

Link Letter No. 8 September 2015

Dear friends and supporters,

Greetings from a very humid and volcano spurting Ecuador! For those who do not know, Cotopaxi Volcano, near Quito, has been letting off steam (and ash) daily since the middle of August. It makes for impressive pictures, but even we have been dealing with the ash here in Santo Domingo.

Since my last letter in May, I have been planning for and starting the new programme for school leavers. The table tennis table is in situ, and the horse riding opportunity has disappeared.

Petita started work on May 4, and we had hoped to do two weeks of training



Washington and Jostyn enjoying the new table tennis table



Sharon Wilcox

CMS mission partner
Ecuador

Sharon Wilcox is a CMS mission partner working and living in Ecuador. She is working with children and adults with severe learning and physical disabilities, in a culture where disability still carries a high level of stigma.

and then begin the programme. However, Petita unexpectedly received a call from the hospital to say that they had had a cancellation, and they would like her to go for a planned operation, three months early. So three days later she also disappeared, for eight weeks! When she returned in the middle of July, I was about

to go to Los Angeles for the Special Olympics, so we decided to delay the start until the day after my return (6 August).

We had two young men who have been coming since the beginning, but we need a few more to make it break even. However, this situation has enabled Petita to learn a lot, as we have time to do things slowly and in detail. She has been able to experience firsthand how to communicate using non-verbal communication, as well as how to adapt things for someone with mild physical disabilities. We have been able to help the youngsters learn to make a variety of things to sell, as well as teaching them skills to use in the home.

The friends who have the ranch, where we had hoped to go horse riding, have had to leave for family reasons, and are unsure when or if they will return. Also, having waited many months for the piece of land to be ready for us to grow plants, I discovered in June that this would not now be possible, as the Foundation wants to possibly rent out the land. However, LuzCelli has offered us a small plot of land



Petita and Jostyn making a bed



Stephen & James with their silver medals

at the orphanage, where she is also director. So when Petita is fully fit, we hope to start going there. Until then, we are growing Basil, mint and tomatoes in pots. It is early days though so no tomatoes yet!

As I mentioned, I went to Los Angeles in July, for the Special Olympics, and was fortunate to meet some of the GB medal winners. The British and



Some of the crafts we have been making

Ecuadorian teams did very well, with over 60 medals each. It was a great event and I had some really good conversations with people about the Foundation and even suggested it as a volunteer opportunity to some university students. We will see if they pursue the idea. I stayed in Long Beach with a lady who has

visited Ecuador twice, and is currently in the process of adopting three lovely, noisy Mexican brothers aged two, three and four.

In July I had a Skype call to my church housegroup in the UK, which was great. We planned a service which actually took place on 6 September, with me visiting via Skype. It was quite a strange experience, as Ecuador is currently six hours behind the UK, so the 6.30pm service was actually at lunchtime for me.

The Latin Link team I am associated with is going through a period of change, with some of them returning to their home countries, and six new people coming out in early September. It is at times like this that you realise just how fluid missionary work can be, and how difficult it must be for local people to invest time in building relationships with us, just for us to disappear. Certainly in Santo Domingo it is difficult for people to stay in touch afterwards, as they don't tend to have computers, and the post is very erratic. One example of this was on my birthday. I received family cards from the UK two days after the date, and then a week later received cards from the same people, dated August 2014! Only a year late. I wonder where on earth they could possibly have been.

Sadly, this month, a decision was taken by the Baptist Church here to close its school at the end of February, due to financial issues. This was a very

difficult decision as many members have children at the school, and two members actually work there, and will lose their jobs. One has been there for 21 years.

As I write, I do not think I will have time to go to Chile, due to the late start with the Programme, and me needing to spend time with Petita. However, I hope to be able to offer some online advice.

Please thank God:

- That Petita has almost fully recovered from her surgery.
- That the new programme has started well.

Please pray:

- For more young people to join us.
- For all involved with the Baptist Church School.
- For my last seven months, that I will know what God wants me to do during this time, and that He will show me what I should do next.

Thank you for your continued support.

Bendiciones/Blessings,

Sharon

PS. Did you know that you can now receive link letters by email, sent as a PDF? If you would like to receive them this way and help CMS save money, please send an email to **links@cms-uk.org**

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Church Mission Society

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