

30 December 2011

RECIFE



Happy New Year/Feliz Ano Novo!

How was your Christmas / New Year? Cold? Busy? Fun? Stressful? Here in Recife it was ...warm and noisy!

Vale continued as normal until the 21st of December which terminated in the cantata that I mentioned last month, that the kids had been practicing since October!. Before this there were other parties and a little pooltime (yet again swimming lessons were limited thanks to folks from the community using the pool at their leisure!) There was also the nightmare that was presents! A rich school in Aldeia that is run by a friend of the family who lead Vale, had asked for the names of all the kids and their shoe and clothes sizes because the families there wanted to “adopt” a kid to give a Christmas present! The idea was a great one, however in reality it didn’t quite work out so well. Fortunately we opened a couple of the presents to see if the size of clothes fitted the child that they’d been bought for. One was, the rest weren’t! This

created a dilemma ‘cos we knew that families had specifically bought clothes for the kid that they had “adopted”, but to change clothes here really isn’t simple and our families don’t often have the means to get into the city centre or shopping centre anyway. We explained what we needed to do with the head of the school and she was fine with it! So Eleinai and I spent over 7 hours matching presents with kids! In the end everyone had something that fitted them!

The cantata on the last night for all the families went really well. The kids sang the majority of it in tune! We spent all day decorating Vale! We had a Christmas tree made out of recycled plastic bottles that the kids had helped make (for the past 5 months there’s been a teacher at Vale who specialises in making things out of recycled items) It looked really good especially when it was lit up.

It was also for me sad too because all the older kids aren’t returning to Vale next year, so it was the last time that I’d see the majority of the 12-14year olds.

This is due to changes in the daily running of Vale that will come into operation in January when Vale reopens after Christmas.

The age limit is dropping to 11 years old, mainly due to financial problems, aswell as a few other reasons!

I’ll miss the older kids ‘cos I think they are fab bunch and am already praying that they don’t get any more caught up in “street” life than they already are!

I start back at Vale on the 10th January.

Life at the Roda continues as normal, although it was extra noisy over Christmas and New Year’s eve! I really don’t understand the need to have massive free standing speakers outside your house with the music at distortion level with folks sat or stood right next to it! Then two houses down they have the same thing but with different music and then again a few further down the road!

Our service on Christmas eve was a battle against such a din! So much so that in the end we finished early ‘cos we really couldn’t hear anything! But more about that later.



Prayer Points:

Thanks:

- For God’s faithfulness
- For improved health these days
- For a good time with David& Vanda

Requests:

- That God will guide the leadership at church and that they will act on what David advised
- That God will guide Ricardo as he takes on the leadership at church
- For wisdom and guidance for Nane&I. That we will hear the voice of God and stay in the centre of his will for Vineyard em Ação&our lives too

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We had an away day with everyone from church and some visitors one Sunday in December, to a school still in Recife but a little further out than we live that has a pool and football pitch. To start with getting everyone to arrive at church to leave at 06am was a challenge in itself (but one this year that most folk succeeded, more or less!) then the bus didn't turn up and we were informed that the driver we'd booked just decided not to come and had passed the job onto someone else who also didn't come! To cut a boring story short we eventually found someone to take us, but when the bus arrived we wondered if it would managed to get us to Aldeia! Talk of old! To get to Aldeia, you need to climb a very long winding road! ...basically the bus started to climb the hill but couldn't cope and started rolling back! So we all had to disembark and walk, over 3-4kms up the hill, fortunately there was a big cloud over sun during this time! So we paid to walk! Was a day mainly spent in the pool, or on the football pitch with a communion service to finish with. The bus successfully returned us to the Roda without any hitches! ..the brakes were functioning, which was good as it was downhill for the majority of the way back!

On Christmas eve we had a short service (cut shorter due to the noise that we were battling against from the neighbours with their 4-5 foot high speakers as previously mentioned!) However the worship was good and after the service we'd all brought things to share and eat. Later we all went back to Rico&Na's ...to eat more and chill!
Christmas day really isn't anything special here, so we all gathered again together for lunch at Rico&Na's. We were meant to do an evangelistic video presentation about the birth of Jesus, on the outside wall of church in the eve, but it was too noisy so was cancelled.

However on the last Monday that we went out on the streets with Vineyard em Ação, we showed the same video on the wall of a bank, to do something a bit different as it was Christmas. It got a really good response and two people accepted Jesus as their Saviour there and then! Which is amazing!

Nane, Sonia and I had spent the day baking cake to take out 'cos we remembered that last year the folks really appreciated the cake we took out! This time we took orange juice as well.

You may have noticed that I said the "last Monday" ...this is because for the first time since starting this work 15 months ago we felt we needed to take a break. Sonia in particular we felt deserved a break from making soup every week!

We also felt that God was saying stop for a short while, so we are spending this month praying, individually and as a team, listening to the voice of God and evaluating what's happened over the last 15 months and how we can change/shake things up a bit!

We have many ideas and also now have the promise of the use of a room in the centre of Recife for free for a couple of months! We need to go and see the room to see if it's a viable option (at the mo' we are still waiting for the owner to clear out the room) but we'd been praying about something like this happening, we just didn't know how as we don't have the finances to rent anywhere in downtown Recife and then Erick turned up with this proposal! So we are seeing it as an answer to prayer. It's an exciting time! So watch this space! We will start back on the streets on the 30th January.

Thankyou to everyone who's supported this work financially this year! God bless you!

I have had visitors staying here with me since the 29th Nov. It's been really nice to have David and Vanda staying with me. They went back to the UK on the 29th Dec. At the mo' am readjusting to being here alone in my flat!
Lots of love

Ali x



Cantata at Vale



My small group pizza night



Showing the video in the square with Vineyard em Ação

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