

Friendships and Memories Forged Through LINKS

Editor's Note: The following are letters of thanks for LINKS from active and retired missionaries, a district LINKS coordinator, and from an indigenous leader who also benefited from this long-standing ministry. Use these notes of thanks to encourage the people of your church to participate or to provide new ideas of how your church may improve its LINKS ministry.

I have a special LINKS friend this year—one from Oklahoma—who has even “adopted” my mom and is calling and encouraging her in her recovery from hip replacement surgery. The lady’s name is Mary, and Mom seems to be an encouragement to Mary too. Really neat! (Not to mention that Mary is a great letter writer to me too—so, as always, the LINKS are so appreciated and timely.)

Also, on Monday I was baking Christmas goodies and had one bag of chocolate chips, but needed two. I could have purchased some, but it would have been more expensive than necessary for the recipe. But I went to the store near the post office, stopping to check my mail before going to the grocery store. There, not a moment too late or too soon, was a package from my LINKS and inside was a package of chocolate chips!

Lisa Lehman
Missionary to Thailand



We had an incredible LINKS “family” from the Canada West District, and we will miss them.

They were such mission-minded people! They took care of us and supported us in an incredible way. We thank God for them and pray the Lord will bless them. Incredible people!

We had the opportunity to visit and meet some of them at the district during our home assignment, and our hearts are full of thanks to them.

Also we want to thank you for this ministry. It is nice to have people praying and supporting our ministry. Mission is a partnership. There are people on the front line, but we could do nothing if we didn’t have partners supporting us.

We like to be part of the LINKS family. Thanks again for your ministry.

Carlos and Noemi Fernandez
Missionaries to South America Region

I just want to say George Miller has been such a wonderful LINKS missionary to stay in contact and update us all the time. This makes us feel more of a part of his ministry.

Nancy Hicks
South Carolina LINKS Coordinator

We have been given the royal treatment by Gardner Church, in Gardner, Kansas. We were able to be with them on our last home assignment tour; and during these two years of LINKS, they have continued to maintain contact with us frequently. Every couple of months, notes will come in the mail from their congregation.

One neat thing is that Sydney and Elijah always receive their own note cards with their names on them. They love opening the note and reading it—often time finding a couple of small stickers or a balloon inside. It's been frequent enough that every time a card comes in the mail for them, they immediately ask if it's from Gardner.

We've also been able to partner with them in two projects—one that was initiated by our side, and one from their side. I believe during VBS, the kids made some little prayer pillows in the shape of turtles. Many turtles have little pockets sewn into them, and the picture of a child inside each pocket. We currently have them in a bag here in Costa Rica and plan on handing

them out to some children next spring when we are on a ministry site. It will be a neat opportunity to let the kids here know that there are kids in the U.S.A. praying for them, but also to be able to send pictures back to the church so that the kids know that they are contributing to the mission field.

The other partnership that we've had with them is in the translation of the book *Discovering Missions* by Dr. Charles Gailey and Dr. Howard Culbertson. After reading the book, we knew that it was a resource that would be very beneficial to our ministry and region, if it were in Spanish. We asked Gardner if they would consider taking a special offering to help cover the cost of translation of the book. We challenged them [with an amount of] \$300, and they sent in close to \$350! We hope to have the book translated by the end of December.

It's been a wonderful LINKS partnership with Gardner.

Emily Armstrong
Missionary to Costa Rica

In addition to the assigned LINKS, the church regularly sent our family extra Christmas boxes. The unique aspect of their program was that they would assign one church member to buy a gift for one child, and then they would gather and pray about the shopping trip, that God would direct their purchases. After wrapping the presents, they would place a little note on top indicating who it was from.

One Christmas, Grandma and Grandpa sent us a Sears catalog wish book. Our daughter spied a schoolhouse that she fell in love with. There was no way we could get it in time, and we certainly could not have afforded it if it had been available in the country we were serving in. But she wanted it so very much!

Just before Christmas, the parcel from our LINKS church arrived. The presents were all colorfully wrapped. When we read the note on our daughter's present, I was very touched. The note had been written by a gentleman who obviously had a serious learning disability. In large letters, he had scrawled my daughter's name and then the words, "I PRAY BEFORE I GO STORE." But my heart really soared when my daughter opened her present, for inside was...the very schoolhouse she had wanted!

Dr. Charles Gailey
Retired Missionary to Swaziland

Let me thank you personally for the gracious help and labors of love by many to provide the rolled bandages to Reynolds Memorial Hospital (RMH), at Washim.

I was born at RMH and lived on its campus 'til the age of six, when I was sent to boarding school. When it was time to go to school, I had a big wound on my foot, and I used the rolled bandages to dress the wound for few months.

It's 40 years later, and the mark of the wound is still there to remind me of the healing touch of the hospital. And your rolled bandages were part of that healing process.

Thank you for your unceasing partnership in the mission of the compassion of our Lord Jesus Christ which reaches beyond the seas and touches lives for eternity.

I just spoke with the administrative officer, Mr. Vishnu Khandekar, who is very grateful for your help and said that the rolled bandages are very valuable for their services at RMH. Please use his name as person to whom the parcels are addressed at RMH.

Please pass on our gratitude to every person who gives precious time and labour of love for unseen persons who are benefited by it, like me. Thank you very much. God bless you and give you peace.

Sunil Dandge
India Field Strategy Coordinator



Near Easter we suddenly became aware that grocery store shelves were becoming bare. The meat coolers were depleted, and no fish were available in the roadside stalls dotting the landscape. Like everyone, we began asking questions and learned that the shipping company that delivered monthly supplies to the island had gone bankrupt.

"When will a supply come?" we asked. "Will another company simply assume ownership and begin supply delivery?"

Everyone understood that it could be days before supplies arrived and the shelves were full again. Heaviness hung over the island, and conversations were often heated as to the best solution of meeting the crisis.

Since it was the Easter season, LINKS churches asked if something was urgently needed or if we could use ministry items at this special time of the year. Their queries were providential. We asked for two or three canned hams, hoping they might arrive by Easter Sunday. Much to our surprise, several boxes

arrived at our post office only three days before the special resurrection celebration. We couldn't believe the number of canned hams! Almost every LINKS church had forwarded a ham to us. Some sent other food items that made the church potluck one of the best the people had ever had.

The postal clerks were curious about all the boxes arriving on the same day and asked about their contents. Even more surprised were the church people as they gathered, knowing that all food was scarce on the island, but here was a bountifully spread table of a variety of foods. Through the generosity of LINKS churches, God had supplied food when there was none available.

Thanks, LINKS, for a marvelous Easter celebration meal!

Wayne LaForce
Deputation Ministries
Former Missionary to Japan, Papua New Guinea, and Micronesia

Dear LINKS,

Keep up the good work in your local churches! It means so much to Bob and me to know a group of local churches are caring for us and sharing with us.

This year we have experienced a wonderfully new way of being able to communicate more often...good old e-mail. For the first time, our LINKS churches all have e-mail addresses; if not the NMI president, then the pastor or another in the church willing to pass on the information. What that means for us is that we get to keep in touch more often now. It also makes it better to hear the news and prayer requests from the churches to us.

For this and all the blessings that come to us from it we say Thank You LINKS!

Bessie and Bob Black
Retired Missionaries to Papua New Guinea