



# Sharon Wilcox

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Contact details:  
sharon.wilcox@hotmail.co.uk



**Location:** Ecuador



**What I do:** Working with people with learning disabilities, teaching them life skills and seeking to enable them to become independent.

Dear friends,

Greetings from a sunny Santo Domingo. It is good to have a bit of summer sun and less rain at the moment. I hope it is the same wherever you are.

At the end of May, we said goodbye to Joy as she returned to the UK to take up her university studies again from September. Before she left, she took on the task of teaching carpentry to the youngsters. It involved turning six used wooden pallets into a large storage box. Everyone joined in at every stage of the process. Something we thought would take about one day a week for two months actually needed daily input during the final two weeks in order to finish it before Joy left. But we achieved it, just. Please pray for Joy as she processes all that she did here and thinks about her future.



*Orchid Project students doing woodworking*

At the end of May I visited the Orchid Project in Quito to do some evaluations of the students' work. It was a week well spent, as it proved to some doubting volunteers that they were doing a good job and that the youngsters had learned a lot during their first year. I was also able to give some practical advice to the volunteers too. They celebrated their first anniversary on 17 July and are now on their summer holidays. Please pray for them as they relax and look to restart in September. Please also pray for Marco, one of the volunteers, who has been seriously ill since the middle of June. We thank God that he is making a recovery, albeit slowly. His wife is also a volunteer, who now has to have time off to care for him. On a brighter note, Geraldine, one of the students, was baptised in June. An answer to prayer for her brother, Frangel, who has been praying for her to come to the Lord for quite some time. He has autism and is a helper at the project. Please pray that he can continue as a helper, as he has found a job. Another of the volunteers has left and one has returned. This can cause difficulties for those with autism as they tend not to cope well with change. Sebas, who I told you about in a previous newsletter, has been having a challenging time and has not been attending the project recently. Join me in praying for the group to stabilise in September as they start the new year and for Sebas to return.

Back in Santo Domingo, those who are part of the Special Olympics team took part in the annual Ecuador event. Cristian came home with three silver medals. In a different event Jonathan won gold. All won in running races. Special achievements. It made all the training worth it. They train most afternoons during the week as well as on Saturday mornings.

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**With Jesus  
With each other  
To the edges**



Then in July we had a visit from Paul Tester, our CMS Latin America manager. As the Orchid Projects in Quito and Cuenca were closed for the holidays, he got to spend time at the project in Santo Domingo, sampling the youngsters' cooking as well as spending time chatting to volunteers and parents who had all been invited to meet him. Several of the parents told Paul how much they appreciate that their child is part of the project.

Paul, Pastor William and I also spent time with Daniel and Lidia, a missionary couple from the Baptist church that I attend, who work in the indigenous Tsáchila communities on the outskirts of the city. We were shown a New Testament in Tsafiqui, the language of the Tsáchilas. Then we went with Daniel and Lidia to visit one of the communities. (Paul tells me he will edit out the photo of him in traditional Tsáchila dress!). That evening we went to the Baptist church for their time of prayer and testimony. It was a short visit for Paul this time, but it achieved a lot in terms of making connections with people.

I thank God for Katy and Mary, our new volunteers in Santo Domingo, who have settled right into the team and have both agreed to do some of the teaching. Please continue to pray for more volunteers to join us, as Katy and I will both be back in the UK at the same time next year. It would be good not to have to close the project during that time. Daniela, Walter and Federico are our other volunteers, who continue to be great support. Daniela is currently trying to teach the youngsters to play the recorder, with limited success, although a couple of weeks ago, after struggling to get his fingers to cover the holes properly, Israel suddenly shouted, "Wow, I really can do it!" with the biggest grin on his face as he made the correct sounds.

The Cuenca project has a new volunteer, however they now only have one student as Pedro has decided to take up new therapy sessions on offer to him. So now Bev and the team need to find other students as they seek to grow the project as they return from their break.

It has been a busy few months and I am enjoying supporting the other projects. I hope to visit Cuenca at the end of September to support Bev and evaluate student Linda's progress.

Thank you all for your continued support, messages, emails and prayers. They mean so much.

Every blessing,

Sharon



*Photos from top to bottom: Coffee with Quito volunteers; Cristian at the Special Olympics; meeting re indigenous mission; Paul the Tsáchila fisherman*



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