



Sharon Wilcox

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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 and supporters,

I hope you have all had a good summer and are enjoying autumn. It was lovely to see some of you at the Adelante conference last month. If you were not there, I have some news for you, "hot off the press"!

But first, when I last wrote, I was telling you about the possibility of a new Orchid Project in Quito. Well, the project is now up and running with seven students, including Marlon, who was with me in Santo Domingo before moving back to Quito. He is enjoying making new friends. There are 11 volunteers supporting them. It started on 17 July, once I had been able to do a week of training with them. I told them that I would be available by WhatsApp or Zoom should they need me. To date I have received one text message asking for help, and we have had one team meeting on Zoom to discuss issues regarding one of the students. Other than that, the group is running really well. I receive lots of photos daily, showing what they are doing. You will see one or two in this newsletter. Please join me in thanking God for this provision and the dedication of the volunteers.

At the end of July I visited the Cuenca Christian Church, run by Bev Cannon and Johnny de Pinos (CMS people in mission) to talk to the congregation about the possibility of starting an Orchid Project there.

In August I was able to celebrate my birthday in the rainforest in Mindo with one of my volunteers and her family which was fun and a real treat.

Then in the week leading up to the Adelante conference, I was in Cuenca training volunteers for the third Orchid Project. The challenge for me was that the training needed to be in Spanish and English as some of the volunteers are new to Ecuador and do not yet speak Spanish. The challenge for them will be the need for non-verbal communication. This project will start off on a smaller scale with just two students and four or five volunteers. I thank Bev and Johnny for their support and hospitality. Please pray that God will guide them all to achieve things they cannot imagine and that the students will feel a real sense of independence. They hope to start in mid-October.

One of the volunteers in Quito has been in contact with a church in a place called Riobamba, where they have identified a need for an Orchid Project. I will let the new projects settle before hopefully visiting Riobamba in the New Year. God is certainly opening doors and keeping me busy.



Cooking in Quito

Support Sharon Wilcox:
churchmissionsociety.org/wilcox

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



Before the training in Cuenca I managed three days' holiday there walking along rivers and in parks in communion with God. It was really refreshing. I also visited a museum and ate too much.

The youngsters in Santo Domingo continue to do work experience in the hotel and are progressing well. Five of them are also taking part in the Special Olympics in Santo Domingo, which involves anything from two to five afternoons of training every week. Two of them took part in a military parade in July, with one of them, Paul, carrying the Olympic banner. They have also been baking birthday cakes, making candles, growing herbs and having music lessons (with a Christian flavour).

We have enjoyed a couple of mornings with our friends Maria and Roberto from Vive por Fe (Live by Faith) at their mission. I will be joining them again this year on Christmas Eve night, giving out meals and praying for people who are homeless.

The First Baptist church has had several celebrations recently including the church's 55th anniversary. There were different events all week, culminating in a family day with six weddings, 10 baptisms, sports swimming and a lunch. It was a special day.

In the middle of October we will be having a visit from Jo Anthony (CMS personnel lead for Latin America). She will spend time in Santo Domingo and Cuenca during her stay. She also visited us in 2014 before the Orchid Project began. After her visit we have a Latin Link Strider (short-term volunteer) coming to work with us for six months in Santo Domingo as part of her university course. She is an artist so we hope to learn some new creative skills.

We give thanks that we now have a team of seven volunteers here. Marcela is back with us after dealing with her health issues, and we have four volunteers from the First Baptist church. This should enable me to be able to visit other churches to see about starting more projects without having to give the youngsters a holiday.

I would ask you to continue to pray for me as I try to support three projects, each with very different needs. Please pray that I would have sufficient wisdom and stamina as well as being able to devote the right amount of time to each project.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support, it means so much.

Every blessing,

Sharon



Photos from top to bottom: Birthday in Mindo; Cuenca training; hotel work experience; one of six brides



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