



DBU Soccer player Sheila Heath with a child from a Peruvian orphanage



DBU Volleyball player Tiffany Coffey kicks the ball around with young Peruvian boys



Peruvian boy, Moses, was found in a basket on a doorstep at a local orphanage



2008-2009 DBU Lady Patriot Volleyball Team with Peruvian Junior National Team



DBU Soccer player Jordan Vick signs autographs for children in Lima, Peru

LADY PATRIOT VOLLEYBALL AND SOCCER TEAMS



TRAVEL TO PERU

Written by Ryan Erwin

Dallas Baptist University Lady Patriot Volleyball and Soccer Teams traveled to Peru for a Spring Break mission trip March 7-14, 2009. Joining the 10 DBU volleyball players and 18 DBU soccer players were coaches, trainers, administrators, and other DBU students, as well as representatives from Buckner International. For several years, DBU has partnered in mission trips with Buckner, visiting orphanages in Guatemala and Russia, as well as traveling to Peru previously in 2006.

The 2009 Peru trip marked the first time that the Lady Patriot Volleyball and Soccer Teams traveled outside the country to participate in a mission trip of this nature. In the fall of 2007, the DBU Patriot Baseball Team spent a week in Guatemala, partnering with Buckner to minister in orphanages, hosting baseball camps, and competing against the Guatemalan National Team. This time, it was the Lady Patriots' turn.

These DBU student-athletes were blessed to have this opportunity to love and serve the less fortunate and share their faith in Christ. They ministered to orphaned children and abandoned mothers and brought them the good news that Christ loves them.

The group began their Peruvian adventure in the capital city of Lima as the Lady Patriots were greeted with much fanfare. Television reporters interviewed the DBU Volleyball and Soccer players, little girls rushed up to them for autographs, and posters around town highlighted the upcoming games against the "USA Patriots." This attention shocked many of the players, but they soon discovered that it allowed for many opportunities to explain about their true mission over the course of the week.

Throughout their time in Peru, the Lady Patriots made it their goal to share the love of Christ with whomever they met, especially those in the orphanages and single-mother homes. The teams traveled to many different locations and encountered a variety of souls. In fact, during the course of just one day in Lima, they spent time with over 700 orphaned children.

"We were worn out every night," reflected Jordan Vick, a DBU Soccer player from Kerrville, Texas. "But the opportunity to give to these children gave us renewed strength each day. We have all been so richly blessed, and it was incredibly energizing just to bring happiness into others' lives."

In addition to their work with orphans, these young women spent time with single mothers in two separate government-sponsored houses. Through small group conversations, games, dances, songs, and various other cultural interchanges, they embraced scores of victimized women. The group purposefully included performances of Gospel-based skits, and several players shared personal testimonies of their walk with God. The young mothers were very responsive to a special time of musical praise sung in their native Spanish dialect.

"It was rewarding for us to see that our efforts to love these girls had such a strong impact," said Amanda Emmert, DBU Volleyball player from Keller, Texas. "They seemed so happy that it was hard to imagine the incredible hardships they must have endured."

Wherever they went, the Lady Patriots sought to leave more than just DBU memorabilia—duffle bags full of shirts, balls, air pumps, jerseys, CDs, and games. The faces of the Peruvian orphans and the abused and abandoned young mothers revealed that they were overcome with long-awaited and unspeakable joy at the realization of receiving the undivided attention and love of strangers who had traveled so far for their sake.

"When you look into the eyes of orphans," explained Dr. Blair Blackburn, DBU Executive Vice President who accompanied the students on the trip, "your heart pounds for the love you want to share, and at the same time, your heart breaks for the loneliness you know these kids feel."

While the time with the mothers and children served as the primary motive for the trip, the Lady Patriots still had other matters at hand—competing on the court and on the field.

The DBU Volleyball Team twice took on the Peru Junior National Team, with all the proceeds from the game going to help build a much-needed gym at an orphanage in Lima. One of the games took place in a remote Amazon village, a location that rarely had the chance to see any national team compete. Both matches proved intense, but in the end, DBU was unable to capture victories.

"I have never played in an atmosphere like that," said Lauren Zegarelli, DBU Volleyball player from Arlington, Texas. "It was so loud I could barely talk to my teammates. I will always remember it as one of the most motivating and fun experiences of my life."

"Our trip to Peru has totally changed my world view. Now I know how much this world truly needs the love of Christ." Lauren Secord DBU Volleyball player

On the soccer field, the Lady Patriots faced the top team in the Lima region in front of a sold-out crowd of over 2,000 fans. The rowdy crowd provided the Peruvian team with a great home-field advantage, and the Lady Patriots unfortunately came out on the losing end.

From the memories of competitions in front of thousands of roaring fans to the personal, one-on-one conversations in small village orphanages, it was a trip that will not soon be forgotten.

"Our trip to Peru has totally changed my world view," stated Lauren Secord, DBU Volleyball player from White Oak, Texas. "Now I know how much this world truly needs the love of Christ, and it has given us joy to share that love—not only by our words and actions—but also through God-given athletic abilities. This has been a once-in-a-lifetime trip, and we thank God for this amazing opportunity."

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Young Peruvian soccer players



2008–2009 DBU Lady Patriot Soccer Team after a match in Lima, Peru



DBU Volleyball player Lauren Secord with toddlers at an orphanage in Lima, Peru



Head Volleyball Coach Cathy Ray Kokel with children from a Peruvian orphanage



Lady Patriot Volleyball Team discusses their game plan