hip support or a walker, he was able to stand with more stability and was so pleased that he wouldn't even let his sister see them, since they were “given to ME,” he said.

Ecuador

Our therapy service trip to Ecuador was both fantastic and surreal. I was able to fit a young boy who had a diagnosis of Down syndrome with a pair of PattiBob[®] shoe inserts. His family had been trying for a year to raise the money for just a pair of shoe inserts.

One 16-year-old girl had no formal diagnosis, but I was able to fit her with hinged DAFOs to give her stability. She can now walk outside with a little assistance and, finally, play with her siblings.

These orthoses are helping families by giving their children more mobility and independence. Thank you, Cascade!

—Samantha Stith, PT



Samantha tries out a pair of DAFO[®] 4s, left, and a pair of JumpStart Leap Frogs, right, on two boys at the clinic.