



## Holden Newsletter - June 2017

We hope the following **highlights** will help you **find and read** what interests you!



**MAIN TOPICS**

**MAIN POINTS**



**PRAYER REQUESTS / PRAISES**



**Dear Friend, Encourager, Partner-in-Mission,**

### **ALTITUDE SICKNESS**

**We've lived here in Ecuador for almost three years now. You would think that we'd no longer have any issues with Quito's high altitude of 9,300 ft and it's effects on our bodies but we do.** We've learned that the altitude can affect the thyroid, being that Darrell and I both have recently developed imbalanced thyroids like many of the Ecuadorians we've met. We're both taking natural supplements for this so most of the symptoms have decreased or disappeared – mainly, extreme tiredness along with some shortness of breath, dizziness, and heart arrhythmia. Still, when we change altitudes, sometimes the symptoms return for a few days to a few weeks. **In May we flew to Guayaquil which is at sea level. So, upon returning to Quito, we each experienced the usual tiredness and headache for the first one-five days. Soon (at the end of July) we'll be flying to the U.S. and returning at the end of September. Our mission, Reach Beyond, requires its missionaries to take five days of rest after returning to this altitude. Please pray that our symptoms will be minimal.**

### **GOING OUT WITH A BANG**

**We've managed to survive the worst rainy season of Ecuador in 40 years** with less than a dozen days without rain since November. The people who live in the coastal region and in the southern part of Quito have had it far worse than we who live in Carcelen in the northern part. But despite living higher up than in most areas of Quito, we've had our own issues with cold, dampness, and mold in our 2<sup>nd</sup> story home.

**Folks have been dealing with** major floods, washed out highways, landslides, houses or roofs collapsing, sinkholes, serious black mold issues, and respiratory illnesses. Reported statistics are 21 deaths, 50,000 cubic meters of mud blocking a major road, 5 hours of torrential rain and 6 inches of large hail in certain areas of the country.



Standing On Bench at Bus Stop

The Alley by Our House

Quito Firefighters Rescuing Children

**Our indigenous friends, Rosita and Patricio, who live in the lower part of Carcelen, recently had their roof above their living room collapse due to the rain.** They live in Patricio's mother's house on the 2<sup>nd</sup> story. This house has the flat cement roof one typically finds in Quito. But this particular roof does not have any drains so the rain just set on the roof soaking into the cement.

**Typically, each Saturday, their daughter, Leisha, sits in the living area very early in the morning studying. But this particular Saturday when she woke up at her usual time, she said that an inner voice told her to stay in bed awhile longer. She tried to ignore this message but simply felt she had to stay in bed. Within minutes, she heard a terrible crash as the heavy cement roof/ceiling fell! Praise God that she did, otherwise she could have been severely injured or killed.**

**Leisha, in the past few years, has been angry and mistrusting of God, at times even saying "He does not exist" due to the difficult trials their family has been through because of when their father was unjustly imprisoned in 2011-2012. But on this day, she told her mother that surely 'Someone' loves her and cares for her deeply. Please pray that Leisha's faith and trust in God will be restored.**

### **GREEN CARD SCAM**

**This month our landlady came to us concerned about the phone calls her and her son had been receiving.** Her son, Hernan, had answered some questions on a website giving out his and his mother's phone numbers to an organization which supposedly helps foreign citizens obtain a green card to work in the U.S. Now, because of the persistent phone calls, **she was suspicious that the organization, or at least what they are doing, might not be legitimate.**

**After doing some of our own investigation, it turns out that it is lottery, into which you have to pay to enter, for only a 1 in 8 billion chance for an appointment to meet with your country's embassy authorities to apply for a green card.** Apparently, Hernan had inquired about it giving them enough information that they were now harassing them by phone and pressuring them to give them their credit card number, which unfortunately he did. We explained to them that there are legitimate organizations, usually within the U.S. government, which can help with obtaining a green card and they should never give out any personal information over the phone.

You may be thinking – duh! But often, **people in struggling countries are desperate for a way out of their present political and/or economic situations. Many also believe that the U.S. is not only a land of opportunity but a utopia and will take great risks for the opportunity to live and work there.** After much discussion, we convinced them to tell the callers to stop calling or they will notify the police. Soon afterward, Marianna went to her bank to close her credit card account and to obtain a new credit card. We notified our mission and informed them that this possible scam was going on and asked them to make an announcement over HCJB Radio - Ecuador to inform the general population about it. **We thank the Lord that Mariana and Hernan trusted us enough to ask for our help.**

### **THEFT IN OUR BUILDING**

**This month a computer and phone were discovered missing from Hernan's graphic design business (in the first story of our building).** Mariana, immediately notified the police, the neighbors, and the president of our 'manzana' (the section of Carcelen in which we live). She is trying to get the municipality to set up a surveillance camera on the pole at the end of our street which would record any violators. There was also a report in our local news that a woman in Carcelen who owns a small laundry business in the first story of her building was recently robbed and murdered. **Mariana, a widow in her late 70's who lives alone has become quite anxious and not able to sleep at night. So, I, Sondra, spent some time with her, listening to her concerns and reassuring her of God's presence and protection. After our chat and having the locks replaced she is now able to rest. We thank the Lord for the guidance from His Holy Spirit to share the words she needed to hear.**



## THE FREEDOM TO CELEBRATE A U.S. HOLIDAY

The U.S. Embassy decided to hold a 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebration for the U.S. citizens living, working, and serving in Ecuador (including their Ecuadorian spouses and/or children). It was the first time they have held the event since the U.S. terrorist attack of 9-11. We had received an invitation stating that it would be held on a particular date (not the actual holiday). They also asked that we send our names and passport #'s before they would send us the address of where the event was being held. We later learned that this request, the change in the date, and the limited number of invitations were for security purposes (it is high risk to have too many U.S. citizens at one location). Although the directions they sent were actually an incomplete address and showed only the initials of the name of the building, we still found it.

When we typically think of celebrating our Independence Day, we think of roaming in parks enjoying picnics, cook-outs, swimming and fireworks and having the freedom to move about without fear of danger, after all, isn't that what 'freedom' is all about? But things are not the same when living in a foreign country. The safety of the foreign citizens takes precedence over personal freedom. Upon arrival we realized that it was being held at one of U.S. government properties which was heavily guarded by private security officers, national police, and special police trained in explosives. At the entrance we passed through metal detectors, body searches, and inspections of our personal belongings.



"Explosives Team' Vehicle

So, accepting the situation for what it was, we sat on the grassy hill enjoying the freedom to sing our national anthem played by the band, watching puppet shows and dog demonstrations presented by the Quito Metro Fire District, chatting with a F.D. officer about the antique firetruck on display, and filling our stomachs with N. American and Ecuadorian foods and ice cream.

We left that day thanking God for the special freedom that exists in our country of origin.



1944 U.S. Firetruck Donated to Quito's Metro Fire District

## THE JOY OF MAKING YOUR OWN 'SUNDAE'

This past Christmas season, one of our supporters sent some extra money to us for the Zambiza dump children who attend the Extreme Response After-School Program at the Quito Family Resource Center (QFRC). The program coordinator, Robbie, and I decided to wait until the end of the school year to celebrate the birthdays of all 36 children. We bought large balloons, streamers, ice cream, and 10 different toppings. When we announced that each child would be able to make their own ice-cream sundae, Pato, who is five years old, jumped into my lap giving me a very tight hug, repeating, "Gracis, gracias, gracias! (Thank you, thank you, thank you!) until I peeled him from my body.



We opened the door to the small library where we had hidden the large pile of blown-up balloons. With eyes popping wide open, they belted out screams, stampeding the room and throwing colorful balloons everywhere. As they played, Robbie and I set up the assembly line for the ice cream sundaes.



The children who had birthdays in the last six months got in line first with the others following close behind. Robbie scooped out the ice cream and I was the 'topping police' keeping things under control so that everyone could have each of the 10 things available. The majority of the kids mounded so many sprinkles, chocolate chips, marshmallows, peanuts, coconut, syrup, etc. on top that we couldn't even see the ice cream buried underneath! Quickly, before they could devour their mountain of sugar, we gathered them together to record a video to say 'gracias' which we sent to the person who had blessed them.



22 of the 36 Zambiza Children Who Attend the Quito Family Resource (QFRC) After-School Program

**We thank you and the Lord for your extra gifts that you send to our special project fund so that, together, we can bring special joy to these children who have so little.**

## REACH BEYOND HIGHLIGHTS OF 2016 - LATIN AMERICA

- \* Celebrated the **85<sup>th</sup> anniversary of broadcasting the gospel** in Ecuador through radio, satellite, internet, social media, etc.
- \* Sent **3 emergency medical response teams** to Ecuador's coastal region in April after a magnitude 7.8 earthquake killed 660 people, injured 4,600 and left 28,000 homeless.
- \* Held **mobile medical clinics in 4 Ecuadorian communities** outside of Quito.
  - \* Completed **6 clean water projects** in Ecuador.
- \* Treated an estimated **350,000 patients at Hospital Vozandes-Quito** in Ecuador and saw over **32,000 patients at 2 medical clinics** in Quito.
- \* Distributed **1,000 solar-powered audio players of the gospel** to river dwellers in Brazil.

### Darrell and Sondra Holden

Missionaries of -

RIPE for Harvest  
WORLD OUTREACH



Partnering with -

reach beyond  
The Voice and Hands of Jesus.  
TOGETHER.

### in Ecuador, South America

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