



Sharon Wilcox

Link Letter no. 35 | June 2025

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.



Discovering creative ways to share the hope of Jesus with people unconnected to church

Dear friends,

I am now back in England, enjoying some sunny weather, visiting friends and my supporting churches.

Several things have happened since my last letter, some of which will explain the delay in writing this update. Marcela has returned as a volunteer to teach crafts, and Veronica left as she has found a job. Edwar's mum is making slow improvements following her stroke.

On Valentine's Day my mother passed away and since my return we have buried my only aunt. I have also attended a memorial service for a friend. I am grateful that I was here and able to take part.

The Orchid Project in Santo Domingo finished for the end-of-year holidays on 17 April. As a special treat, all the students, their families and most of the volunteers went to the beach for the day. It was a day full of joy, competitions, swimming and good food. Also, a chance for parents to chat and get to know each other. The classes begin again in June, without me. I am grateful to volunteers who have agreed to lead sessions and cover extra days. Please pray for them to have confidence in their ability and for the students to really engage with learning new things.

The projects in Quito and Cuenca continue to work until July before they have their holidays. A few weeks before leaving I had a meeting with Pastor William to explain that I am thinking of retiring in 2027 and will therefore leave Ecuador. We spoke about the need to find someone to coordinate the Santo Domingo project before I leave. William said that there are some adults with learning disabilities living in villages near our church plant on the outskirts of the city, and he wondered if there may be scope for a fourth Orchid project there. We discussed it further, and if there is enthusiasm for it and volunteers can be identified, when I go back, I will train and work alongside them towards the end of the year. Later we met with the administrative board of the church, and they have agreed to include both projects as an independent part of a new ministry for disabled people. This would give more security for the future, and the new coordinator would have more support. Please join with me in praying that we do what God wants in relation to this.

Since getting back to the UK at the end of April I have had meetings with staff at CMS's office, including discussion about my retirement. This has now been agreed for April 2027, which means I will leave Ecuador in October next year. I would appreciate your prayers so that I know where God wants me to retire to, as I have



Day at the beach

Support Sharon Wilcox:
churchmissionsociety.org/wilcox

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



no current permanent base here. You can imagine that I have very mixed emotions as I contemplate the transition.

You will remember that the students in Santo Domingo had work experience in a hotel, which eventually led to Jonathan continuing there every Monday by himself. He has been really enjoying it, especially as they give him breakfast and lunch while he is there. It has been the vision from the beginning of the project eight years ago that people will gain more independence and/or a job because of attending classes.

So, imagine my response a couple of weeks after arriving back here, when I received a message from Jonathan's mother telling me that the hotel has offered him permanent part-time work six days a week! I am thrilled and I know that Jonathan and his family are too. I thank God for his faithfulness. Please pray for Jonathan, as this is a huge step for him.

The project in Quito is thriving, with new volunteers and more consistent attendance by the students. They have been doing more in-depth Bible studies and developing their housework skills.

Linda in Cuenca has attended a professional cookery class with some tasty results. She and one of the volunteers also attended an event in Cuenca which promoted the Orchid Project.

I have been really enjoying visiting my supporting churches and thank you for your hospitality as well as your support. It has been lovely to be able to thank you in person for your prayers since my last visit when I was asking you to pray that God will show me if he wants me to start more projects. He certainly answered the prayers. I am excited to see if the fourth project becomes a reality.

My home church has involved me in various activities, including giving a talk at an international Bible study about crossing cultures, and a talk about Jonathan's journey at the monthly men's breakfast.

In June, my sister and I are going on holiday together for the first time in 50 years! I will then be staying with her until the end of July so that I can continue with my church visits in mid and northern England. From there I will return south to finish my visits and prepare to return to Ecuador.

Thank you again for all your support and prayers.

Blessings.

Sharon



Photos from top to bottom: Jonathan, working at the hotel; clothes washing in Quito; Linda's cookery class; international Bible study



Discovering creative ways to share the hope of Jesus

I've been encouraged to hear stories from others who are part of my wider area of work. In Honduras, Carlos had a change of heart working with a Christian ministry, and in the UK Garry Ion reports on how Carlisle's Community Shed is sharing skills, community and Jesus. Read more at churchmissionsociety.org/bringhope