

In Moraga, Change Makes Change

Submitted by Lisa Radcliffe

Local patrons of Cathy Corsi's Si Si Café in Moraga have been making big changes in the Dominican Republic by donating their spare change to a Peace Corp project to pour concrete floors in an impoverished community. Inspired by a recent visit to the Dominican Republic to visit his Peace Corp volunteer brother Kaveh Azimi, Si Si "barista" Kassra Azimi and staff have been enthusiastically raising money to help fund his brother's most current project.

"He's involved in a project to finally bring sanitation and water to the Batay he's living in," said Kassra. "But, his first project is to give these people floors. At least 35 houses in his Batay have only dirt." A Batay, reports Kassra, is a community made up primarily of Dominican's of Haitian decent. "They used to be worker camps for Haitian sugar cane workers", Kassra explained. "Now they are just poor communities in the middle of miles and miles of sugar cane."

Kaveh, a 2002 Campolindo High School graduate is serving as an economic development volunteer. He plans on being in the Dominican Republic until the summer of 2009.

Kassra and his family spent ten days touring the Dominican Republic with Kaveh, and meeting his various "host families." They spent two afternoons touring Kaveh's Batay and meeting the people there. "These people have an extraordinary sense of community," Kaveh reported. "People who leave the Batay tend to work outside to improve the Batay. They always come back—one way or another. We have no sanitation, we have only one source of drinking water, we have electricity outages that last weeks, and no indoor plumbing. What we DO have," exclaims Kaveh, "is a great feeling of community involvement. A little money goes a long way here."

"When the rains come," Kaveh reported, "living with dirt floors in ad-

dition to our dirt streets, is a nightmare." "Kaveh estimated that it costs approximately \$130 USD per house to pour the concrete floors," reports Kassra. "The labor is donated by the community."

To date Kassra has collected enough money to pour floors for 7 of the 35 homes in need, all through generous donations from our caring coffee drinkers. Most notably, Corsi herself generously donated \$100 to this cause.

While 7 homes is great, 35 would be better. Kassra hopes the donations continue to come in. "I want to let the people of Batay 8 know that the people of OUR community care", said Kassra.

Donations for the Peace Corp floor project may be sent to the Law Office of Radcliffe & Radcliffe, 455 Moraga Road, Suite A, Moraga, CA 94556. Make checks payable to "Radcliffe Attorney Trust Account" with a memo for "Peace Corp Projects" or contact the Peace Corp directly.



Kaveh Azimi and friends

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