

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

Main Topics

Main Points

Praises/Requests

Dear Friend, Encourager, Partner-in-Mission,

### PAPA NOEL RESURFACES IN FEBRUARY !

Darrell used to drive coach bus in the U.S. So, whenever he has the opportunity, he likes to sit near the drivers during our bus trips in Ecuador practicing his Spanish conversing with the them about bus driving experiences. In early February, while traveling back to Quito by bus from the Shell/Puyo retreat, we were the first ones on the bus and were able to sit in the first two seats across the aisle from the driver. While stretched out enjoying the extra leg-room Darrell happened to notice a photo, near the driver, attached to the metal roof by a magnet. He nudged me, telling me to look at the photo and then said, "Doesn't that look like me when I was dressed up in my Santa suit?" I moved closer to the photo to get a better look, and sure enough, it was Darrell, the bus driver, and a friend! I asked the driver where the photo had been taken. He said, "Argelia Alta" (which is one of the locations where we visited with Extreme Response). I then asked him if he recognized my husband. He turned to take a quick look and said "No, why?". When I told him it was the same man in the Santa suit, his face broke out into a huge smile and said, "I can't believe it!" When we arrived back in Quito, the driver came over to Darrell and cheerfully recalled that day in Argelia Alta. Together they helped unload the luggage of the Reach Beyond missionaries and then posed for a photo together - this time without the Santa suit.



### A FAMILY THAT TRULY SERVES

We've know Carmen's family of eight for 2 ½ years now. In 2014-15 they housed us while we attended language school. Carmen, near Sondra's age, is like a mother/aunt to us, and Verito, her oldest daughter, is like a sister. They've helped us with the language and culture, helped integrate us in the local church and community, and welcomed us as part of their family. Whenever we need someone to talk to, to ask questions of, to help us with something, or to pray with us - they are there.

Recently, they've taken in a new language school student, helping her in much the same way they did us. One Sunday in February, we were invited to share a meal with Carmen's family and to help with some of the translations between the student and her new family. It amazes us how welcoming and helpful they are to so many people in the church and community. But even more amazing was the decision Carmen made that day to become our first Ecuadorian financial supporter! Carmen decided to make hand-crocheted items for us to take to the U.S. to sell for income for our mission work! This is a family of eight that has only one full-time income and yet they have found an amazing way to show their love for us and the Lord's work here. We are truly blessed!

## A PEEK INTO THE LIVES OF THE ZAMBIZA CHILDREN

**We'd like to introduce to you to an amazing 9-year old - - - >**

**- Samuel.** I've almost never seen this little Afro-Ecuadorian boy without a huge smile on his adorable face. Each week when I, Sondra, arrive at the after-school program at the Quito Family Resource Center (QFRC) his face and eyes light up and he runs to give me a full-bodied hug!

**Samuel came to the QFRC just a few months ago. He had lived in the coastal region with his parents until his father unexpectedly passed away followed by his alcoholic mother abandoning him.** An uncle, the brother of his deceased father, who works in the Zambiza dump, agreed to take him despite struggling to support his own immediate family.

**It was soon discovered that Samuel did not know how to read or write.** He had never attended school. Now, while attending school for the first time and with the help of the QFRC staff, Samuel knows how to write his name. **When I help Samuel with his writing, encouraging him and complimenting him on his successes, his face beams with excitement and hope for his new future!**



**Meet Michael** - He lives with his mother, who collects recyclables, and three siblings about 15 minutes away from the Quito Family Resource Center by bus. His father had another family, yet tended to stop by Michael's house in the evenings to visit him and his siblings. His father also helped with the rent and brought food for the whole family.

But when Michael's father didn't show up for a few days, the family started to worry. When a phone call was finally answered, it wasn't answered by Michael's father, but by a mortician. **Michael's father had fallen off the roof of his house and, unfortunately, had passed away.**

**While Michael is going through a difficult time, his spirit isn't broken.** He has been coming to the after-school program since 2013 and wants to study robotics and be an engineer. **In the midst of struggle, Michael**

**has hope.** The QFRC also helps out Michael's family with food left over from our after-school program that we send home with him. **This is one way that Extreme Response is helping change not just the life of one child, but the lives of an entire family.**

**We pray that you will take a moment to watch this 1 1/2-minute video where you will meet Luis, a 13-year old with learning disabilities, along with his parents who have been working in the Quito dump for the past 20 years.** - - > <https://youtu.be/8r4ymL4iX4Q?t=111>

In addition we'd like for you to watch this **6-minute video of the Zambiza children thanking you and others** for your support, prayers and school supplies that you donated! <https://youtu.be/I5k9cX-8S8w>

## WHEN GOD GIVES US OUR DEEPEST DESIRES

**In 2005, upon a first visit to Ecuador, we began sponsoring six-year old Wendy (and her brother, David). In 2007, 2008 and 2010 during subsequent short-term mission trips one or both of us were able to visit Wendy at the children's home in which she was living. Then when we lived here for six months in 2011, we discovered that she had left the children's home to go live with her mentally-ill mother, Patricia, and her brother, who had left the children's home the year before. We were deeply saddened and feared never seeing her again.** But one of the housemothers connected us with her and her family and we were able to visit them in their rural village, high up the mountain, in Pisuli. There they lived in a dirt-floor home with an outside toilet, no running water, four ceiling light-bulbs in their home, no gas nor tank for their refurbished cooking stove donated by an uncle, and only a meager income from David, her brother, who was working for his uncle repairing appliances, doors, and windows.

**Traveling to Pisuli was difficult and entering her community was very dangerous, but the Lord protected us in our travels because she was 'our daughter' and He knew our hearts desire was to be with her again. When we left Ecuador in 2011, we left with heavy hearts, wondering if we'd ever see her again and in fear of how her life would be affected living in Pisuli, no longer able to attend school, and with a dismal future. She was now a beautiful, fully-developed 14-year old and we noticed the way that the local men looked at her. All we could do was pray.**

**Since our return here in August of 2014, we've desired to make contact with Wendy and her family again, but to no avail, until we were also reunited our other sponsor son, Cristian, in 2016.** During one of our visits with Cristian, he shared with us that he had recently found Wendy on Facebook and told us that he saw photos of her with a baby. He figured out that she lived somewhere in Quito but being that there are more than 2.5 million people living in this city, our chances of finding her were slim. We continued to pray fearing that she had become pregnant and was not married with no income.

**Then one evening, in mid-February, I, Sondra, was looking at Wendy's photo on the shelf in our living room (as I so often do) wondering if we'd ever see her again and meet her child one day. With a heavy heart, I told the Lord that however long it took, I would wait, but that I hoped it was His desire that we would be reunited with her again soon. The very same week, we received a phone call from Wendy!** Cristian had decided to make contact with her through Facebook. When he told her we were living here and that we had reunited with him, she asked where we were living and said she wanted to visit us. So Cristian gave her our phone number. On Sun, Feb 19, we agreed to meet Wendy at a bus stop in Carcelen. Much to our surprise, she was walking with her 4-year old son and her boyfriend (also named David). Wendy ran to hug us and held Sondra's hand the entire way to our home. **We then shared a meal and the became re-acquainted with Wendy while also getting to know David and our newly discovered 'grandson' Jhon Gabriel ----- >**

David, her boyfriend, seems mature and responsible, telling us how they have been living together for the past year, since Wendy turned 18, and how he is willing to work any job to support Wendy and Jhon Gabriel, even if he has to push brooms. Presently, he works for his parent's business making curtains and pillow and cushion covers. His family decided to teach Wendy how to do the same. **We praise God that she has learned some marketable work skills!**

When it was time for them to leave, Wendy walked to the bus stop with her arm around Sondra, inviting us to come to visit them at their home for a meal one Sunday in March. **We thank our Lord for answering our prayers and giving us the desire of our hearts!**



## ONE FAMILY'S NEXT MEAL

**Sunday, Feb 29 Sintia and her family came to join us for a meal at our home.** Sintia, a single mother of three youth, works as a cleaning person for the 2-story HCJB radio building. In the past year she had to move from her mother's home to rent her own apartment when her sister was brutally-murdered by her brother-in-law. Sintia's mother is now housing and caring for her daughter's five children. We have much admiration for Sintia as she strives to raise a daughter who wants to attend college, a son who struggles with school and staying away from drug-dealers, and a younger son with emotional disabilities who lacks the special education and medicines he needs. We thought by inviting them for a meal and a fun afternoon of playing games we could help to take their mind off their problems. **Little did we know that they had not eaten much for the past four days.** We sent the leftovers from our meal home with them and will be investigating the best ways in which we can help them. **We thank those of you who give to our Psalm 68:10 special fund to help those the Lord puts in our path!**



## Darrell and Sondra Holden

**Missionaries of**

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WORLD OUTREACH



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