

Victoria Varga, '04
Las Matas de Farfan, Dominican Republic



Working with the Missionaries of Charity at their Nutritional Center for Children in Las Matas de Farfan was one of the most rewarding experiences of my life. We lived with a typical family from the town, and were therefore able to experience the living conditions first-hand, while also working to aid the community. Seven days a week, for six weeks, Elaine and I worked with some of the most beautiful children that temporarily resided there. They were in great need of our attention and caring.



There were approximately 60 children between the ages of 0 and 13, whose parents, due to their poverty or inability to get medical attention, cannot provide them with the nutrition or healthcare their quickly growing bodies need. Our work involved playing with them, feeding them lunch and dinner, and cleaning up after them. Although there were several workers at the center, much

help was still needed in changing the children's diapers, clothing, and bedding, as well as providing them with the love and affection they often did not receive.



Children were admitted to the center based on their nutritional health. Many of the children were malnourished, anemic, or parasite ridden. The Sisters of Charity and all of the workers provided them with their meals, vitamins, medical attention, and a place to play and rest. But, what they also provided them with was some TLC.



On several occasions, the Sisters took Elaine and I on excursions to nearby "campos" (small villages), where we helped distribute medications and vitamins to those who could not afford it themselves.



Perhaps the most difficult part of our service trip was leaving behind the children we had grown to care about so much. Everyday they would run to the gate, and make it so hard for us to leave. But, I couldn't stop the tears the last time we had to say "adios

