

Link Letter No.5 September 2014

Dear friends,

I wish you every blessing and thank you for your continued support. At the end of my last link letter, I told you that I would only be teaching Life Skills for 1.5 hours a day as I do not have a teaching qualification. Well, after speaking to a couple of the Foundation's board members, it was agreed that I would be able to do a "pilot" for my project, teaching one group for four hours a day. The new school year started at the beginning of May, so I have been planning lessons and teaching for four months now. There have been some changes to the members of the group that I teach, and we have moved premises, so it has been a busy time.

My group have been able to do classroom based healthy eating lessons, which



Teaching life skills



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.

have included making fruit juices, salads and healthy snacks. We have also visited a shopping mall, market and supermarket, looking at the different ways of shopping and the difference in prices. The most positive observation I have made is the development of personalities within the smaller group. One of the

boys, who was a shy introvert, has started becoming more assertive and showing some leadership qualities, which were not there last year. He is also freely showing his sense of humour, which was not obvious before.

At the beginning of June, it was the “Day of the Child”, and the school celebrated this with the parents and children entertaining each other.

Great fun! On 3 July, there was a parade, as part of a week of fiestas in Santo Domingo, to celebrate the city’s anniversary. The parade included many school and college bands and dancers, and lasted over three hours. The Special Olympics Team was invited to take part, which included Francisco and Jonathan from the school.

Irina, our CMS physio (a short-term mission partner), arrived in Santo Domingo at the end of July, and a week later the children helped her celebrate her birthday with the customary three “C’s” – cake, Cola and a chorus of “Happy Birthday”. She has started helping several of the children in the school, as well as a couple of people in an orphanage on the edge of town.

The First Baptist Church celebrated its 46th anniversary on 16 August, with a day out at a place with sports pitches and four swimming pools. There were five baptisms led by pastors William and Rodrigo and a great time was had by all. The church ladies (including myself), beat the Baptist School ladies at 6-a-side football, to win a trophy which was presented at the church service celebration on 17 August. At the end of August, the Foundation celebrated its



Jonathan and Francisco in the 3 July parade



School children entertaining the parents



How much is pizza... Genesis and Francisco

anniversary, and hosted a sports day and an open day. The theme was the World Cup, with each class representing a country (Ecuador, Colombia and England).

Jill Ball (a CMS mission associate) has been here with her family for a month, and has spent time visiting the new school and the expanding women's projects. The Foundation

is now working in four *barrios* (suburbs), encouraging women to report abuse, and helping them to make a small living for themselves by making things to sell. Blanca and Rodrigo are now back, fully employed in this work, following a horrible motorbike accident at the end of May. We thank God for their return.

I have been able to spend two days a week writing and researching my project, which is going well. I have managed to translate 5,000 words into Spanish! I am trying to keep the body of the manual as short as possible, so that people will read it. The "tool kit", which I am preparing to go with it, is in danger of being too big so I am trying to discern which things to put in and which things to reference so that people can look them up on the internet etc. I also plan to leave all the information I have used in my classes and the equipment, for the Foundation to use.

My visa, was due for renewal at the end of July, and a recently opened office in Santo Domingo, meant that I did not have to make two or three trips up to Quito to renew it. It did mean that I had to apply without the help of the solicitor, but resulted in me applying for and getting a two-year visa. (Many thanks to Katy, the Latin link team leader here, for her help with the paperwork). This was a real answer to prayer because, with a one-year visa I would have needed to renew it at the end of next July, and that is when I hope to be in Los Angeles for the Special Olympics. Now I believe the way is open for

me to go. Through the connections that Henry Scriven (CMS Mission Director for South America) has, I have people looking for a church family who I could stay with whilst I am there. The \$500 saving I made on the visa process will help with other costs, should the Foundation not be able to meet them. It will be an opportunity to highlight the Foundation and its British counterpart, LIAT, as well as to do some evangelism.

This month sees Jo Anthony (CMS Personnel Officer), visiting us for a few days in Santo Domingo for the first time. Then I have a friend coming over for four weeks, and plan to take a holiday with her for a couple of weeks. So hopefully I will have some photos of Ecuador to share with you in my next link letter.

Please thank God for:

- My two-year visa.
- The chance to have a holiday.
- For being with me every step of this journey.
- The five people baptised during the church anniversary.

Please pray for:

- The work of the Foundation, and for my project.
- The children in my class to continue to develop skills and personalities.
- Good planning for my trip to the Los Angeles Special Olympics.
- For Jo's visit this month.
- For Blanca's full recovery following the accident.

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**

www.cms-uk.org



Church Mission Society

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