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“

We are not human beings on a spiritual journey. We are spiritual beings on a human journey!”

”

Gwen **Carlisle** & Mags **Southern**



## Gwen **Carlisle**

Gwen arrived at St Andrew's College (Colégio San Andrés) in 1983, ready to serve God and carry out his will for her life. However she probably did not realise then, that this would be her life's work and that in the future, she would be the head teacher! Although the school has changed beyond recognition in appearance, its mission remains the same - to provide its students with excellent educational skills whilst teaching them the Christian message. Gwen was head of the pre-school section of the college for many years which incorporates 3 year groups - Jardín 3 (3-4yrs), Jardín 4 (4-5yrs) and Preescolar (5-6yrs). She continues to teach there daily as well as helping out in other areas of the school when needed and carrying out her duties as Head teacher.

## Mags **Southern**

Mags first worked in Paraguay in the mid 1980s as a volunteer teacher at St Andrew's College in Asunción. She strongly felt God's call to serve on a longer term basis. In 1987 Mags returned to the college as a mission partner with SAMS. She taught in different areas of the school and was soon heading up the English primary section of the bilingual school. From 2002 Mags has been deputy head teacher working along side Gwen in her role as head teacher. As well as carrying out her duties as deputy head, Mags teaches maths in the secondary part of the school and prepares the students for international GCSE exams.



## Colégio San Andrés **Overview**

St Andrew's College is a Christian school in the heart of Asunción, the capital of Paraguay. St Andrew's was founded in 1963 by Thea Wedgewood, an English missionary who wanted to provide a bilingual Christian education in English and Spanish, with the aim that every pupil should come to know Jesus as Saviour, Friend and Lord. Thea also wanted every pupil to obtain a Christian worldview and lifestyle and so contribute to the welfare of their family, their nation and the wider world. These remain the stated aims of the school and our reason for being. Hence, all aspects of education in St. Andrew's have a solid Evangelical Christian foundation and the school is part of the work of the Anglican Diocese of Paraguay.

St Andrew's was started as a means of reaching the middle to upper classes of Paraguayan society with the Gospel. This group of people was particularly hard to reach, and so a kindergarten was started with just five pupils, with the aim of building relationships with both children and parents.

Growth was slow and dependence on God was vital. Money was needed for land and a building. God's provision and faithfulness was seen all along the way. As the school grew it needed to incorporate a Paraguayan education too, and so Paraguayan Christian teachers were found to work alongside English staff and the school gained recognition with the Paraguayan Ministry of Education. Life wasn't without its difficulties and a few times the school nearly closed due to lack of funds. Despite these challenges the school grew until, in 1981, it had its first graduates; a class of about a dozen girls. The aims of the school are still very dear to the staff and still the main focus of attention. The school tries to employ only Christian staff, they have daily Bible studies, assemblies, camps and special activities and whenever the children perform they try to have a message for the parents too.

Today, St Andrew's is a well equipped modern school with very good facilities. It has 360 pupils ranging in age from 3 to 18 years old. The school employs a full Paraguayan staff plus a number of English speaking teachers. St Andrew's is the only school in Asunción to provide the full Paraguayan curriculum and internationally recognised qualifications, e.g. International GCSEs and AS Levels and the Cambridge English exams up to Proficiency.

# Prayer **Points**

## **Wisdom**

Pray for Gwen and Mags in their roles as Head and deputy Head teachers. Pray for wisdom and clarity as they make decisions and pray for a supportive team of colleagues around them.

## **Openness**

Parents are often very open to the gospel. Pray for the staff as they meet with new parents and introduce them to the school and its Christian ethos.

## **School Events**

Pray for the numerous events that take place every year when parents come into school. Pray that they will hear and receive the Christian message.

## **God's Word**

Pray for the daily Bible studies which take place with the pupils. Give thanks for the faithfulness of the Christian teachers who bring God's word to the pupils.

## **Staff**

Pray that Gwen and Mags will always have the staff they need to run the school effectively. Pray for trained primary teachers, secondary English teachers, Maths teachers and qualified TEFL teachers.

## **Students**

Pray that many of the children and young people in the college might come to know the Lord as their Saviour and then might go on to make a difference for God in their country.

## **Practical Projects**

Pray for the various practical projects which take place for the older pupils. Pray for a real outpouring of God's Spirit as young adults are challenged to go the extra mile.

## **Rest**

Pray that God will help Gwen and Mags to recognize their need for rest away from their various ministry tasks and know God's refreshing touch.

**If you would like to participate with SAMS through receiving prayer updates on Gwen and Mags ministry, or financially support the school ministry in Paraguay, please contact SAMS.**