

Dear Friends,

The last day of school has finished. The last homework assignment corrected. The last runny nose wiped. As I reflect over this past school year, I see how God has worked, and provided, and never left my side.

*August began with the challenge of the brother/sister duo that needed so much love, structure, language, and discipline. My classroom assistant, Stefanie (from PA) began her year with us at the end of the month.

*September took Criss and his family to New York, where they have relocated. He will receive the therapies and services in NY that he could not get here in Puerto Rico. A young lady named Sonia from the neighborhood showed up with a degree in teaching and a desire to volunteer. She did not know Jesus, but she had two willing hands, so she was brought in to help manage the chaos of my class and teach Spanish to the older division of students.

*October and November were really tough months of tedious and continuous instruction and discipline. I had a class of beginning readers, and the two who couldn't spell their names or sit still. God gave me the energy and patience to face this challenging bunch each day.

*December brought wonderful encouragement as Kioney (the sister in the challenging pair) had her understanding awakened during the nativity and birth of Jesus activities. She understood the role that Jesus played in our hearts and lives. As I began to erase the pictures of a clean white heart with Jesus in it, and a black heart with sin, she "whispered" to me in sign language that her heart was still black, and she wanted Jesus to live in her and erase her sin, too. What a time of rejoicing. I looked at the next semester with hope.

*January-March brought three different work groups down to work with us and on the school grounds. The kids learned how to quickly make friends with these visitors, but are still learning how to say goodbye as each group goes home. Then I set aside time each week that we would go on Facebook to see pictures of these friends, and read about what they are doing now. Their writing journals were left in the dust as they began to write letters to friends instead.

*March also brought Selena to my class- a 13 year old from the mountains. She began to work with my group in the mornings because sadly, she had been in the PR education system for 8 years and still could not read or spell her name. She didn't know she had a birthday. This expanded my age group from 4-13! All learning the days of the week, the months of the year,

counting to 100, sight words, etc. After lunch, Selena would join the teenagers for some age-appropriate interaction. She would sit in on their classes, not with the goal to learn Algebra, but to learn more sign language and social skills.

*April and May were good months of uninterrupted learning. Selena (the student) and Sonia (the volunteer) made professions of faith! Kioney, who began the year kicking and screaming, ended the year by passing some of her classmates in math and language. Her brother is now doing age-appropriate school work. The rest of the class is also doing well, and celebrating educational milestones. My Spanish is improving, and I have good relationships with the parents, grandparents and cousins of my students. God is so good, and I praise Him for these things.

I am so thankful for YOU, who faithfully support me through finances and prayer. The letters of encouragement helped to keep me going on those days that were especially tiring. I truly could not be here doing this work without you.

I look towards the next school year with great anticipation, wondering what God will do next! My early readers will move up to the next class, and I will be teaching ONE age level (phew!) but please keep praying, because that level will be KINDERGARTEN! So I'll be starting all over again with a few new students and Saul (the brother from the super duo challenge of this year). There are also several other families with older deaf students that are moving to the island and hoping to join us in August. Sadly, my assistants Stefanie and Sonia will not be with us- they have finished their year commitment, and are headed for the states. Stefanie will go back to PA, and Sonia is hoping to move to South Dakota. Please pray for all of these transitions, and for the new teacher and assistant who are making plans to come here for this next school year.

With the end of my online degree program in sight☺, and an easier load of students, I have a goal to write to you more, and also maintain that blog that I have neglected this year. Thank you again, for all that you do in teaming up with me to bring God's word and gift of salvation to the deaf children and their families in Puerto Rico!