

## Link Letter No.4 April 2014

**Dear friends,**

***Greetings from Santo Domingo, and thank you for continuing on this journey with me...***

I pray that wherever you are around the world, you are happy and enjoying the year so far. I recently celebrated my first anniversary here in Ecuador (16 April). I cannot believe how fast the year has gone.

The board of the foundation have said that they want me to write my project for the children when they leave school, and that they would like me to run a “pilot scheme”, with a group of four children this coming year, so that they can get a feel for how the project will work. The foundation has a piece of land for rearing chickens, and we could use that as an employment training project, the idea being that I would spend two days writing

the project and three days teaching life skills etc.

As I write this, the school year is about to start, so I have had two months to prepare the lessons and to start my project. The latter is still to get off the ground, though I do have lots of information gathered, ready to use.



**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.**



*The Foundation's mission partners*

Since my January link letter, we have had the opportunity to take the children to the 911 emergency call centre, where they learned a bit about what happens if they ring 911. I think, however, that the highlight for them was the balloon they were given at the end, and the ride in a bus.

On 17 February we had our end of year celebration, and the children had the opportunity to sing for everyone.

Jill Ball (CMS mission partner and founder of the Foundation) was also

able to thank people for their contribution to the work of the Foundation. It was a chance to say “goodbye” to Dorothea before she headed back to Germany, and to Jennifer who had been over from the UK, for a couple of weeks, to do an evaluation of the school. The week before she left, Dorothea and I were able to go to a place called Loja for three days. The journey from Santo Domingo cost £9 and took 15 hours, in a bus! It was not the most comfortable journey but, as it was overnight, we did get some sleep. One of the places we visited was a park, with miniature versions of some of the world’s most famous structures, including Big Ben and the Eiffel Tour... totally unexpected in the south of Ecuador!



*Trip to 911*



*Latin Link America team*

In February too, I was asked to represent CMS at the Latin Link International Assembly, which is held in South America every four years. This year it was in Quito, hosted by the Latin Link Ecuador team. These are the folk who provide me with pastoral support, as there are no other CMS partners here (except when Jill visits). I am very grateful to all of them. I was able to have a table in the



*Last day of term...*

“Market Place” to sell some of the things made by the women in Santo Domingo, who are supported by the Foundation. I raised \$200 (£125) for them, which was really good. I am also grateful for the opportunity to meet some wonderful people, and to enjoy great fellowship and teaching over the course of the six days.

Luzcelli, the new director of the school and women’s work projects, has started her role, and has begun to put a more “Latino” emphasis on the way things are done, which should put things in a more relevant context. However, this has an impact for me, as anyone teaching their own class has to have a “*titulo*” (title= professional qualification) – which I do not have for teaching. Therefore, I will probably only be able to take a group for 1.5 hours each day. This will mean that the “pilot scheme” for my project will not be possible in the way that I had envisaged, but I will be able to teach some life skills in a more basic format. This has been a challenge for my lesson planning, and also means that we will not have time for the employment training with the chickens. (Sigh of relief... how do you rear chickens?).

Thanks to generous donations from the UK and USA, the Foundation now has another worker for the Women’s Project, so this work is expanding all the time, and they are also looking to employ a fourth teacher for the school. I have also received a donation from supporters to buy a wheelchair for the school, which will be really useful.

As Jill Ball seeks to “retire”, it is good to see that God still has plans to progress the work that she started here, and that there is a Latin American director to oversee things – all answers to prayer. Jill has also decided that she will continue to promote the Foundation around the world, so for now, I will not

be going to the USA to do that.

This has been a fairly quiet three months for me, but I feel that the next three will be very busy and a little challenging. So I should have lots more to tell you next time.

### ***Until then...***

### **Please pray...**

- That the new ways of working in the school will go down well with the students, families and teachers.
- That the group I have will benefit from, and enjoy, learning new life skills.
- That Irina, our new CMS physiotherapist, will arrive, with her visa, and settle in well at language school, before she comes to work in Santo Domingo.

### **Give thanks for...**

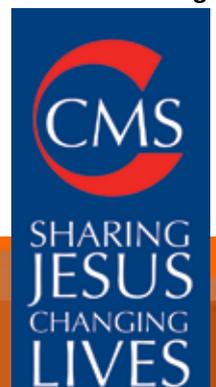
- My improved Spanish skills (still need to improve more).
- The chance to see more of this, beautifully diverse, country.
- The continued friendship of my Spanish teachers in Quito, and for my developing friendships here in Santo Domingo.

Blessings/ Bendiciones

*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 contact **the links team** at [links@cms-uk.org](mailto:links@cms-uk.org)

[www.cms-uk.org](http://www.cms-uk.org)



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