



Fun Sartor Facts:

- This year we had chicken instead of turkey for Thanksgiving. We still ate too much.
- Lauren has recently been on a dessert baking binge. Mmm . . .
- The guard's name at our gym is Leo. We still can't figure out his friend's name.
- Last year, Lauren's mom made Matt his very own stocking.
- Matt picked the right stocking online playing the Dell Holiday game and won a Dell Axim x51v hand held!
- If you want to turn your car around in a Costa Rican's driveway, you may encounter a man with a gun. Matt did.
- Matt & Lauren have been running almost every day, not from anyone in particular.
- The rainy season has ended and the kids are out for summertime.

Year Round Christmas Fun!



Thanksgiving Day in Costa Rica

Dear Friends,
Feliz Navidad & Happy Holidays to each and every one of you! Admittedly, it does not feel much like

Christmas here at the moment. Sure there are lights and decorations up everywhere, and the grocery store plays some of our favorite carols in Spanish, but something is missing. Perhaps the weather is throwing us off. The rainy season has ended and the sun shines brightly here every day. The mountains are in clear view and there is a pleasant breeze always blowing. Though we've temporarily forgotten what a real winter is like, we know that the cold will be waiting to rudely remind us upon our return to the States. However, it doesn't seem to be the weather mixing things up.

Perhaps then, it is the culture. Living in another country can often times feel like living in another world. In the world of Costa Rica, Christmas is simply different. Sure there are some similarities, like the superficiality of it all, the lack of understanding and appreciation of the holiday itself, ever fueled by the god of commercialism. This growing dynamic, not isolated to Christmas, seems inescapable in today's "global" economy. All of that aside, there remains some sweet purity here in the traditions of the gift exchange, the seasonal foods and festive decorations. Families get together, parties are thrown, and celebrations are had. There are also random explosions of

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some very loud and unregulated fireworks, which is a bit different. Also, because this is a predominantly Catholic part of the world there aren't a whole lot of people complaining about the overemphasis on Jesus, or the use of the word Christmas in Christmas Tree. Still, apart from explosions and the lack of what many would call political correctness, we can't pinpoint the difference as cultural either. To many here and everywhere, "It's the most wonderful time of the year."

So what then is different about Christmas this year? I would have to say that we are. Christmas is a luxury that we are afforded all year round in this place. How so? Just as good friends are no less important throughout the year than they are on their birthdays, so it is with Jesus. Our relationship with Him has only grown in our time here. As each day passes we find ourselves more and more thankful, not only for his birth, but for his life, death, and resurrection as well. These moments in history have shaped and formed our own personal history and will equally affect our future. The best parts of who we are exist because Jesus was born. We remember Him daily because He, like us sought to follow God with His heart, soul, and mind. Unlike us, He did this perfectly

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BWAB Goes on Tour



In late October, Matt took a two week trip with Jamie Johnson spanning two countries and four states. The trip included great opportunities to catch up with friends, individuals and churches that support Boy With a Ball, important meetings with government agencies in D.C., and an amazing time at the Association of Covenant Ministers Annual Conference. Every part of the trip was memorable. Fall had just begun in the States and the changing leaves and winds were with us everywhere that we went. We spent time with a beautiful church in Boston, and when I say church, I am speaking of the people. We spent time at Harvard mingling with pro-

fessors and students, sharing about the work we do in the U.S. and abroad. Though we did get to see the sites in Boston, in D.C. the landmarks were merely a backdrop. The meetings with government agencies all around D.C. were incredible, however, and it was encouraging to meet with so many government officials who are excited about our efforts in working with youth. We spent our last days in Columbus with good friends at the ACM conference and new friends at a local house church. We even got to see a few more friends during our layover in D.C. Though it was difficult to be away for so long, God really made the most of our time in the States. Thank you to our hosts and friends who showed us the meaning of Biblical hospitality.

Year Round Christmas Fun! (Continued from page 1)

and so we look to Him each day for guidance as we struggle to live by the example that He set before us.

Our relationship with the Father through Christ has led us to live in Costa Rica. Recently that has meant meeting with a group of teachers every Tuesday afternoon to discuss a book we are reading called *The Celebration of Discipline* by Richard Foster. Our time on Tuesdays has helped us to build many new relationships in and beyond this group. These new relationships have given us the opportunity to encourage others in their faith as we are getting to know them. As we read about the discipline of service, Lauren was encouraged to help one of the teachers, who will soon be getting married, with some of the her grading in an effort to lessen her load during this busy time of year.

Many in that group have also expressed an interest in coming out with us on Saturday nights and some of them have already come. Every Saturday night at around 11pm, the Latin American team heads to downtown San Jose, armed with nothing more than coffee, cookies, and Matt's bad Spanish. We start at a park, make our way to a hotel surrounded by prostitutes looking to lure in visiting Americans (which they are very good at by the looks of it) and little kids selling flowers. We stop and chat with all the regulars while serving our gourmet coffee, and then head on to the corners where the drug addicts and gangs hang out. Our conversations are typically short, but on occasion we get a chance to pray with our friends downtown.

The stories are endless, sometimes scary, and sometimes hilarious. Though we've only been at it for a couple of months now, we are encouraged to see what might happen.

In addition to our many groups, Saturday night excursions, and random relational activities, we have also been very busy getting ready for our trip back home as well as making final preparations for the Next conference in Atlanta. We are truly looking forward to seeing as many of you as possible during our time back in the U.S. As always, we are so appreciative of your friendship and continued support. Many thanks to those of you who have remembered us in your prayers, sent us letters, spoken with us on the phone, and blessed us financially. We are grateful for your friendship. May you have a wonderful and blessed holiday season. Merry Christmas!

With Much Love,

The Sartors

Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant,

--Philippians 2:5-7

That's a Little Different . . .



Some of you know that Matt was born with only one kidney. That's a little different in and of itself, but this story isn't entirely about kidneys or the lack thereof. This is a story about the Sartors making a routine visit to a Costa Rican hospital to

gency . . ." "Just in case of emergency" was just so casual, kind of mildly suggestive. After that, the fact that anyone would press my buttoom with a phone symbol simply because there was an emergency seemed entirely outrageous. Fortunately we have not been in the elevator during any sort of emergency that might prompt a buttoom pressing, but we have informed the U.S. embassy here to let them know the kind of activities taking place in public buildings. They didn't seem too worried. Nonetheless, our appointment was scheduled for nine in the morning which doesn't seem to be an agreeable time for our doctor. He generally shows up about forty-five minutes late which I guess we'll chalk up to culture. So what did we do with ourselves during that time? We got really excited about the floor fans that had been converted into ceiling fans. These were about the 'coolest' things we had seen in quite some time. At this point, you the reader, may be wondering if we are beginning to lose it down here. But hey, it's all about the little things in life. In the end, we eventually saw the doctor, got the CAT scan, and it turns out that Matt's kidney, and buttoom, is fine.



take some pictures of Matt's favorite kidney. After a bus ride down town and an eight block walk, we finally arrive at the hospital where we had scheduled an appointment with a urologist. We eventually find the right building, as there are two. We hop in the elevator and notice the sign above. (By the way, we don't take our camera everywhere, these pictures were taken on our second visit) Before I get going on the sign, may, I just say that we have been amazed at the crazy amount of misspellings and simple grammatical mistakes of English in well published brochures, periodicals, and signs. Did you know that down town at the casino, you can play "Texas Holden?" I digress. We found this sign hilarious because first we know it should say "Only in case of emer-



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- reaching young people in their neighborhoods
- equipping them to grow into leaders
- building communities of and around them
- releasing them to improve the world

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