



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.

Hello everyone!

I trust that you are all enjoying the Christmas season.

Before I get further into my letter, I have some **news to share**. As I look towards the end of 2023, I **want to thank you wholeheartedly** for supporting me— your prayers and gifts are incredibly important in helping me to serve here. With a heavy heart, I need to share that at the moment, due to increased living costs both for myself and my supporters, **there is a shortfall in my funding**, which may put my work at risk. And so, I come to you for further help. If you are not currently doing so, would you be able to start a regular gift? And if you are giving, would you consider increasing your gift? **If everyone reading this letter gave an extra £15 per month, that would make a huge difference.** If you can help me close my funding gap, please go to churchmissionsociety.org/wilcox, call 01865 787489 or complete the enclosed form if you have received this letter through the post. (For my supporting churches, if you are able to give a further gift please contact churchrelations@churchmissionsociety.org.) I understand this might not be possible – **please know that I greatly value your support** and thank you for letting me share my challenge with you.



Sebas with crafts he made to sell.

As you know, this year has seen the expansion of the Orchid Project across three cities in Ecuador, currently helping 16 young adults with learning disabilities learn the life skills they need in order to be more independent. I truly believe that God wants to help more youngsters in different cities in 2024. Please pray with me that God will show me where he wants new Orchid Projects to be, and for me to find churches that will open their doors to work in partnership with me.

I would like to share with you a little about one of the youngsters in the project in Quito. His name is Sebastian (Sebas). He is 21 years old and has autism.

His mother told me “Sebas can read and write. He loves to investigate things on the internet and his favourite subject is geography. He is very much a loner. Because of his autism he finds social interaction with others, or just being around people, very difficult. He does not cope with noise. He can become aggressive if I suggest he does things around the house, although he has learned to make his bed and can heat up a meal

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With each other
To the edges**

in the microwave. He struggles with change and transition.”

I asked her how the Orchid Project could help Sebas. She said: “He needs a lot of patience with his activities and can only cope with one thing at a time. He struggles with verbal communication, for example he reads his Bible but cannot put into words what he has read. He dislikes praying too. He needs to learn and understand social norms as well as how to manage his emotions. One day we will not be around, and he will need to be able to look after himself most of the time. Please help him to do that. He does certain things that show he is anxious, like cleaning his spectacles repeatedly. When that happens, he needs time to breathe and walk a little until he calms down.”

I hope that you, like me, are amazed to see the photos of what he has been doing since the project started in July. It is a slow process, but it is changing his life. There are over 116,000 people with learning disabilities in Ecuador. The Orchid Projects can currently help 30 of them. With your prayers and financial support I am happy to stay here and let God use me to help many more.

Every blessing and a happy Christmas.

Sharon



Photos from top to bottom: Sebas has learned several new skills, including cooking and ironing; Sebas helping to sort a donation of craft materials.



Can you help?

Right now Sharon is facing a shortfall in funding, which puts her work at risk. Will you support her today? Go to churchmissionsociety.org/wilcox, call 01865 787489 or complete the enclosed form. **Thank you!**



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