



# MISSION OF LOVE

THOMPSON SQUARE'S SHAWNA AND KEIFER OPENED THEIR HEARTS TO A LITTLE BOY IN HONDURAS—AND FOUND HOPE

by ALICIA DENNIS & KAY WEST



Visiting Emerson and his family in Lepaterique, Honduras, the Thompsons helped build a playhouse of sticks and learned to make tortillas. Says Shawna: "It really brought home that family is what matters most."

There weren't any screaming crowds or flashing lights at Thompson Square's January performance in Honduras—just a 4-year-old boy named Emerson and his family soaking up the music—even though they didn't understand the lyrics. "They were so intense and focused," says Keifer Thompson of the little audience. "I think they were all just kinda surprised that anyone would come out there, literally in the middle of nowhere."

It was an emotional journey for Keifer and wife Shawna. As celebrity ambassadors of ChildFund International, a nonprofit agency that helps provide food, protection and education to more than 17 million children in 31 countries, they wanted to learn firsthand about

the day-to-day challenges of Emerson, whom they are sponsoring. "It was a life-changing experience," says Keifer. "The people there live in houses that are like 50 sq. ft., made out of adobe with sticks and feed sacks for walls. It was a great lesson to us and should be for everyone who has so much." Shawna agrees: "It definitely makes you realize what is important in life."

During the three-day visit, the couple spent time playing and visiting with Emerson and his neighbors. But they also filmed a video they now show at their concerts to encourage fans to sponsor children too. "When this is all over and we're done singing, we'll be able to look back and know we tried to do something good," says Keifer. "We tried to change a part of the world a little bit."

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