

Dear Friends,

The holidays have vanished and we are now back in school. February is flying by as so much is happening! School seems busier than ever. We went back in on February 2nd for our heads' meeting and to see what had been happening in school with all the alterations. It was good to meet together and get to know each other better as we now had 3 new people with us and the men to women ratio is now improving for the men.....now 3:5, men to women!

The next day the rest of the staff were in and we started with a service in the cathedral with Pastor Ronnie speaking on Thankfulness. Then we had the lawyer in to talk on Children's rights and what to do if we suspect abuse etc. He was very good and the staff appreciated the talk.

Security

Since September we have been working on improving school security and we had a few sessions on it in January with the American company. We then had a few talks with the staff on this, including a webinar from the USA. We see the Lord's hand on all this as, when we started, there was no imminent threat at that time. Now we have a few families, all members of one extended family, under threat. Some of

News from Paraguay

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The start to school was also delayed. We started as planned with our parents' meetings which went well and it looked like the building work was progressing well. Then, 3 days before school was due to start, the men started to cut floor tiles and take down wiring. So, by the time of the last of the parents' meetings the mums and dads were walking through thick dust and ducking under wires!! They said they'd rather their kids didn't start just then. They didn't want them in school with all the builders that we don't know either. So, instead of starting on the 12th we began on the 18th. By then the work was more or less finished but there are still details to be finished off. The workmen now have to work after school hours or at weekends to finish.

them have left the country and others still with us. When we started the term we had 11 of these children absent with a possibility of 4 more. It has meant we have had to be extra strict with security and there are even more guards round school.





Both of us are teaching this year. Mags is the main maths teacher for the whole of secondary. She has the help of another English girl, Sarah, and they prepare the kids for IGCSE maths and AS maths. The ex pupils all say it really helps them when they go to university so it makes it all worthwhile. Gwen is teaching an hour a day in the pre school class (5 yr olds) and is slowly getting to know them. They find it hard to settle at first after such a long holiday and they forget a lot of English too.



First Day

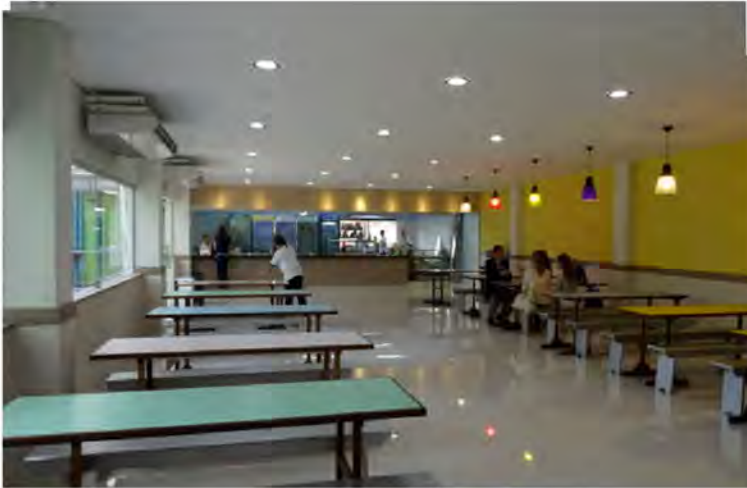
A number of the leaving group weren't around for their "last first day" in school but most were and this is always something big for them. Mags talked to them beforehand to plan it and we had a really good start. They arrived wearing a special T-shirt with the name of their class and they arrived in a stretch limo. Their parents were all waiting for them on the street!! They were then sent on a tour of school to be welcomed by the other children. Finally they were taken up to the new canteen where they were shown a film of the staff dancing which they loved. It was very amusing!! There was a very happy atmosphere. At the end of the morning we had our service in the cathedral. By then everyone was back in uniform!! Pastors Donald and Ronnie led and preached. We ended just in time for the children to go home at lunchtime. The next day we were straight into full days.

The new nursery class also started at the same time. Usually they start the week after the rest of school but we were already late. Their first day went fantastically with 20 new children and none of them cried and none of their parents hung around ... quite a record!



Church reopened again at the end of January with us taking the service. We took it again last week. It has been very encouraging to see new people appear and numbers grow despite not having a pastor or live music!!





The new dining room was finished enough to start classes but still needs a few more details fixing. The parents are thrilled with it as are the kids. Even so, we knew they would be asking what we planned to do about the food now as many complained about it last year. I think for its lack of variety. When talking about this in our heads' meeting, the new primary head, Jorge, said his brother was a chef and would be happy to come along and help to train the canteen staff. In the end he offered to stay for a month ...free!! We were amazed and thrilled. He's also a Christian and prays with the kitchen staff each day. His food is going down amazingly well. The kids and staff love it. ...so much so that the first day they ran out of food! It's amazing to see how the Lord, once again, met our needs in a way we never dreamed of.



Building work



The school entrance has also undergone an amazing transformation making it a safer place. It too still needs a few more additions like windows in offices and an internal glass door but it's looking good.

We also managed to find new staff to fill gaps left after last year. The PE staff had 3 new people who have settled well and are well received. The kids are amazed that we managed to get a professional footballer/ coach for them...again another Christian who the Lord provided for us. A New Zealand girl also turned up looking for a job the other week and she will join us this next week. Thankyou all for your prayers for this. We did have a bad moment when Mags had finally finished the secondary timetable and one of the staff announced she wouldn't be able to come for the time she'd said! That meant the timetable had to be re done and another teacher found. Amazingly (yet again) one of our ex teachers who left a few years ago to work in some far outpost in the Chaco, had come back to the city and was looking for a job. So he has been able to take that job and make his hours full time in school which is also an answer to his prayers as he was praying for work when he returned to Asuncion.



We are well and very busy. Our animals are all fine. The puppy is as mad as ever and now gets Vikingo, the other dog, to play with him. The weather has been very hot, humid and wet. We have had a lot of thunderstorms which are usually preceded by high humidity and followed by a slight cooling off. They are forecast for most of the weekend too.

Thankyou all for your support and all your prayers... they are very special to us. God Bless and love from Gwen and Mags xx