

A TELLER'S TRAVELS

Notes and Pictures
from the Journal of
David Titus

Summer 2008

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Taking String From Around The World,
Around The World!

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LETTERS

Dear Mr. Titus,
Thank you for showing all of the tricks. I love doing the Spider. The Spider is so fun. My friend Gabby showed me the Witches Broom. I like that one too.
You are so good at doing all of the tricks. I wish I could do every one of them like you.
I bought 9 strings and a book. I have 10 strings since I got one free.
I am so glad you came to our school. I don't think anyone can do anything with strings better than you can. Thank you so much for coming.
Sincerely,
Maddy
Oklahoma City

Dear Mr. Titus,
My grandson, Andrew Walker, saw you at Clegern School. He bought your instruction book and has been practicing all evening, only putting his string away at bedtime. He's learned through page 15 and can do the drum with his eyes closed. In a day and age full of video games, guitar hero, and television blasting, its often less than positive messages, what a joy to see a boy of 11 so rapt with something to exercise the imagination and applied directions. Thank you for sharing this excellent storytelling technique with him and others. May God continue to bless your efforts.
Mary McReynolds
Edmond, OK

David,
I can't thank you enough for coming to Dunn to present your string storytelling. We sold the extra 500 string immediately (beyond the original 1,000!)
The children still walk around with string on their arms and pull it out every available moment. My own son is the worst! I have had a few parents say that their child traded in their Game Boy for the string.
I Love It!
If you are ever in town again, let me know so you can visit again.
Much luck to you in the future!
Pam Kleine-Kracht
Louisville, KY

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STRINGS RULE

String rules at Sangre Ridge Elementary School in Stillwater, Oklahoma. Dave did workshops with the 2nd and 3rd graders in a district wide program. The other students in the school were so adamant about Dave coming back to do their classes too, that he went back and did all the classes from 4 year olds through 5th grade.

Shenista Furman, the librarian ordered 5,000 strings, regular and neon, to sell to the 658 students. She also took orders for Dave's books. The school provides a unique way for students to pay for extra strings that are available. The students can bring in five box tops and trade for one new string. The library can then send these to BoxTops4Education for money for their school. Each box top is worth ten cents. One student used 50 box tops to purchase one of Dave's books.

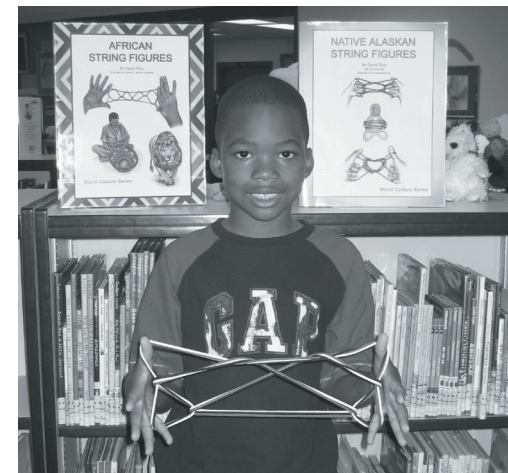
Sangre Ridge has really gone crazy over strings, with the teachers encouraging the students along in this learning endeavor. They are organizing a program called "String Buddies" that pairs up 4th graders to work one on one with their Kindergartners and four year-olds. The older students teach the younger ones string figures they have learned from Dave's visits. The teachers have a set of strings available for these lessons and then wash them before the next use. All the kids have their own strings too...multiple colors running up and down their arms.

The early childhood teachers are using string for making letters and shapes. The art teacher is following up on the idea that string is a line for drawing and the PE teacher is having the students make giant figures with rope on rainy days. They are also doing a lot of cooperative projects with the string. Many of the kids have to wait in the bus lines at least half an hour and strings are a perfect diversion for this wait time.

There are four year olds that can now do very complicated figures...over and over again. One boy repeatedly made Jacobs Ladder and the Apache Gate. His big brother had taught him. Boy do the kids there know a lot of things!

There is a first grader named Jordan that invented a new "Two Diamond" figure that he taught Dave, which is quite a nice figure to know. "Make the cup and saucer. Little fingers get the far thumb strings from below. Bend the indexes from the top to get their respective palmar strings. Transfer the index loops to the thumbs and extend...Two Diamonds." This is another figure to make from cup and saucer. It's great when you can make a number of things from one figure.

The students are now searching the web for sources of learning new figures and are ready to add their own creations to YouTube.



Jordan from Sangre Ridge with his Two Diamond String Figure.



**MORE AND MORE SCHOOLS ARE SELLING STRINGS
AS A FUNDRAISING TOOL FOR THEIR SCHOOL ACTIVITIES.**

SOMETHING NEW ONLINE!

Dave now has his own Blog. You can check out his comments and follow his daily travels through the blog link on his website, www.Storyteller-Wordsmith.com. He is not a member of the 365 club, but does try to write often. When in foreign places, the internet is not always available to him. He would love to receive comments from you on his blog or you can email him directly at OKTeller@juno.com.

BOOKING INFORMATION

Dave Titus is the author of three World Culture Series books, "Native American String Figures," "African String Figures" and "Native Alaskan String Figures." He also has produced three string figure DVD's: "String Magic From Around The World," "String Fun With The Parables" and "Sharing With String Through String Ministries."

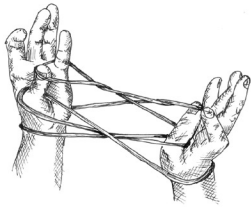


Basic booking fee for an author visit is \$400 per day plus round trip travel from Lawton, Oklahoma at .50 per mile. (\$600 per day in Alaska) Overnight accommodations are sometimes required. You will need to provide a string for each participant.

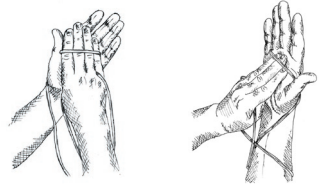
For more booking information, visit www.Storyteller-Wordsmith.com.

Does your district provide special funds for Native American or African studies?

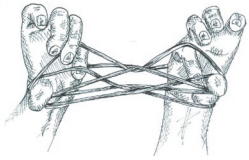
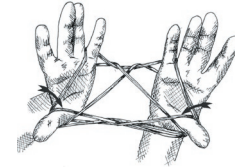
This figure is found in many places. In Belize, Central America, the Mayan descendents call it a hammock. An Apache girl taught it to Caroline Jayne as the Apache Door. The Navajo know this one, as do the Zuni. It has been called a poncho, sling, Mexican hurdle or woman's belt.



Make Opening A with whole hand - thumb included - instead of just the index finger. The palmar string is now on the back of each hand.



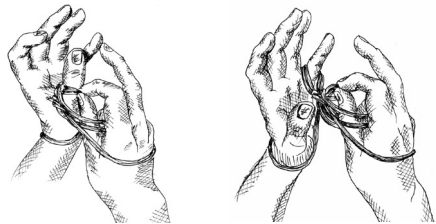
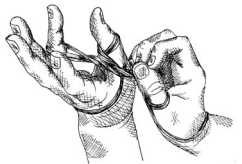
Thumbs pick up near little finger string and extend hands.



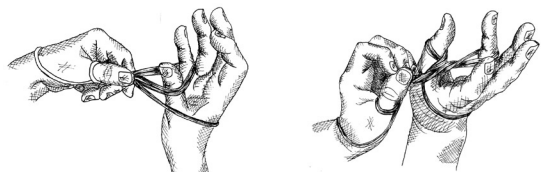
Little fingers pick up far thumb string - close to the thumb. Look at the picture to see which one it is.



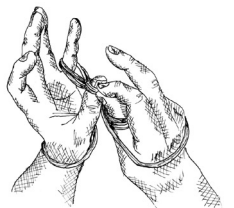
Right hand, grab all the strings in the middle and bring them between the thumb and index finger of the left hand toward your body. Next, see the two near thumb strings? You will do something with them in a moment.



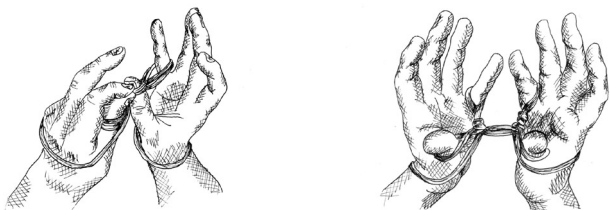
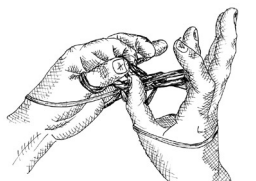
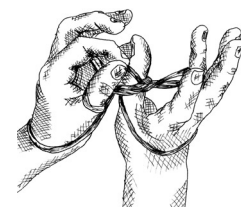
Let go and find the left two near thumb strings. With the right hand hold those two strings and take left thumb out of all the strings and move it toward your body. Keep hold of those two strings.



Put your left thumb back in just those two strings that your right hand is holding.

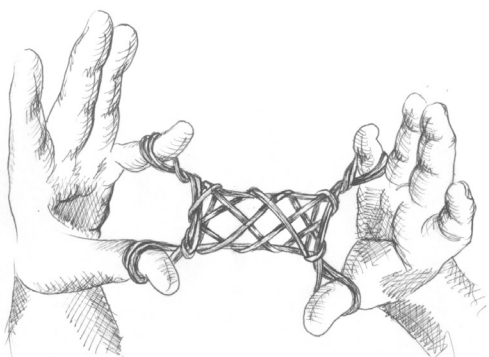


Let go and find the right two near thumb strings. With the left hand hold those two strings and take right thumb out of all the strings and move it toward your body. Keep hold of those two strings.



Put your right thumb back in just those two strings that your left hand is holding.

Take the strings that are around each wrist off and put them in the middle. Extend.



You will need to work the hands back and forth to make the "Hammock" appear.

Note: To take the figure apart with no knots, take it off the hands and turn it over. On the backside there are two straight strings running across the figure. Take one in each hand and pull. No knots!

Caution:
String placed
around neck can
be a choking
hazard.

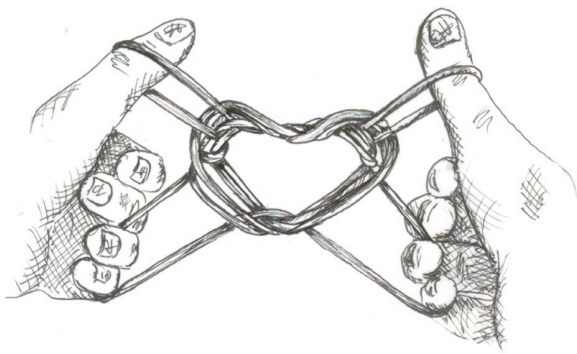
STRING MINISTRIES

BOARD: Charles Boyle, Peggy Brock, Doris Hyde, Reverend Kevin King, Hazel Stall, Randy Warren, and Mike Wood.
DIRECTOR: David Titus

THE PURPOSE OF STRING MINISTRIES: String Ministries is a Christian organization founded to share the love of Christ through string figures, especially working with the people in developing nations, refugees, oppressed, imprisoned or disabled. Some examples of these would include, but not be exclusive to: leprosy patients in Mongolia, reindeer herders of Mongolia, Palestinian refugees, aids affected inner city children of New York, Alaska Children's Services group homes, children of prisoners, Pokera Drug treatment center in Pokera Nepal, isolated Alaskan villages, and East European children.

String Ministries would also prepare materials such as videos, books, pamphlets or interactive CD's for teaching. These materials would be provided at reduced or no cost. Staff would also be available to teach and equip people, including such things as teaching at Missionaries Annual Conference in Nepal and Mongolia, speaking at churches and organizations to promote the ministry, and other activities as needed. String Ministries may also provide strings to missionaries, Volunteer-in-mission people, special groups, etc. at reduced or no cost.

www.StringMinistries.org



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A \$100 donation would allow over 500 to have fun with strings. Please be a part of this joy-filled experience for the needy of the world. **Donations are tax deductible.**

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Phone (800) 357-9854 or (580) 357-9854
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LETTERS

Costa Rica Mission Trip

In June 2008, we were able to use strings to minister to the children of Costa Rica. A Mother/Daughter team of 19 traveled from Tyler, Texas to southwest Costa Rica for

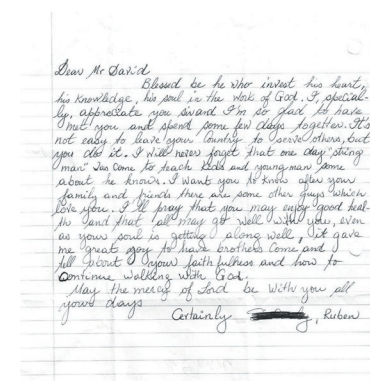


a week of serving the women and children in the name of Jesus. During our trip, we were able to spend time with the children in public schools in three different rural communities. We taught the Bible story of "Jesus feeds the 5,000" and had time for singing, crafts, drama, snacks and recreation.

We took strings for all the children 3rd-5th grades and used the strings to illustrate the story and our memory verse, "Todo es posible mas de Dios." (With God all things are possible. Matthew 19:26) The children enjoyed learning the new tricks and it was a great way for us to interact and overcome the language barrier. The strings were a very practical way for the children to remember what they had learned. We will be taking strings with us again next summer!

Jennifer Paul
Green Acres Baptist Church Member

As I was leaving Haiti, one of the young men, a graduate of the orphanage gave me this letter.



Dear Mr. David,
Blessed be he who invest his heart, his knowledge, his soul in the work of God. I specially appreciate you sir and I'm so glad to have met you and spend some few days together. It's not easy to leave your country to serve others, but you did it. I will never forget that one day "string man" was come to teach kids and young man some about he knows. I want you to know after your family and friends there are some other guys which love you. I'll pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well. It gave me great joy to have brothers come and tell about your faithfulness and how to continue walking with God.
May the mercy of Lord be with you all your days.
Certainly, Ruben

Dear David,
Greetings. We hope you are well and enjoying fall. We turned on Eagle TV last Saturday, and one of your little "students" (Rock Wiley, whose father works at the station) was teaching two Mongolian girls how to make your string tricks. He even did the one depicting Jesus on the cross and told all about it in Mongolian. You must have shown him these things several years ago, but he still remembered. Thought you would enjoy knowing that the gift goes on. I (Spencer) used string today with my English class and they really enjoyed it, too. Hope we can bump into you again someday!
Love and prayers,
Spencer and Pat Garner
(Missionary in Mongolia)



Above: Grandson Jack is very proud of the String Figure he invented. It's an alligator mouth, (as if you can't tell.) **Right:** Mike Spiller sent in this picture of him with fellow string enthusiasts.

Hi David!
I hope your trip is going well! or went well by the time you read this!
St. Luke's children asked about you yesterday! They had to put up with me and play games. One child brought his yellow string. He said he couldn't remember how to do the first story you taught. He's a first grader. Some of the older kids asked when you were coming in...I had to explain you were out of the country teaching other children stories with string.
You are loved!
Charlotte Teel
OKC



IN MEMORIAM

Jo Uhland, a faithful supporter of String Ministries, Inc and board member emeritus passed away November 2007 after a lengthy illness. She will be missed for her wit and wisdom. I was in frequent contact with her after she moved into an assisted living facility near her daughter in North Dakota. She was always cheerful and glad to visit. I will miss a close friend and confidant. She had many good ideas for me.
Dave

MISSION TRIPS

HAITI

November 2007

I went with the Mission of Hope team from Lawton, OK; we were there for the Thanksgiving Holiday week. There were sixteen people on the team with seven of them in their teens. The leader was Kim Shahan. We landed in Port au Prince in the late afternoon and were met by the Mission of Hope bus, a recycled yellow school bus. Driven north through the city on a very congested two lane road...the main road in the region.

When we arrived at the compound an armed guard opened the gate, let us in and closed it. He then opened the second gate and let us into the compound. We drove past the orphanage, school church and clinic to the dorm facilities. They were also walled with an armed guard sitting in a tower. We had generator power from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. It was great to have the fans to keep off the mosquitoes.

Sunday we went to church on the compound and after the singing, the kids left for Sunday school. I did a string program for them and taught them some things. The team was just beginning to learn some of the figures so they could help the kids. Soon they were very proficient.

After church we brought some of the kids from an outlying village up to the dorm for lunch with us and then to play on the playground that had been built the year before. What a pleasant time for the kids; food, loving attention and play. It can't be beat.

That evening we went down to the Hope House orphanage where 40 or so kids were being reacquainted with some of the team members who had been there before. Popcorn and a video in Creole; I had trouble keeping my eyes open.

The first three days I worked in the mornings with the kids at the school on the compound. There were 1,200 students and we worked with each grade level from first grade up. I had young men that had graduated from the orphanage translating for me. They did a great job.

Each afternoon we went to another school or orphanage to do string programs. Each was so different; but similar in the fact that it was crowded, dim, and hot. Most of the schools had a piece of plywood painted green for



a chalkboard...or maybe just a part of the wall. It's not very readable but without any textbooks, very necessary.

One day we walked up to the Voodoo Tree. Waded the river three times and followed a very muddy and slippery trail over which young boys were leading horses loaded with sugar cane. The tree was an enormous affair of roots, branches and gnarled trunks. We did strings with the people there and I put a string crucifix on the tree. It was great to be telling the Gospel Story to the people gathered at that place.

Another day we went to Grace House in Cabaret. It is a big room that just got cement for the floor. It is built for the homeless people next to the dump. They were so happy to have anyone pay attention to them. Some of them knew string figures, so we had a bond to start with. We also gave out Beanie Babies to kids and adults alike. I wonder what they look like after a couple of days.

The students at Titanyen School were very receptive to the string program and by this time the team members were very eager to teach what they knew. Sometimes they would take a child or adult off to teach them something different from what I was teaching. Oh well, now I have many disciples.

The Good Samaritan Orphanage was in a building instead of the tent they were in last year. With the help of organizations such as Mission of Hope, these children

are getting a chance at life. We brought backpacks, paper and pencils. Oh, what we take for granted!

Simonette School was started two years ago by a Haitian man who saw a need in his village. He taught the kids under a tree. Last year he was able to get a blue tarp for a school. This year he built a building out of pallets. They have dirt floors but now there are four rooms for the kids. When the average worker gets \$2.50 a day, they don't have much to work with.

We were searching for a girl that one of the families had befriended last year. We found her with her eight siblings and her mother living in a very unpleasant situation. They had lost everything when the floods from the hurricane came through two weeks earlier. Eighty people in that area were killed at that time.

MOH was able to get her family situated in a 12 by 12 home, register her in a school and get her a uniform. They also were able to alert the authorities of the need and Convoy of Hope, a humanitarian feeding program, is going to saturate the area with meals. All of this happened because one family wanted to help one little girl.



The team and I worked with 2,500 people...at least we gave out that many strings. The strings were a perfect vehicle for communicating love with the people. No language skills necessary. There was also a team from Kansas City, MO there. They joined us in working with the people and are now also proficient in string. In fact, they want to start some kind of work with them in their area.

KOSZALIN, POLAND

Volunteers in Mission

May 31 – June 9, 2007



I had been to the Northeastern part of Poland when I was in the Baltic countries about four years ago. Went down to teach some students string at a University in Oryzsy. It was a driving trip of only a couple of days. I was anxious to return to see more of the country.

Ten of us flew from Oklahoma for the purpose of painting and insulating a church in Koszalin. We flew into Berlin and drove to the Northwestern part of the country. What a beautiful drive with lots of windmills and storks. While at the church, we did work very hard putting up insulation in the attic roof and painting the gutters while the women gardened.

It was a very small congregation and the pastor and his wife had not made many inroads to the community

yet. Therefore, I was not able to get into the schools to do string. I did teach the team members...who went home and used the knowledge in their own church communities. I also gave a program for the church there and worked with some other small groups. The string ministry works even in the airport. What a great way to involve some strangers in community.

We ate very well. The young pastor's mother came in from the country to cook for us. What wonderful meals they were; great pastas, cheeses, creams, breads, pickles and salads. Topped off with pastries of fruit, gelatin, cream and who knows what else. It was beautiful to look at and delicious to eat. Everything was prepared with great presentation.

(continued on next page)

MISSION TRIPS

KOSZALIN, POLAND

VIM, May 31 – June 9, 2007

(continued)

We took part of one day to go to the Baltic Sea for a boat ride. The drive through the countryside was wonderful. It looked so much like the postcards with small hamlets, farms and beautiful fields surrounded by woodlands. We saw many stork nests, some with little storks in them. There were a few horse carts along the way.

We took one day to go to Gdansk. The old city has been restored from the destruction of WWII. Things look as they did in the 15th, 16th and 17th centuries. It was a nice

trip into the past. On the return trip to the Airport in Berlin, we had a chance to see some of the sites there; The Wall, Brandenburg Gate, the Cathedral, and a trip to the top of the TV tower.

It was on this trip that I met Shannon Lemons and she was able to see just how well the strings work with strangers and for sharing the Gospel. She has since put me in contact with friends of hers in Palestine. I have arranged a trip there in January of 2008. Three weeks in the Bethlehem area trying to get Palestinian and Israeli children to play together. The string is a perfect vehicle for this. One never knows where the next trip will come from.

We all worked hard and met some wonderful people. I was the youngest man on the trip...at 67. Fellow travelers, Chester and Harold, were great models of what I can plan on in another 10 years. I need just such models to keep me going. They worked me under the table.



PALESTINE

January 2008

Holy Land Trust

January 21, 2008 - Monday morning. Osama is a Palestine Christian. This young man is 23 and lives with his mother. They are my host family; feeding me and seeing to all my needs. He took me to the office of Holy Land Trust, the organization that has coordinated my time here. (See www.travel.holylandtrust.org)

This evening we are going to an Uncle's home; the brother of Osama's father. Family is so important here.

Dar Al-Kalima College, Bethlehem

January 24, 2008 - This morning a taxi picked me up and then picked up Elias to go to the school. Elias left me at the school and I worked with grades 7, 8, 9, and 10 today. They were great. They already knew what to expect and were very anxious to learn. We had a lot of fun. I saved two of my best figures for the 11 and 12th grades but they had exams today and could not come. Oh well, they will learn them from cousins at another school.

Everyone here has at least one phone and often two; one for Palestine itself and one that covers Israel and the adjoining countries. Everyone also has a MyFace internet site and they spend a lot of time checking their own or others. I am talking about the younger generation. The older ones are watching the Arabian soaps.

Let me talk a minute about Settlements as I see it. From the news, I thought they were a few houses with a fence around them. Actually there are about 28 that are enormous. One, Jabal Abu Bhnem or Har Homa in Hebrew, is on the top of a mountain right next to Bethlehem; modern apartments and buildings of many stories high. There must be 10,000 people living in it. They expect 40,000. A great gated community. It is built on Palestinian land and the Israelis say that to protect it, they build the wall to include it into Jerusalem territory and destroyed all the Palestinian homes near the wall. This one is populated mostly with Russian Jews who get free apartments and a stipend for living there. When you sit in Bethlehem looking northeast, it is always prominent in your view. Always in their face reminding them of land lost.

Tear Gas

January 25, 2008 - Friday morning. I went to a peaceful demonstration here in Bethlehem to protest the building of the wall; on the Bethlehem side of the barrier. There were about 400 people and they were carrying signs and

chanting. Most of them were Muslim and had a talk by the Imam and prayers. Then we all walked to the line of soldiers and tanks. Things were very controlled. We had been there about 45 minutes and were starting to disperse...but not fast enough for the Israeli troops. They started shooting and throwing tear gas canisters, noise grenades and shock grenades. I was caught in the middle and got a big dose of tear gas. I could not see or breathe. One starts to run just to get away; wherever you can go. You fall and hope you don't get trampled; running and holding your ears because the noise grenades are so loud. You try to see and vomit because you can't breathe. It was horrifying. I am safe now but my eyes still burn and my throat hurts. They told me not to use any water on my face because it will make it blister and burn; wait until tonight. My clothes smell and my Adrenaline is very high. I'm back at the office with a cup of Nescafe now. It did not seem to me that there was any threat as we were leaving. I don't understand these tactics.

Well, off to the SOS orphanage to do a program. I feel like I have put in a full day already. I understand a little more just what these people go through in their own land. SOS Children's Village-Bethlehem (www.sos-childrensvillage.org) is an orphanage for 97 children. The organization also runs a school and social services to a number of area families in stress. The kids were great.

Gunshots in Bethlehem

January 28, 2008 - Monday morning the taxi picked me up and took me to the Greek Catholic Patriarchate School. I met with 6 classes of 5th to 11th graders. The Principal said that the teachers wanted to meet with me about the string programs. We met during the morning break for about 10 minutes and talked about all the educational benefits that were involved in this activity.

At 3:30 we went to Azzah Refugee camp. There are three camps in Bethlehem. This one has about 2,000 people, 48% are children. Boy, were they excited to have something to do. Some of their families have been in this camp since 1948. They are in block housing but it seemed very dingy.

Osama, my host, works for PNN the Palestine News Network and came in about 5:30 to tell me there were Israeli soldiers in Bethlehem who had shot at the PNN photographers. They didn't seem to know why the soldiers were there. Two people were in the hospital. (We later learned that one person was killed.) I thought I had heard shots earlier and have heard some since. I think I will keep a very low profile.

It is sad to think of the children that are in the midst of this. Everyone I have met here seems to be just trying to

live out their lives with family and friends.

Greek Catholic Patriarchate School

January 29, 2008 When I entered each class in the Jr/Sr High they cheered. They had heard of the "String Man" and were very excited when it was their turn. The teachers were especially interested in the Bible stories and concepts that were portrayed.

Afterward, I came straight home. They are supposed to have the funeral at noon for the 17 year old that was killed and I thought it prudent to stay away. I will walk to the little store a short ways away and get a snack for lunch.

The rain seems to have stopped and the snow is not here yet. Everyone is expecting to stay home tomorrow because of snow; an event that happens, once every 10 years, or so.

Beit Fejjar

February 4, 2008 - Monday morning I went back to the Greek Catholic Patriarchate School to do the classes that I missed because of the snow day. They were expecting me and very happy that I could make it. It is so nice to go to a school that I have been to before, because I know where the teacher's lounge is for tea, and where the restroom is.

After lunch, Elias and Marwan Al'Fararjeh, the HLT field coordinator and I went to Beit Fajjar village. It is the largest village in the Bethlehem district; about 12,000 people. We went to a Center for the community. They have special programs for people young and old. They had gathered some children for me to work with. The kids kept coming in. We ended up with about 60 children and a few adults. Wow, did I have a good time. This is what I came to do. These are the minds that need it the most. They were so eager in such an open way. It is hard to explain, but I loved it.

After over an hour we stopped for tea. Sent the children out and the adults poured in. About 30 in their 20's and 30's who work with the children as teachers and aids. They wanted some of this also. I did some new ones with them. I could do some stories with them and we worked through Creation with the strings. It works for the Muslim as well as the Christian and does not step on any toes. They, also, had that openness that is almost able to be touched. We went on and on. They also showed me a couple of their string figures.

The drive back was marred by the view of so many settlements and the presence of the "Wall." There is nowhere you can look and only see Palestine. Well, my time here is closing in. Tomorrow is my last day.

Dave