

Meet Our Speaker: **EMILY SPEICHER**

For her 17th birthday this past April, all Emily Speicher wanted was for her friends and family to donate money to help build a home for 15 orphans in Guatemala. The Seminole teen's inspiration behind this project is Casa Angelina, an orphanage outside of Chimaltenango, just an hour from Guatemala City. She recently returned from her fourth mission trip to the orphanage, spending a month and a half in Guatemala in June and July.

Speicher's family moved around a lot before settling in Seminole three years ago. At one point, they lived in Colorado Springs, Colo., which is where she met Ivan and Kimberly Tait, who became family friends. The Tait's ran What Matters Ministries and Missions, as well as Casa Angelina.

When she was in the sixth grade, Speicher first visited Casa Angelina on a mission trip organized by the Tait's. Then in spring of 2012, she attended a mission conference. Following the conference, she reached out to the Tait's on Facebook and quickly organized a month-long summer trip to Casa Angelina.

She felt a pull to the Christian-based Casa Angelina, which currently operates on an 18-acre complex with five homes of 15 children and two house parents each, as well as educational and athletic facilities, a kitchen and dining area, and a medical center.

Because it isn't government run, Casa Angelina is unlike any orphanage she's ever heard of, Speicher said. The children brought there have been through a lot – sexual abuse, emotional abuse, physical abuse – “basically any kind of abuse you can think of,” she said. But the orphanage is “a very loving place” and “like one big family,” she said. “It's not just a big cement building.”

After her first summer there, she visited during her spring break week this past March before going back again this summer. Each time, she's served a generic role, helping wherever she's been needed, doing everything from assisting with the young girls, working in the kitchen, cleaning the homes.

When she learned that the orphanage wanted to build additional homes in order to help more children, Speicher knew she wanted to raise the money to build one of them. She decided that she would call her building Casa Santiago, the Spanish name for James. This came from the Bible verse James 1:27, which discusses a “pure and faultless” religion that cares for the orphaned, she said.

Going into her senior year, she's not sure what comes next. Though she wants to graduate and immediately head back to Guatemala full-time, her parents insist she earns her college degree first. She's not sure where she'll go to college, but she knows that whatever she studies will help her with her mission work down the road.

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ROTARY 2013-2014

SEMINOLE SMOKE SIGNALS

Club Number 4289



January 15, 2014

PRAYER FOR TODAY: Lord, help me to welcome each day as a gift from Your hands. Amen.

**PROGRAM THIS WEEK: Emily Speicher
Guatemala Orphanage Home**

**PROGRAM LAST WEEK: Former Governor Bob Martinez
Holland & Knight, Senior Policy Advisor**

**PROGRAM NEXT WEEK Sophia Sorolis, Economic
Development & Greenhouse
Manager, City of St. Pete**

Upcoming Events:

January 16	Golf Tourney Meeting, 12:00 SLCC
January 29	Lucy and Keith Bailey Climbing Mt Kilimanjaro
February 5	Dr Matthew Galloway MD, Orthopedic Surgery & Sports Medicine
February 12	Sweetheart Luncheon
February 19	Danielle Weitlauf, Tampa Bay Innovation Center in Largo