

Dear Family and Friends,

“For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.”

1 Corinthians 3:11

Broken and beautiful. The smell of diesel fuel and dirty engines was thick in the air. As I took little Jorge (5yrs) by the hand and helped him out of my vehicle, his grandmother and other family members climbed out the back of the truck. The bus station is always a dirty and busy place. These moments are always awkward for me. I picked up little Jorge one last time. He put his arms around my neck and gently yet firmly, laid his head on my shoulder. As he rested his head on my shoulder, I felt he was saying, “I wish I could stay here forever. Thank you.” That is how the deaf communicate, with signs, actions, expressions, and touch. It is their language.

This was the result of what the juvenile judge had decided earlier in the morning. The results of the judge’s decision placed little Jorge right back into the exact situation he had been rescued from. But what we learned after the court ended, added to the heartbreak. When the court adjourned, we invited Jorge’s family to Casa De Mi Padre to get his things. While we were filling up a suitcase, our social worker began talking to the grandmother. The grandmother openly admitted the family really didn’t want the boy. They just didn’t want any trouble with the judge. A few moments later our social worker came over to me and told me what the grandmother had said. I felt so sad. As I drove the family to the bus station, I was silent. I didn’t know what to say. As Jorge walked away, a little part of my heart walked away with him. It hurt seeing him go, even though he has only been with us for five months. I was brokenhearted. We can only hope Jesus has a plan.

Thankfully, we can know that beauty can come from brokenness and disappointment. For the past several months we had been working through another difficult situation with one of our older children. But thankfully, it became clear, Jesus had a plan. Just a few nights ago we celebrated the wedding of our first daughter from Casa De Mi Padre, and a wonderful answer to pray. The culmination of this beautiful night began out of the brokenness and crisis of the past, but Jesus had a plan. Cristina (10yrs) and her two brothers, Walter (6yrs) and Geovany (8yrs) came to us after Casa De Mi Padre had been open for three short weeks. Cristina was the first little girl to come to our home. They had been living with their father and stepmother. Both parents were emotionally and physically abusive to the children. But Jesus had a plan.

Before she came to us, Cristina was beaten so severely, she ran away to the home of a distant relative. A few days later, her younger brothers ran away as well. They found their way to where Cristina was staying and knocked on the door. Cristina met them at the door. She began to cry and said they should go back home. But Geovany protested and said, “We can’t go back there. Look at your bruises.” So they didn’t. In time, the relatives felt they could no longer properly care for them. So they took Cristina and her brothers to the juvenile judge. He ordered them to Casa De Mi Padre. Jesus had a plan.

The first day they came to us, the shock and trauma of what they had been through was evident. They were malnourished, confused, and afraid. As we began to meet their basic needs and apply the word of God to their hearts, we saw new life bloom in them. As their trust in us grew, happiness filled Casa De Mi Padre. I remember Cristina’s first day. She came into the dining room and decided to sit at my right hand, and that was her seat for the next eight years. Jesus had a plan.

As the days turned to years, Cristina became a very happy and bubbly little girl. When she grew into her teen years, there were times we did not see eye to eye. She could be very strong willed. I often had to exercise a lot of patience with her, while standing my ground. After a bit, she would come around and ended up making the right decisions. She never failed to express her love for me. Even when we were in a tough place we always loved one another. God used this to help get us through. When Cristina turned 18 years old, it was time for her to be placed in another living situation. We found a place where she was able to stay for two more years. But when Covid came, this living opportunity closed. Cole McCauley, our Casa De Mi Padre operations manager and Sarah, his wife, wanted to host Cristina in their home. It was a good fit. Jesus had a plan.

When Cristina was growing up at Casa De Mi Padre, we did our best to lay the foundation of Christ in her heart. But often times when children are growing into their late teens they begin to want to make their own decisions and choices. This process is a very important time in their lives as they transition from adolescence to adulthood. They are becoming their own person. As important as this time is, it can also be a time marked by tension and danger. But as the scripture says, “Train up your child in the way he should go: and when he is old he will not depart from it.” At this time in Cristina’s life she was working full-time and had begun her first year in college. Our hope for her was that she would continue to work full-time and complete her education.



At some point during this time she met a young man. Her focus shifted. As the days passed, tensions between Cristina and Cole's family increased. Cristina was not abiding by the rules of their home. Cole made many heartfelt attempts to reason with Cristina to refocus her on the Lord and on her work and studies, all to no avail. In time it became clear Cristina had done things that were not in God's timing and in accordance with His word. Cristina informed us she was going to move out and marry the young man. Cole took the initiative and met with the young man to try and get to know him. Cole wanted to help him understand that he and Cristina needed to slow down. Cole clearly communicated that some of the things Cristina and he had done were wrong in the sight of God and against His Word. The young man responded by saying, "I have never heard anything like that." Cole took this opportunity to share the Gospel with him. It became clear the young man was not a follower of Christ. Thankfully, at the time, he was always respectful and asked lots of questions. Even though the young man didn't respond to Cole's counsel, the seeds of the Word of God were planted in his heart. Jesus had a plan.

Soon after, Cristina and the young man came to my home and informed me they were going to marry. It was the first time I had met the young man. He was cordial, Cristina was nervous. Cristina began by saying she very much wanted me to meet Max and him to meet me. She then told me they were going to have a civil ceremony with a lawyer and their families. I listened quietly to all she had to say. Finally Cristina asked me, "What do you think Papa Shane?"

Speaking to Max, I said, "Honestly, we raised Cristina to be a godly young lady. Our hope for her was she would finish her education and then wait upon the Lord and his timing to find a godly young man who would love her as Christ loves his church." I said, "This has been very difficult for me." I turned to Cristina, "Can you imagine trying to follow Jesus with someone who doesn't know the Lord. And then when all is said and done, you go to heaven and he goes to hell. Can you imagine this? How terrible. This is not what we had hoped." Cristina then asked, "Papa Shane will you come to the civil ceremony?" I said, "Cristina I will have to pray about it." Then Max finally spoke up, "Why wouldn't you honor Cristina by coming to our ceremony?" I responded kindly but firmly, "Because she didn't honor me. And more importantly she didn't honor God by her actions." At this point, Max had the deer in the headlights look on his face. He said nothing more. I concluded our conversation by telling them under the circumstances it is better for them to be legally married than to live together. Cristina ended by saying how much she appreciated all I have done for her and that she will always love me. I told her I loved her as well. The next week Cristina gave me the date of the civil ceremony. After praying about it, I told her I would go. It seemed to me, being married civilly was Cristina's way of trying to move the situation in the right direction. I felt I could be a part of that.

A few days after the ceremony, Max and Cristina came to visit me at Casa De Mi Padre. We had a wonderful time. As we talked, spiritual things came up. Cristina took the opportunity to clearly and with much conviction share the gospel with Max. She said, "Max you need to receive Jesus?" Max said nothing. The conversation gave me much hope for Cristina. Cristina told me that they wanted to have a wedding in the church as soon as possible. I said, "This would make me very happy."

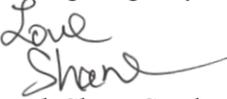
Their special day soon arrived. Pastor David and Loli his wife, helped Cristina plan everything. It was beautiful. Pastor David gave a powerful message. Cristina was absolutely stunning. Max was scared spitless. All the kids from Casa De Mi Padre participated. I was honored by Cristina when she asked me to walk her down the aisle, even though her biological father attended the wedding. Cristina was our first daughter to marry. My first daughter. It was a joyous occasion. At the end of the night I spoke with Pastor David, thanking him for everything. He then said, "You heard that Max received Christ a few days ago?" I said, "What! No one told me!" Pastor David had been visiting Max at his home and shared the gospel with him and Max prayed with him to receive Christ. Pastor David said, "I thought you knew." I was so happy! Sure enough, Jesus did have a plan.

Even though I have felt much brokenness with Jorge's story and the difficulties working through everything with Cristina, we can trust the plan of Jesus in our lives will be beautiful. We will continue to lay the foundation of Christ in the lives of all our children. Thank God, we can trust that Jesus has a plan.

Construction update: We are continuing to move forward on Casita no. 2. The roof is almost done and the white finishing on the outside walls will be done in a few weeks. Pray with us for the Lord's continued provision. We know Jesus has a plan.

Christmas is coming. This next month we will be coming out with our Christmas instructions for this coming December. Be watching for the information. Christmas is always a joyous time for all the children. We will need your help to get it together.

Working diligently to lay a firm foundation,


Joseph Shane Sanderson

We love you and
thank you.
We couldn't do this
without you!
many blessings.