

Dear Everyone

Greetings from nearly Spring in San Francisco. This is the season of wide fluctuations in temperature, sometimes hitting thirty in the afternoons, while still dropping to two or three degrees overnight.

Main news this month is that we now have the bones of a primary school leavers trip for Danny's cohort. We have permission through the school inspectorate. Hazel then did some to-ing and fro-ing chasing promised resources from the local government, until one of the secretaries confirmed that these were unlikely to materialise. This is partly good news because it means we can just get on with doing it ourselves. So far, we have dates, location and transport all confirmed. We are going to "Albergue Los Guindos" (picture right), in the Cordoba hills for three days in the first week of January (school summer holiday here). You can find lots more photos on their Facebook and Instagram pages or on Google maps. The next task is to get all the parents on board. Most already are, but a couple we haven't yet managed to chase up, and a couple are not sure – many people rarely leave this neighbourhood and the idea of their kids going somewhere is a strange one for some people. One mum told us that this is her third child going through the school system and will be the first time anyone has gone anywhere.

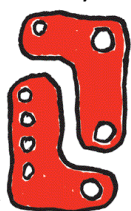


And the next job after that is fundraising. We have set a couple of dates for fundraisers with mums from the group, and we would love some of our UK supporters to partner with us on this. Specifically, I am hoping to raise approximately £1200. This would enable us to add a couple of adventurous activities which have to be paid for separately (the centre offers kayaking, abseiling and the like, all with qualified staff and appropriate safety gear), completely fund the adult volunteers and a couple of the kids such as a lad who lives in a childrens' home, and significantly reduce the costs to everyone else.

If we managed to raise more than £1200 then any money left over would be channeled to the school through the *co-operadora* (PTA) which Hazel is also part of. The *Dos de Abril* is a state school in a challenging neighbourhood and is in need of resources in every possible area. In Argentina state schools receive government funds to pay the staff and for some aspects of building maintenance. Literally everything else must be fundraised by the school or provided by the parents. If a child has a pencil or an exercise book, then it was probably sent in by a parent or brought in by a teacher. Every so often we get a little message home asking for every child to bring in a toilet roll to restock the bathrooms, and for glue, or 20 sheets of computer paper. In poorer schools like the *Dos de Abril*, resources like P.E equipment or art supplies are rare luxuries. In Argentina, even more so than in other countries, the state education system replicates and reinforces social and economic inequality.

So, we would love to hear from anyone interested in partnering with us in this venture. At this stage all we need would be an expression of interest; an email with a possible amount, so we have an idea of how much we still have outstanding to collect through fundraising events here.

Church and the rest of life is keeping us busy as usual. The Scouts went to a superbly organised regional camp at the start of the month, and we were thrilled at how well our kids participated in the big event. Hazel preached on Mary and Martha last week, and the week before Martin talked about different spiritualities from Corinthians. Martin is also being kept on his toes running the sound and electronic equipment at church and dealing with conflicting requirements for this. Thank you for your prayers. We hope you have a good month.



Hazel
X
Martin



Joni & Daniel

