



HOLDEN NEWS – APR 2019

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

*** Main Topics * Main Points**
*** Prayer Requests/Praises**



DEAR PARTNER, ENCOURAGER, FRIEND,

EVERYDAY LIFE IN ECUADOR

In approximately six weeks, we'll be celebrating the 5-year anniversary of our missionary work here in Ecuador. Now that the locals call us true "Quiteños" (citizens of Quito), we'd like to share a bit more about our life here.

Ecuador, despite being a very small country (a bit smaller than the states of Illinois and Indiana combined), is one of the most mega-diverse countries in the world. Its four distinct geographical regions – the Galapagos Islands, the Coast, the Sierra (Andes Mountains), and Amazon Rainforest - contain a very large number of species of animals, birds, and plants. Though it comprises only 2% of the world's land surface it is home to 132 species of humming-birds and 4,250 species of orchids). Quito, has the highest elevation of any capital world-wide, and the Chimborazo volcano is the highest peak in the world measuring from the center of the earth. **Quite impressive!**



Someone recently asked us "What are your most and least favorite things about Ecuador?" Here's our answers.

Our most favorite things:

- 1) **The People** - are very hospitable and extremely devoted to family and friends. They make friendships slowly, but, once trust is developed, they maintain those friendships strongly and indefinitely.
- 2) **The Variety** - Ecuador has more ecosystems than any other country in the world. It also has 52 volcanoes (27 of them active) Seven surround the city of Quito). One can enjoy snow-capped mountains, lush sub-tropical areas, the Amazon rainforest, beaches, deserts, cloud forests, and the Galapagos islands. Quito, has Spanish colonial architecture, modern high-rise buildings, 550-year old churches, bull-rings, soccer stadiums, even malls.
- 3) **The Magnificence of God's Creation** - erupting volcanoes, terrifying electrical storms with large amounts of hail, winds that rattle windows, earthquakes, rivers and waterfalls, and a wide variety of exotic flora, fauna, and fruit.
- 4) **Roses/fruit/ice-cream/bread** - Two dozen roses sell for \$2.50. Two large totes of fresh fruit are less than \$10. There are ice cream shops and bakeries on almost every block with the best home-made delicacies ever.
- 5) **The Way the People Relax, Play, and Celebrate** - Parks are filled with families every Sunday. Holidays are always spent with extended family and friends. Celebrations are large, loud, colorful, and fun. The people love to sing, dance, play music, eat, drink, and find any excuse to shoot off fireworks.
- 6) **The Way the People Look Out for One Another** - neighbors keep each other informed of suspicious persons and telephone each other or shout out personal concerns on bullhorns in order to keep the neighborhood safe.

Our least favorite things:

- 1) **Traffic and Pollution** - Traffic jams occur daily, many people honk their horns at anything and everything as well as play with their car alarms, many bus rides are hair-raising, buses run on dirty diesel fuel, the insides are packed with people and do not meet N. American standards for cleanliness.
- 2) **The Slowness and Inefficiency of Bureaucracy** - Paperwork is a nightmare. Lines are endless. All processes seem to move slower than molasses. The right hand never seems to know what the left hand is doing.
- 3) **The Unpreparedness of People** - Ecuadorians live for today which can be awesome but detrimental in regard to safety, crises, etc. (Example: poor training of the police can result in large amounts of thefts/robberies.)
- 4) **Lack of Training / Customer Service** - Many people seem to not know their jobs and responsibilities due to lack of

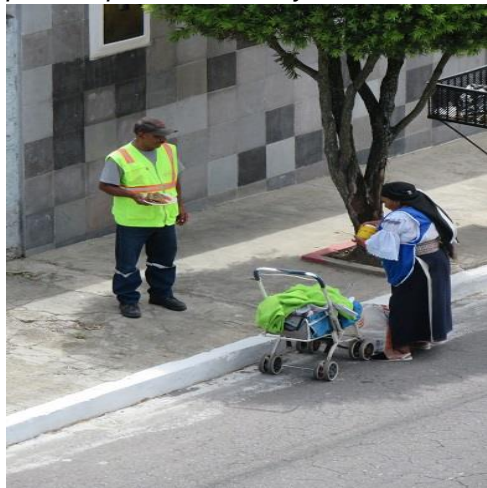
proper training, education, disinterest, fear of making changes while holding onto tradition, and make decisions based on pleasing others instead of on what is truly needed because of fear of judgment and/or shame.

- 5) **Lack of Regard for Personal Space** - Many folks enjoy drinking alcohol, get overly excited, stand/sit/talk extremely close to other persons, play music at decibels off the charts, and shoot fireworks anytime/anywhere/for any reason.
- 6) **The Number of Guard Dogs** - Nearly every home has a dog in the yard or on the rooftop which often joins in the barking and howling choruses in the neighborhood several times both day and/or night.
- 7) **Level of Police Protection** - Calling the police may not always bring about the results one desires. Sometimes, due to lack of funds and/or training, they can be ill-prepared and under-paid which may affect their capacity to serve well.

We praise the Lord that our new neighborhood is exceptionally safe, quieter, lower in traffic, and 'greener' compared to most areas within the city of Quito.

Safety/security is a prized luxury that most Ecuadorians cannot afford. We are blessed by having a home with high security - a guard on duty day and night, an iron gate with double locks at the property entrance, a 3-step system to enter the door to the house (with a code, an electronic key, and fingerprint reader), and an inner iron gate between the stories where we and our landlords live, and the two stories below us where the other renters live.

Our building is equipped with this level of security because our landlord is a colonel with the National Military Police of Ecuador and is away often. He used to work at the border of Ecuador/Peru patrolling goods entering the ports. Now, he is stationed at the border of Ecuador/Colombia which is heavy with narco-trafficking. These security measures were put in place to protect his family in his absence.



Local Woman Selling Lunch



Daniel, our Friendly, Comical Guard



Recycling Family on Our Street



Daily Gas Tank Delivery Truck



Man Offering Lawn Care Services



Sondra with Ornamental Trees



Day View of the Valley Below Us



View of Valley at Sunset



View of Valley at Night



View of Peak Beyond Valley



Sun Shining on Mountain Side



Snow-Covered Cayambe Volcano



Behind Low Clouds at Base of Valley . . . is Mitad del Mundo (The Equator)



We have been truly blessed to have found such a lovely place to live within this large city of 2.5 million people!

LIFE WITH CARMEN'S FAMILY

It will be five years this August 11th since we stepped foot in the home of Carmen and her family. We came as language students in need of a host family. But today, we've become family. After living with them for seven months, we came to know each other intimately and we've continued that relationship ever since. We now refer to them as 'our Ecuadorian family', and they simply refer to us a 'family'. Sometimes Carmen and Verito refer to us as 'angels' which is their way of expressing their love and appreciation for us and the ways we try to minister to them. Other times, Carmen and Verito will tell Darrell he is a 'mal niño' (bad boy) when he teases them, and Verito, who considers Darrell to be like a brother, will often wrestle with him or chase him about the house. Carmen and Verito also feel close enough to Sondra to share their intimate struggles with her – and she with them; they sometimes talk for hours and pray together. And, the

children have told Darrell he is like a father to them. **We are truly blessed to have this family while we are living abroad and to be able to share life with them.**



Mother's Day - Carmen Reading Card ...Receiving Darrell's Mom's Brooch ...and One of Darrell's Mom's Rings.



Carmen Overwhelmed w/ Emotion

Back Row (left to right) - - - >
Aly * Sondra * Jenny * Carmen * Verito

Front Row (left to right) - - - >
Isa * Darrell * Beli * Nico



PROGRESS ON CARMEN'S HOME

We've been working at Carmen's home almost every Saturday since the Community Church team left in January. The team members were able to complete all the major projects, leaving the small projects for us to finish up. Just a few of those smaller projects were: installing LED lights in the kitchens, building shelves to hang on the bedroom and bathroom walls, re-fitting a wardrobe closet to fit in a corner allowing more bedroom space, refinishing doors, painting, and installing new internet router cables, and separate phone, water, electric cables and meters. (When Carmen's two younger daughters marry and move out, she will now have the option to move the rest of her family upstairs and rent out the bottom apartment for income if needed.)



We hope to finish up all projects by the end of this year and will keep you updated in the September and December newsletters.



Darrell/Luis Caulking Outside Windows

THE LORD'S HEALING TOUCH UPON ISSAC AND OSCAR

We wrote in our last letter about Isaac, the son of Andreina, a single mother and teacher at the After-School Program for the Zambiza children. Isaac had fallen through a roof 12-feet down onto a pile of rocks, breaking his arm in several places. The doctors were concerned regarding possible damage of the growth plate in his shoulder area.



Isaac, who is a very active boy (always running, jumping, skipping, hopping, dancing about) was confined to bed rest at the hospital and then at home for several weeks to heal.

A metal plate was temporary inserted to hold the severely shattered bone into place. Following a consult with our Naturopathic physician's staff in the U.S, we were able to have nutritional vitamins, minerals, etc. transported by Reach Beyond staff to Ecuador to assist in Isaac's healing.

The sling is now off. Isaac is able to move about freely once again and is awaiting his second surgery to have the metal plate removed.

At his last appointment, the doctors were amazed at the MRI results. They stated that Isaac's bones were healing much better and faster than they had anticipated and were grateful that he had access to such helpful nutritional assistance.



Oscar, the healthy man you see on the left in this photo, is the result of God's miraculous healing. We met Oscar's mother, Gladys (behind him) and his sister, Sandra (at the center of the table) on the streets of Carcelen back in 2014 where Gladys sold Christmas trinkets. Since then we look for her each year. This past December, Gladys asked that we come to the home of her son, Oscar, because he had a severe infection eating away at his internal organs and pancreas. The doctors said he would not recover and would soon die. Carmen and I, and later, the Nazarene Church prayer team, visited with and prayed over Oscar and his family. During one of the visits, his wife gave her life to Christ. Oscar began reading a Bible (ironically, the one I had given Gladys four years ago), and later gave his life to Christ. Then one night while he was in the hospital, Oscar had a dream and the Lord told him "sit up and eat" (Oscar was on feeding tubes,

oxygen, etc. for months. When Carmen and I first met him, he was barely able to walk). Oscar obeyed the Lord's instruction and began eating, then walking. Now, a second MRI shows that the head of his pancreas is no longer dead but functioning and only the tail of the pancreas is swollen for which he will need treatment for 5 years. The doctors cannot explain what has happened. **Oscar, Gladys, and Sandra, are now traveling around Quito, giving testimony to the Lord's miraculous healing at every one of the churches that Gladys had asked to pray for her son.**

NAZARENE CHURCH MEDICAL OUTREACH TO VENEZUELAN REFUGEES



For eight consecutive Saturdays, our Nazarene Church in Carcelen hosted a medical outreach to the Venezuelan refugee families in our community. Medical personnel from our local area came to minister to folks by giving exams, consults, and dispensing much needed medications. Volunteers from our church, who had any type of medical training, including Darrell, helped with triage, taking vital signs, watching children during their parent's exams, etc. Between 25 and 75 individuals were helped each Saturday. **PTL some of those families are now attending our church services!**

OUR EARLY ARRIVAL

We are scheduled for our bi-annual HMA (furlough) this Sept/Oct during which Darrell will renew his Paramedic license and Sondra will receive her bi-annual medical treatment. But because of a recent significant increase in symptoms, we needed to make an emergency trip to Wisconsin this past week. We arrived Tuesday, June 25 and will stay a total of 6 weeks until Aug 4th. We then need to return to Ecuador for various reasons and will then return to Wisconsin again Sept 12 and stay 4 ½ weeks until Oct 14. We are presently staying with Brad and Dawn Zimbauer in the Town of Hull and have access to their house phone (715 345 1433) as well as a vehicle from one of our supporters from Chippewa Falls. Sondra will receive treatment once every 4 weeks and plans to receive the same treatment again for 4 weeks in Sept/Oct. In the past the treatment has lasted up to 2 years but now seems to be lasting less so she may have to return every year for treatment. **We'll wait on the Lord and see.**

The unfortunate thing is that our budget only allows for airline travel every 2 years, not every year. The good thing is that we had built up enough credit card points and/or flyer miles to cover half the cost of these unexpected tickets which were double the normal price because of the short notice and 'high fly' season. We are very blessed to have access to excellent medical care in Ecuador, but the closest international location for this specific type of treatment is in Brazil. The expense of traveling to and staying in Brazil to receive care would be much more expensive than receiving it in the States. **So, we are depending on the Lord to help us with the extra travel expenses involved.**

We are very blessed that these treatments are available for this condition and that our mission is very supportive of us having to leave the field during this time to receive the care needed. Various missionaries with Reach Beyond visit the U.S. regularly for specific types of medical treatments not available in S. America, so they have had experience with this situation and are quite open to being of assistance.

The blessing of being able to be in Wisconsin during this additional visit is that we will be able to spread our ministry and personal activities across a total of 10 ½ weeks versus the original 4 ½ weeks we had planned. This will give us more time to visit family, friends, and supporters, and most importantly, take some time to 'just relax'. We were thinking of taking a week of vacation in 2020, but because we had to shell out over \$2,000 for recent airline tickets, we will make a way to 'relax' during our 2 HMA's in the U.S. instead. **We are waiting upon the Lord to show us how we can accomplish this, economically, during our stay in Wisconsin.**

**We thank the Lord for all the folks who have been praying for us and for our time here.
We hope to visit with you soon!**

VENEZUELAN REFUGEE CRISIS / PAN DE VIDA UPDATES

Pan de Vida (Bread of Life) ministers not only to the Venezuelan refugee families who have recently come to Ecuador, but, for years, have been ministering to Ecuadorians. Their vision - "To gather the resources needed to help the less fortunate people in Ecuador to come to a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, and to develop to the fullest their God-given potential."

In addition to serving the refugees, PDV provides hot meals to at least 1,000 Ecuadorian adults and children every month, provides health fairs and medical caravans to poor communities, focuses on 100 families annually providing microbusiness training in sewing and baking for the women, holds summer camps for approximately 100 teens/children, provides school supplies for 150 children, and makes repairs to 10 homes annually. **They also provide emergency relief including to the recent Venezuelan refugee families who have come to Ecuador. But, the most important provision for families is to hear the Gospel and to participate in church services, worship and prayer times.**



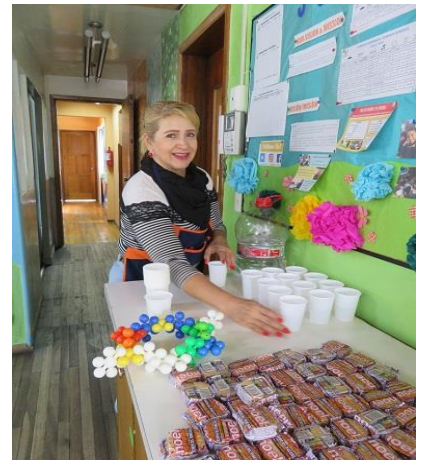
We recently invited the PDV staff to speak to the Reach Beyond staff about the current needs in serving the Venezuelan refugees.

< - - - Juan Carlos, a former Venezuelan refugee and now a legal immigrant in Ecuador, serves as a Social Worker at PDV. Here he is explaining how 15,000 Bolivars, a month's wages, equals 6 USD and buys only a small bag of flour. **Please pray for JC and his work with the refugee families.**



< - - - Monserrath, also a former Venezuelan refugee, is now a legal immigrant in Ecuador serving as the cook of Venezuelan food for the refugees. **She's a single mom with children and has asked that you pray for her and her family.**

You've met Jakelin, - - - > the mother of Angel who lives in our building. She is visiting her son. She now volunteers in the PDV children's area. **She's asking that you pray that the Lord will grant her a work VISA in Ecuador.**



For the past 6 months, PDV has been serving between 225 and 275 refugees every other Thursday. But, now because of limited resources and with the number of refugees still increasing, PDV has had to make the painful decision to only serve 'new' refugees, asking those who want to return to sign up for a space during the Sunday outreach.





PLEASE
*continue praying with us as we
 seek to find ways to support
 the Pan de Vida Ministry
 and the refugee families it serves.
 We not only help the families
 find hope for a better life
 but also the promise of eternal life.*



THANK YOU FOR YOUR PRAYERS!



DARRELL AND SONDRA HOLDEN

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 MISSIONARIES**



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