



Holden Newsletter - Sept 2018

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,

NEW FALL SEMESTER - ZAMBIZA MINISTRY

In the After-School Program, we're starting out the year with a 'bang' with 30 elementary school students and 18 high school students! Fortunately, we have 5 staff this year to help with the increase of attendees. These are first generation children (to attend school) of the dump-workers and street-recyclers who Extreme Response serves. In the program, they receive not only the love of Jesus from their teachers, but also:



... a hot, nutritious lunch
(often their only meal of the day)



... help with homework assignments
(many parents are illiterate)



... special learning workshops
(including computer workshops)



... spiritual development
(Bible stories, prayer, worship, dance)



... and social-educational activities
(to instill patience, understanding,



cooperation, teamwork,
and success)!

We praise the Lord for the opportunity to make an impact in the lives these children who otherwise would not succeed well in school without the support they receive in this program.



Erika - Program Director/Teacher



Nieves - Teacher



Andreina - Teacher



Daniel -Teacher

Thank you
for your financial support
and prayers
which allows Sondra
to be a part
of this wonderful team
of Christian workers!



Sondra -Teacher 's Aide

THE VENEZUELAN REFUGEE CRISIS IN ECUADOR

In the past 2 years, the number of Venezuelan refugees crossing the border into Ecuador has increased from just over 100,000 to approximately 450,000. In August, the government reported 4,200 refugees entering Ecuador per day! Thousands are fleeing daily from a country that may see 1,000% inflation by the end of this year, possibly bringing the country to the point of complete collapse. It's president, Maduro, (who was not elected but appointed by the now deceased President Hugo Chavez) has been leading the country in a manner of socialism that has reportedly resulted in virtually no food, water, electricity, medicine, education, housing, transportation, employment, security, etc. for anyone except the top elite of Venezuela and/or Maduro's chosen companions. **It is reported that this exodus of people is the largest in the world at this time, and the countries through which they travel, or settle into, are being severely impacted, including Ecuador.**

Our former landlady, Mariana, tells us of 2 refugees attending her church - - - a married couple who are a doctor and a lawyer. Now, having escaped to Ecuador, they are selling candy on the Quito buses, trying to obtain money for food while they look for housing and jobs.

Recently we met Jakelin. Her son, Angel, is our neighbor. He was formally employed as an architect and left Venezuela about 5 years ago. He has since obtained employment in Quito as a salesman for a food manufacturing company. Jakelin has been visiting him for the past 3 months - the maximum time allowed on her passport. She was a teacher and owned her own home back in Venezuela. But now, **her goal is to visit here as often as she can, to be cared for by her son, as she now has no income, no food/medicine, no immediate hope nor future in Venezuela. If she can find employment here she'll be able to obtain a visa. But she fears she will have to abandon her home (which will then be confiscated by her government.) She would then move here with what she can transport in a single suitcase, via bus, to start a new life.**

Her son, Angel, lives in a small apartment on the next floor below us. Jakelin and I met one day in the backyard when she was hanging her son's clothes out to dry in the sun. **She's a sweet, friendly woman with a strong faith in God and a Catholic background.** She and I have spent hours, on several occasions, getting to know one another and sharing our hearts of compassion for the refugees. She and her son have visited some of the transient refugees in the encampments near our home. Since then, the police have transported the refugees to shelters. But many refuse to go for fear of the danger of drug/sex traffickers who are preying on the refugees there, including their children. Recently, Jakelin and I spent 2 hours walking in the hot sun, searching for any remaining hidden refugee camps (without success).



The main route from Venezuela, through Columbia to Ecuador, brings the refugees, by bus, to the Carcelen terminal less than 2 miles from our home.

In August, there were over 300 men, women, and children < - - living in make-shift tents at the interchange which we pass by everyday on the bus.



Oscar, Founder of Pan de Vida Ministry

Jakelin has now returned to Venezuela hoping to return to Quito by the end Christmas. Until then, we'll stay in touch by email via her phone. We look forward to seeing her again soon.



Young Recipient of Pan de Vida's Food Program

Meanwhile, we hope to connect her son, Angel with Oscar, founder of the Pan de Vida (Bread of Life) ministry.

Angel has access to donations of flour, rice, etc. from the business for which he works. Pan de Vida is now feeding 400 Venezuelan refugees, twice weekly, who are living on the streets of Quito. This is 400 more than the usual 175 - 300 Ecuadorians they normally feed. Also, someone from Wisconsin sent us \$250 and someone from our Ecuador church has donated \$20 (a lot of money in this economy) for the refugees. We will discuss with Oscar what is the best way to use this money for these families.

Thank you to everyone who has been praying and to those who have given donations!

If you wish to send a gift please send to:
Pan de Vida, P.O. Box 480, Wheaton, IL 60187
or to directly to us at: Tina Bush, 6031 Ashbury Dr, Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54467

INCREASE IN THEFTS/ROBBERIES/VIOLENT CRIMES

The Ecuadorian authorities report an increase of 2.4% for the first 9 months of 2018 compared to 2017, including more thefts of taxi drivers and passengers, delinquency, and significant littering issues.

Two weeks ago, one of Carmen's neighbor's was returning to her home, on foot, with groceries. As she was unlocking the door to her home, a group of men approached the woman demanding that she let them into her home. Two of Carmen's adult daughters saw the incident and began screaming, which fortunately, drove the men away. **Last week, our new landlady, Jhen, was driving home from work at night.** When she stopped at a stoplight, a man broke her passenger window with a gun, stole her purse, and threatened her. In her bag she had lot of cash, 3 brand-new passports for her teenage and adult children which she had obtained that day, and all her identification which includes the address to her (thus our) home. As she sped away, running the red light, the man and several others followed her on their motorcycles. She drove to an area with lots of people on the street and screamed "I've been robbed and I'm being followed". Fortunately, the men took off. After spending several hours at the U.S. Embassy, who offered her temporary protection and wise counsel (she's Ecuadorian but a U.S. citizen), she returned home to clean out the glass from her vehicle, picked up her sister, got the window fixed, and visited several offices to obtain all new identification and passports (she was leaving that weekend for a trip to the U.S.). Fortunately, I was home to be with her when she returned home in distress.

Thanking God for: **1) Darrell's experience in Crisis Management/Safety, etc.** It's comforting to know that my husband is an experienced and wise man concerning these issues. His wisdom and assurance are extremely useful and comforting to me, Jhen, and others. **2) The security measures in and around our new home.** We have an armed guard across the street 24 hours, another (with a pit-bull) on our back street 12 hours at night, a triple-phase electronic entrance to our building, electric fence, cameras with an 'app' to view the street before leaving the house, and an iron gate with 4 dead-bolts between the lower and upper stories of the building where our landlady and our apartments are located. **3) The Lord's provision and protection.** Even with all the these security measures, our Lord is our most reliable and faithful source of protection. He's always been with us, as evidenced by when we were in dangerous situations in the past without knowledge of it at the time. We will use our God-given wisdom to take all necessary measures, but we place our faith, not in those things, but in Him!

Darrell's research, unfortunately, indicates that the 'usual thieves' (typically Ecuadorian, Colombian, Nigerian, Jamaican, etc) are taking advantage of the presence of the Venezuelan refugees. They are up-scaling the severity of their crimes knowing that most people, as well as some of the authorities, will blame the Venezuelans for the incidents. Yes, some of the refugees are so desperate as to steal in order to eat or to obtain money for the bus ticket they need to continue their exodus, but the majority of them are good but simply desperate people, seeking food, work, and a decent future for themselves and their families. **Please pray for the refugees with this added burden upon them.**

SECURITY, TRANQUILITY, AND SPACE TO SHARE OUR BLESSING WITH OTHERS

We're now settled into our new home. The last box is unpacked, the pictures are hung on the walls, and there are only a few more update projects to complete. We still, at times, turn the wrong way in the upstairs hallway, can't seem to remember that we have the bathrooms where we do, and open the wrong drawers and cupboards looking for something, but **the familiarity will come in time.**

We're amazed at the amount of rental search, paperwork, packing, unpacking, cleaning, repairs, etc. that has been accomplished at both apartments in the 3 'short' months since we came to terms with the fact that we had to move. Yet, it's been a very 'long' 3 months because of the amount of physical work that was necessary to achieve everything. **We've been quite worn out and in need of an opportunity to simply 'enjoy' our home.**

So, September 22, we held the first of two large 'fiestas' (parties) to celebrate the blessing of this new home as well as our 32nd wedding anniversary which was September 20. We will have the second fiesta Oct. 7th. We've invited 50 people to each event; 82 Ecuadorian friends and 18 'gringito' missionary friends. With the wonderful green space we have, our guests are able to enjoy 'bocaditos' (finger snack foods), 'bebidas' (beverages), 'postres' (desserts), 'musica' (music), 'companerismo' (fellowship), 'basket' (basketball), 'la piscina' (the pool), and a time of blessing and prayer by our pastors.



At September's event, we overheard the Nazarene seminary director's wife, Lucy, make a comment to her friend how wonderful this space would be to hold an event for some of the women of the church. We shared with her how the Lord had already impressed this idea upon us and how we'd also like to provide basketball events for some of the men of the church, and swimming parties for some of the children. She was elated! Surely the Lord knew well in advance of the safety and security this home would provide for us as well as the blessing this space could provide for others.



Carmen's 4 grand-kids & niece in kitchen



Friend Rosa, Pastor Julio, us, and Pastor Loi



Basketball court, lawn, BBQ area & pool

OUR FAMILY IS GROWING!

In addition to the many Ecuadorian friends we've been blessed with, the Lord has also provided us with 'family'. We've been spiritually adopted into Carmen's family of eight. In addition, we have spiritually adopted Wendy as our own daughter, her son, Jhoan, as our grandson, Wendy's brother, David, as another son, and Cristian, as another. (We had sponsored all 3 of them for several years when they lived in a children's home/orphanage in Conocoto, Ecuador). Now, we have a new addition! Another grandson! Cristian (and Katy) gave birth to a baby boy this past week. He wasn't due for another month. We praise God that even though he is here early, he is healthy, and we can't wait to meet him!



Cristian, Katy & Baby-To-Be

UPDATE ON THE CHANGO -TAIPE FAMILY PROJECT

After much planning and prayer, we are excited to share with you that things are progressing well with plans for a team to bless the Chango-Taipe family! We, and Pete of Extreme Response, have been meeting via Skype and email with Rebecca, of Community Church of Stevens Point, WI over the past several months. All praise and glory to the Lord, we now have a team of 10 adults, 2 women and 8 men, including the pastor, coming to Ecuador January 17-27 to bless this family! We have over 40 hours of work planned to replace the plumbing, update and repair the electric, and complete several other much needed repairs which have been affecting the health and safety of this family. The team has most of the funds for the project but they would benefit from \$500 more to complete everything that we'd like to bless the family with - - - household items, school supplies, food staples, and vitamins for the children. As the Lord places it upon your heart to help bless this family, please, send your gift(s) to:



Darrell & Pete of Extreme Response

HOLDEN - C/O TINA BUSH, 6031 ASHBURY DR, WISCONSIN RAPIDS, WI 54497
PLEASE WRITE 'Chango-Taipe Project Fund' IN THE MEMO LINE OF YOUR CHECK

These gifts are NOT tax deductible but 100% of the funds will go directly to the family's needs.

or to: RIPE FOR HARVEST, P.O. BOX 487, MONUMENT, CO 80132-0487

PLEASE WRITE "Holden Psalm 61:10 Project - Acct #20099" IN THE MEMO LINE OF YOUR CHECK - - - -

A percentage will be deducted for RFH's handling of the funds.

PRAYER REQUESTS:

- 1) For our upcoming visa appointment, October 17th at the immigration office, to obtain our new visas.
- 2) For a future meeting with Jeremy and Boris of the Dunamis ministry to resolve communication issues.
- 3) For a future meeting with Oscar, of the Pan de Vida ministry to unite resources to help Venezuelan refugees.
- 4) For the team of Christian workers who serve the 48 children from Zambiza in the After-School program and the new students to the program along with their families.
- 5) For Darrell throughout the end of this year, as he balances his duties as Crisis Management Coordinator and Lead Maintenance Person at our ministry, home handy-man, husband, and Papa Noel for several upcoming Christmas events in Dec.
- 6) For Sondra as she balances her duties as Teacher Assistant, supporter/encourager of single parent families, manager of our ministries from her home office, manager of the domestics at home, wife, and seeks God's will for her involvement with the Venezuelan refugee crisis.
- 7) For the team from Community Church as they meet bi-weekly preparing for their time of ministry here in January and for the team of mission workers and Ecuadorian volunteers who are preparing for the team's arrival.

Darrell and Sondra Holden

Missionaries of -



Partnering with -



in Ecuador, South America

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