



## **HOLDEN NEWS END OF YEAR SUMMARY 2020**

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

**\* Main Points**

**\* Prayer Requests/Praises**



**DEAR PARTNER, ENCOURAGER, FRIEND,**

**WOW, it's been 1 year since some of you have heard from us! There is no easy way to explain our negligence in staying in touch with you, except to say that the past year has been CHALLENGING!** We know many of you understand because we're all living in a new world since the onset of the pandemic shut-down in March. But our challenge actually started 9 months prior to that with an extraordinary number of circumstances had entered into our lives and that consumed a large portion of our time and physical, emotional, and spiritual energy.

**We did stay in touch, regularly, with our financial supporters, and those on our prayer partner list which was vital at that time. But in that process, we neglected to write to our other newsletter recipients. And for that we deeply apologize.** It is not that you are any less important to us. But the fact is, when we sent out our formal newsletters, we are required to pass them through the mission editor for proof-reading, and then wait for them to be sent back to make the necessary corrections, before sending them out to you. At the time, with so much going on, we simply did not have the time nor the energy to go through that process.

**But now we're back and excited, and will try to summarize what has happened over the past 15 months.** We will then return to our prior schedule of sending out quarterly newsletters which are scheduled in the following manner: 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter (Oct, Nov, Dec) is normally sent in early January, 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter (Jan, Feb, Mar) is sent in early April, 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter (Apr, May, Jun) is sent in early July, and 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter (Jul, Aug, Sept) sent in early Oct.

**If you have any questions, please contact us via email or written letter to our U.S. address listed at the end of this letter. We thank you for your understanding and your patience!**

**June/July** - An emergency trip to the U.S. for medical treatment for 6 weeks, then short return to Ecuador.

**August** - An overwhelming influx of refugees fleeing the crisis in Venezuela and arriving in Ecuador (2 to 4 thousand/day) the tremendous impact it had in our immediate community, and our involvement in helping a young refugee leave his country safely, make the long journey to Ecuador, and get established here.

**September** - A quick but wonderful time spent accompanying our U.S. friends on an 8-day adventure seeing the sights of Ecuador and visiting our ministries. Then a return to the U.S. for another 6-week stay during which we gave church presentations and visited with our supporters, friends and family, before a significant delay in our return due to nationwide riots and destruction in Ecuador

**October** - Returned home, unpacked suitcases full of supplies, multiple safety measures taken, and multiple preparations made in order to protect ourselves and our home due to the threat of more violence, plus substantially more hours of work for Darrell as Crisis Management Coordinator for our mission, and special guests who came to visit for a weekend on short notice.

**November** - Stepped in to help with the overwhelming number of refugees in our city by volunteering at Pan de Vida in addition to our regular ministry responsibilities; served between 220-300 new refugees bi-weekly.

**December** - A busy Christmas season with 7 ministry Christmas outreaches, including at Pan de Vida plus, a large multi-cultural Christmas gathering in our home (40+ attended).  
- Gave a presentation at our mission staff meeting on our time spent in the Link Care counseling program in California in 2018, resulting in a missionary couple agreeing to participate in the program.

**Dec/Jan** - 3 earthquakes shook our home, firearms attack occurred near Darrell on the street, friends Rosita and Patricio separated and filed for divorce, friend Sintia injured during a bad fall and her oldest son returned to cocaine use, Sintia's daughter was accused of theft and was imprisoned, large wildfire on the mountainside threatened our community for several days, Ecuadorian daughter's (Wendy's) mother, (Patricia) pleaded with us to take care of Wendy and her son should anything happen to her (she has cancer), helped a young Venezuelan family we met at Pan de Vida who were recent refugees (Jesus and Paola and daughter Ashley) who live in our immediate neighborhood and who needed immediate assistance with finding a bed for their family to sleep on. **Darrell and I began discussing our need to be more available to the people the Lord puts in our paths, and those we know and care about so much.**

**January** - Sondra took time off from her ministries, began a 6-month Sabbatical to seek God's will, spent her time at home in solitude, listening for God's voice, praying, journaling, reading, and reflecting, engaging in Christian book studies, on-line videos, deep discussions with her mentors, long discussions with her husband. **Began giving more attention to our relationships with others, especially those in need.**

**Jan/Feb** - Both Darrell and Sondra very sick for a total of 8 weeks with what may have been undiagnosed COVID-19.

**March** - Ecuador began strict COVID restrictions, our 100+ days of confinement began, I was not permitted to leave home because of my age, Darrell (younger than I) was permitted to purchase groceries/medicine but during limited hours, curfews (martial law) every evening, all public transportation (buses, taxis, airplanes) shut down.

**Mar/Sep** - Darrell's schedule increased to 10-14 hours 7 days/week, especially during the first months of the crisis.

**Apr/Sep** - Sondra began fund-raising campaign to help 7 "beloved" families (those whom we are very close to) to provide a way for them to obtain groceries, and in some cases pay for rent and utilities. She dispensed the money weekly for 6 months, reviewing their situations weekly until self-sustaining.

**May** - 6 families from our neighborhood, who we did not know, showed up at our door, looking for food. Began purchasing extra household groceries in order to be prepared. Sondra reported on the situation to people from the U.S. asking for prayer.

**June** - Sondra made official decision to leave her other ministries and lay the foundation of a new ministry. The number of families increased to 18, and the 'Despensa de Gracia' (Pantry of Grace) ministry was born. The Lord provided funding for the next 12 months for the new ministry from 1 person from the U.S. Small grant was obtained and other people and a church began to donate. Each family received a large bag of groceries, welcoming conversation, information about HCJB Christian radio programs for the family, given a Book of John from the Bible, and were invited to return the following month. Local Venezuelan and Ecuadorian friends and acquaintances offered to volunteer their help. A small hot lunch program was developed for those with special situations.

**July** - Relationships began to form with the families and Sondra began gathering more information about their lives. Number of families served grew to 24 and more donations allowed us to commit to monthly groceries in addition to helping, in some cases, with medicines, transportation needs, rent, etc. Additional people offered to volunteer, growing the team to 11 N. American's, Ecuadorians, and Venezuelans including a Venezuelan neighbor in our building who works for a food distributor and offered product discounts

**Aug** - Relationships continue to grow with the families who now share their personal prayer requests with us. Ministry is now serving 33 families (mostly Venezuelan refugees, but, also, Ecuadorians and Colombians). Packing day of grocery bags continues in our home, but distribution day moved to the local Nazarene Church. Discounts now save us \$100/month, allowing us give more groceries to each family, plus feed the volunteers.

**Sep** - 17 more families have been added and put on a waiting list. Beginning to work with another small ministry which is run by Venezuelans called 'Chamo Ecuador' that can offer small amounts of food products, monthly, to these additional families. Paola, a Venezuelan neighbor we met in December at PDV, now helps weekly with various tasks (phone calls to the families, collecting and recording data, and researching legal documents of families). Verito, an Ecuadorian friend, sends devotionals plus links to Zoom church services and Sunday school classes.

Received a phone message, recently, from a Venezuelan woman with 2 children who arrived here in August and are sleeping on the floor of an abandoned bus, who need food and a mattress.

Applied for, and received, 3 more small grants.

Planning home visits to meet all family members and to know their situational needs better.

Delivering 40 hot lunches monthly to refugees selling small items or washing car windows at stoplights, for pocket change to feed their families.

We're in the process of planning a Christmas outreach to all of the families for the month of December.

**In addition, we've had many changes occur within our mission Reach Beyond. People have left, and others have joined, the name has changed, but the ministries remain the same. The mission is now called Voz y Manos (Voice and Hands [of Jesus])** and is now no longer a North American mission but now operating as an Ecuadorian foundation recognized by the government. Ecuadorians have been added to the board of directors, and one day, God willing, there will be an Ecuadorian director. This change was made to protect the mission organization from any future political changes in the government that may affect its operations.

**Recently** - 3 large volcanoes in Ecuador have been erupting, one with more than 100 explosions per day. Ash has covered 7 provinces, air quality is poor, we are not yet able to travel to Cuenca for Dr. appts and a time of rest.

**Although life, this past year, has been overwhelming and quite stressful at times, the Lord has been amazingly present all throughout!** These experiences have encouraged us to seek the Lord intensely and to re-evaluate our priorities not only in our ministry life, but also in our personal lives. Even more than before, it has caused us to remember that our time on earth is limited and that one day we want to hear "Well done, good and faithful servant" when we stand, face-to-face, with Jesus.

**Darrell will continue serving** as Crisis Management Coordinator for Voz y Manos and help out with special projects but, will no longer be working regularly in maintenance at the mission facility. This now allows him to help with our new ministry and to continue reaching out to others in our immediate neighborhood as he has done over the past few months - as a paramedic helping to meet medical needs (IV's, injections, etc.) and as a repairman (helping with repairs, remodeling projects, electrical work, etc.) in the homes of our neighbors in need.

**Sondra will focus on her tasks as founder, organizer, and leader of the new ministry.** She will no longer volunteer with Pan de Vida, nor with the Dream Center (the new name for the family program for the Zambiza dump workers and street recyclers). Prior to the pandemic, both of these ministries had obtained additional paid staff, missionaries, and/or volunteers. At this time, both of these ministries are still closed due to pandemic restrictions. Once it is open, Sondra will make a point to visit with the children and parents of the Dream Center to maintain her relationships with them whether at the facility or in their homes.

**We are also excited to share with you that a team from the U.S. had approached us a few months ago about coming to Ecuador to serve.** We've been meeting with the leaders via Zoom. There are about 15 members on the team and they are in the process of securing airline tickets for early March. We are working with them on the details of how they can best serve some of the 'beloved' families as well as some of the families of Despensa de Gracia.

**So much has happened in just this past 15 months! The Lord has shown Himself to be faithfully present in the midst of everything. We hope you'll continue following along with us, as He leads us, and, by His Grace, attempt to obediently follow in His footsteps.**

**PRAISES:**

- 1 For the support, encouragement, and prayers of our mission partners, friends, and family!
- 2 Healing for Sintia's body, her son's success in drug treatment, the office job offered to her daughter while in prison
- 3 Rosita's graduation from the university, Patricio attending AA meetings for several months, divorce is 'on hold'.
- 4 No serious damaged from the 3 earthquakes, wildfire did not burn any houses, volcanoes calming down a bit.
- 5 The Lord's faithfulness to guide/lead/direct and provide us with good health and fruitful ministry despite the pandemic!

**PRAYER:**

- 1 For repentance of the nations, and for God's glory to shine in the midst of international chaos and violence
- 2 Healing for families who have lost so much during the pandemic, especially the Venezuelan refugees
- 3 For the Lord to work in the lives of the people we are serving
- 4 For the future of the 'Despensa de Gracia' (Pantry of Grace) ministry
- 5 For our preparations, and for the U.S. team that is scheduled to arrive here in 4 months!



**DARRELL AND SONDRA HOLDEN**



**RIPE FOR HARVEST  
MISSIONARIES**

**SERVING IN QUITO,  
ECUADOR, S. AMERICA**

**PARTNERING WITH 'VOZ Y MANOS'  
AND OPERATING THE 'PANTRY OF GRACE' MINISTRY**



**SEND FINANCIAL GIFTS TO:**

RIPE FOR HARVEST  
PO BOX 487  
MONUMENT CO 80132-0487

**OR GO TO OUR WEBSITE:**

[www.ReachBeyondTheMountains.com](http://www.ReachBeyondTheMountains.com)

**EMAIL ADDRESS:**

[dsholden.ec@gmail.com](mailto:dsholden.ec@gmail.com)

**TO SEND CARDS, LETTERS, PACKAGES - PLEASE CHOOSE ONE:**

**Cards/Letters to Be Scanned and Emailed to Us:**

Holden, c/o Tina Bush, 6031 Ashbury Drive, Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54494

**Packages (under 3 lbs.) via DHL or FED-EX:**

Darrell y Sondra Holden  
VOZ Y MANOS/HCJB (frente el Hospital Vozandes)  
Oe-52 Villalengua y 10 de Agosto  
Quito, Ecuador 170508  
SOUTH AMERICA

**Contact us to find out who will be traveling from the U.S. to Ecuador**

Then, send your card/letter/small package to their state for them to hand deliver to us!