



January 16, 2010
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*An environmentally friendly Christmas Tree and
homemade ornaments made by everybody mark Christmas at The Bridge*

RECENT NEWS

Christmas 2009 was a big success, with 80 people attending and having a ball. Barry gets personally involved with indigenous healing methods. School Program 2010 is coming soon! The Epson Printer company provides excellent service to The Bridge, and we say "Thank You!"

CHRISTMAS 2009

Nanci Stevens

Unlike all other outdoor Christmas parties so far, when we would pray fervently for the rain to stop long enough to set out colorful crepe paper decorations, this one dawned bright and sunny, allaying at least one of the many fears that come along naturally with daring an event of this proportion. A few days earlier we'd been blessed with the miracle of Emile, an "on the ground" 24 year-old French "angel", who had already lifted much of the load by popping in just in time to save my bacon. Bear was being treated for a serious leg infection and my "willing to leap tall buildings in a single bound super hero husband" was now down with a case of kryptonite poisoning. The king from his throne had been thrown prone. He was useless.

Christmas Eve, as I tediously toiled in our tiny kitchen feeling very much overwhelmed by it all, I prayed, "Lord, I've bitten off more than I can chew. Please help me." Roger Whitaker's soothing voice penetrated the din of my monkey mind with the phrase, "to face unafraid, the plans that we've made, walking in the winter wonderland." Now the walking in the winter wonderland part seemed odd except metaphorically as we were planning piñatas and water balloons, but the lines stuck with me and by morning, He, She, or It sent me a French helper with the strength of ten and an enthusiasm that left her tireless and me transformed.

I'd had a hunch to make too much food. Last year we had served 60 people. This year there had been more advance notice, and the weather was beautiful. Would we have enough food and gifts for everybody? Lots of folks had R.S.V.P'd and Timoteo Jackson, a tribal leader had phoned to say he would be arriving in an entourage with fourteen of his closest family members!



Timoteo Jackson, right, with his family of 14, some of which are shown in this foto.

The Abrahams brothers, Frank and Roy volunteered extra tables and chairs; RosaLinda, the piñatas; Andrew and his brother donated candy for the piñatas, then stayed to coordinate the kids' games. Much thanks to Rock'n J's for bags of rice, beans and chickens. We also give special thanks to Peter at Surf Rentals who collected food and money for the party.



Nanci and Emilie, a Volunteer who showed up out of the blue, created the table treasures with the help of some of the Bridge Kids,



The crowd gathers as the Christmas dinner begins. Before food is served, guests are deeply into coloring on homemade placemats.

Two in Timo's entourage are Christian Ministers, so the party waited a few minutes while the three brothers formed a healing circle around Bear for his swift and complete recovery. After quite a few more words to the attendees, the three fine gentlemen finally took their seats to let the party begin. Mayra, Elda and some of our amazing Bridge kids, Willie, Maria pequeña, and Ronaldo, tirelessly waited on tables for eighty happy people. The beautiful table decorations were filled with toothpaste, toothbrushes, shampoos candies and toys. Every one walked away with gifts due to the kind and generous donations from people around the world. That is you. Take a bow. You did it again.



Henry, a local Caribbean guy, volunteered to come over and sing. He showed up with his banjo, and provided some great music and some local color. Ever hear Christmas Carols played calypso style? Wonderful!

Toward the end, the crowd broke out the Christmas Armaments and had a wonderful water balloon fight. Finally, with full tummies, some with wet clothes, and with smiles all around, the crowd left for home.

Bear is back on his feet again, now better than ever, thanks both for prayers answered and the tireless intervention of Don Candido the Bribri curandero with his amazing natural remedies. I got through the winter wonderland without frostbite, and our on-the-ground French angel has gone back from whence she came, leaving fond memories and a passel of wonderful photos of a great party. By next year, like labor pains, I will have forgotten how much work it was and prepare to do it all over again.

Merry Christmas, Happy New Year, and thanks to all of you!

NATURAL MEDICINE

Many of you will remember that we've been working with Don Candido, a Bribri Curandero. Recently, when Barry came down with a significant infection, we decided to have Candido treat it using indigenous methods.



Here's Barry, with Candido piling what looks like veggies on his leg, bathing it in a soup made of several different medicinal plants

He came to our house every day for 15 days, from 2 to 5 hours a day. At the end of the treatment, the leg has returned to normal, and I've changed my drinking habits. I used to be a Diet Coke fiend. Aspartame – BAAADDD! I'm now drinking several different herbal teas, chosen to cleanse my system and clean out some organs that might not be working at peak efficiency.

We deliberately chose this route because of our relationship with the curandero, and with the Bribri culture. It was certainly a messy treatment, and very fascinating, watching how the natural plants that surround us truly do work miracles in the hands of someone with the wisdom. I took lots of fotos and notes, and will be writing it up later in a report that will be downloadable from the website for those who may be interested in the detail.

VOLUNTEER CORNER

Emilie Petidemange popped in just in time, as Nanci says, – and helped Nanci make the Christmas Party a success while Barry was a bit under the weather. Born in France, Emilie was working on a long-term contract in Atlanta Georgia and decided she needed a break over the Christmas holiday. After a few emails with Barry discussing the Volunteer Program, she showed up at The Bridge.



On a walk with Nanci along the beach, Emilie the Pirate emerged.



...and she fell in love with the baby chicks running around the yard

She really jumped in and got to work, helping at the Community Kitchen on Christmas Eve, and working hard at the Christmas Party on Saturday the 26th. She was an all around delight to have here.

Thank you Emilie!

SCHOOL PROGRAM 2010

Last year was really exciting – we ended the year with 40 Bridge Kids in 8 schools. Early indications are that we could exceed that total this year. Because of you, we were able to help these Bridge Kids along their road to a brighter future!

The next school year is ready to start in mid-February! Be on the lookout for a Special Report, where we'll give you more information about the School Program for 2010. Let's put these kids back in school!

THANK YOU EPSON

We had really good success with Epson printers in the US. That's why we brought one when we got to Costa Rica. We use our printer for production of the Bridge Book, greeting cards, and prints, and it's important to our day-to-day operation. The new one worked fine as well, until we needed to change printer cartridges – the printer wouldn't accept the new cartridge. After a series of problem resolution steps including replacing three more printers, I wrote a letter to the corporate HQ, explaining the problem – we really, really, really need that printer to work. Eighteen hours later, there was an upgraded printer on the way. And – you guessed it – that wouldn't accept a new cartridge either. Another letter – and this time, we were visited by Nancy Grant, an Epson representative in Costa Rica.



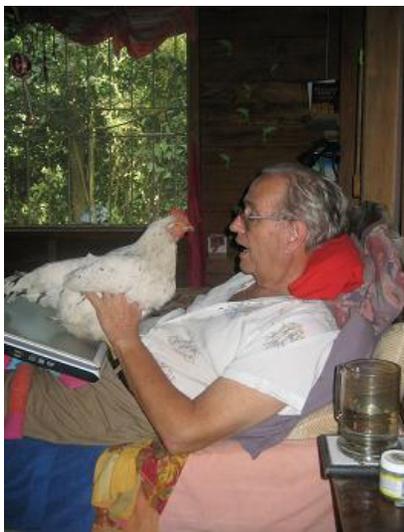
Nancy Grant, from Epson Costa Rica

She arrived with another printer, fully loaded with ink and set to use. She also used a couple of insider tricks to install fresh new ink cartridges on the old printer, and took away enough information to allow the folks back in the lab to debug the problem. In the meantime, we have two fully loaded Epson printers here, ready to go. Now all we need is banana paper, to avoid chopping down trees, and we're back in business.

I felt that was a great service response, so I wanted to let you all know, and say "Thanks" to the folks at Epson.

CHICKEN DADDY

Barry has a nickname around town – "Chicken Daddy". He gets involved in one way or another feeding and caring for the chickens each day. This is a very small town, and just about everyone knows just about everything.



*"Chicken Daddy" and Mrs. McNugget
having a chat. Animal Therapy!*

One recent afternoon he was dozing off during a laptop working session, and woke with a start as Nanci plopped Mrs. McNugget down on his lap to say "Hello".

RANDOM NOTES

SCHOOL'S OUT, BUT... we still have Bridge Kids hanging around, reading books, coloring, even using the Internet. It's nice to have them here.

A NEW LOOK... we've finally changed the header image for the Newsletter. The old one was very much out of date. The new image shows faces – a young boy being treated for papalomoyo, a tribal elder who visits often and considers Nanci and me family, a few Bridge Kids, A Bribri dad and daughter, a mother, and a great-grandmother – one of the "Ancient Ones" – all people we serve and interact with at The Bridge on at least a weekly basis.

AND THE NUMBER IS... Recently one of our visitors brought us a mysterious message she was given while dreaming. She was told to "Give this number to Barry Stevens – 796821". Yes, I know – this is a little unusual. Does this number ring a bell with anyone? Anyone into numerology?

YOU CAN HELP US!

There are several ways you can help.

- **Send this email to people you know** who might also enjoy it.
- **Post a message about us on relevant web sites or discussion boards.**
- **Look at our list of critically needed supplies** – [click on this link to get to the "What Can I Bring?" page on our website.](#)

DONOR NOTES

We are blessed with 13 people who are in the "Intrepid Bridger's Club" – they have committed to a monthly pledge amount. You can see how the Pledge Program and the "100 Tens" effort, are going by [clicking on this link to visit the website.](#)

VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE

**Thank You for the continuing support we have been getting.
You all are allowing us to continue to serve!**

NOW's a GREAT time to contribute.

Make a **Monthly Pledge** by [clicking here.](#)

Make an **Immediate Donation** by [clicking here,](#)
and donate online using PayPal, or mail a check.

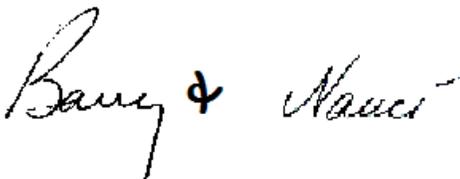
Do it NOW! You'll be glad you did!

Thank you for your support!

Well,

...djmiache

Enjoy!



IF YOU HAVE TROUBLE SEEING THE PICTURES

...go to www.elpuente-thebridge.org/weekly and download the file with the date of this issue.

Go to The **Bridge Blog** -“Angels With Their Skins On” by [CLICKING HERE](#)

Go to The **Bridge Website** by [CLICKING HERE](#)

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Go to the **newsletter archive** by [CLICKING HERE](#)

See some **Video clips** showing activities at The Bridge by [CLICKING HERE](#)

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