

Dear Friends,

Greetings to you from Ecuador in the name of our Lord Jesus!

"I thank my God always concerning you"
1 Cor 1:4

I know many of you will be pleased to see the spring after such a hard winter. Here we have had heavy rainfall, with landslides on the mountain roads, making travel difficult. Since November we have been busy, as you will see.

Our Classes

Christmas was upon us before we knew it, with many activities: a drama in which all children in the main classes participated. We now have a music teacher, who organised Ecuadorian Folk Dancing which was a delight to all.



Following hot on the heels of Christmas was a week of outings. This included an annual trip to the beach, now a firm favourite in our calendar. We invited folk from Laura Flores, and altogether there were 45 of us. For some, it was their first ever trip to the beach.

The close of the school year in February was emotional, as parents thanked us for our work with their children.

Now we are planning for next year, and will have just two classes, one in the charity house, and one in a classroom belonging to a church nearby. It has the advantage of giving

us a little more space than was available last year. We are also taking on a new teacher, Diego, who has worked with Judith Marsden, an English specialist in the teaching of the Deaf. Diego is keen to develop skills with children with other Special Needs, and will work with Ruth, who will now be beginning her fourth year with us. Martha and Maria Teresa continue as teachers' assistants.

The Special Olympics in Guayaquil was a great success. Our entrant, Marco, won a bronze medal. We hope to have weekly horse riding and/or hydrotherapy sessions for our children.

This coming year we will be making a library area in the school with books purchased through a donation by St. Luke's, Formby. Thank you St. Luke's!

Weekly Clinic

Since the New Year we have had a volunteer, Nieves, from the church, to run the clinic. We also pray for our clients, whenever possible. Once a month Dr. Andy of Orphids helps us out with a free medical consultancy.

We have approached the Ecuadorian Government to see if they will help us start a course for mothers with disabled children, called Madres Apoyando Madres, (Mothers Helping Mothers). The idea is to teach mothers skills so they can run their own small business from home. This project comes from Mexico and has a good track record in Latin America.

Latin Link Missionary

It has been a joy to have the help of Margaret Le Beau from the UK to work alongside us since January. She has been doing many things: pastoral visits, helping in the classes, helping out at Bible Holiday Clubs, helping in Laura Flores, and devising and running a Healthy Living course in Laura Flores. This was much needed, as many children and adults suffer from malnutrition and parasites through lack of basic knowledge about how to stay healthy.

Laura Flores

The work here is on-going: normally we have a Bible Study on Wednesdays, which Uriel leads, and a Children's Bible Club, run by Ruth. On Thursdays there is a literacy class, and on Sundays a church service, and Lilianna does the children's work. About twelve adults attend the adult activities, and we have 20 to 30 youngsters in the children's programmes. There are now four baptised adults from this community, and we know others are interested!



Ruth recently attended a conference in Quito about teaching Sunday school, run by Brenda Parkins of Latin Link. This children's work is vital. We want to win these children for Christ in this poverty stricken and deeply troubled community. Recently the President of Laura Flores, Carmen, handed over a copy of the key to the community house. This is a positive step forward and means that we can hold our programmes inside, and not be at the mercy of the sun or the rain.

More projects

This month we are initiating a pre-school programme, PEPE (Program de Educación Pre-Escholar). Two women in Laura Flores, Alexandra and Flor will learn how to teach basic skills to four year olds. The programme was originally devised by English Baptist missionaries in Brazil and has been shown to make big improvements in children's learning ability once they get to school.

We have also done two mini-projects in Laura Flores this year, one making cards for St. Valentine's Day, and the other making costume jewellery.

I am very pleased with the outcomes: all the cards were sold here, some to a Christian Bookshop in Quito; the women are starting to

take responsibility for packaging and administering the products; they are starting to use their skills independently to generate a small income. And they love it!!



Church Life

I am now quite busy in the Baptist Church. I am on the Church Junta, which sounds scary, but it is just the PCC. I help with communion and am currently organizing the Sunday school. I also do a weekly house group and head up the prayer ministry in the North Church.

Prayer pointers

Please pray

- ❖ for all wisdom as we engage with this place of so much need. Col.1:9
- ❖ for the children and staff as they return to school
- ❖ that more people would come into the kingdom through our outreach in Laura Flores

"He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?" Micah 6:8

Thank you for all your support for this work.

Jill Ball

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