

Dear Everyone

Greetings from rainy San Francisco. Two years of drought and the prospect of another “niña” year means that the rain is sorely needed. A few weeks ago, Hazel while out cycling came across a ditch full of carcasses of cows that appeared to have literally died of starvation; there was certainly nothing to graze on in the dusty brown fields around. A brief round-up of a few updates this month:-



Danny’s school trip. Firstly, thank you to everyone who has pledged or sent in donations. We have more than met our target, and there should be a good lump left to spend with the school PTA for the start of the next academic year in February. Even though we could have offered the trip for free, we decided to go ahead with the planned fundraising activities with the mums in the group, which turned out to be God-given inspiration. Last Saturday we made and sold some 750 “pastelitos” – sweet tarts (photo). Apart from the money we raised, it was a wonderful piece of teamwork and gave me a whole different

perspective on these women. Most of them never finished school and it is not a place where they feel comfortable, so after six years of anonymously dropping their kids off at the gate, last Saturday in the warmth of someone’s kitchen, they finally got round to asking each others' names and sharing bits of their stories over “mate” through the morning. I was sorry that we hadn’t done this earlier. There was a sense of empowerment in the group, that they were working together to achieve something important for their kids, and I loved the role reversal when they felt safe enough to oust me out of leadership, because I might be the one who does the adding up, but in the art of making pastelitos, this mum was absolutely in charge in her kitchen.

On Sunday we went on a visit to Albergue Los Guindos and met with the owner. If you plug these co-ordinates -31.1479158,-64.3555772 into google maps you can find the exact location and see what the area is like, essentially hills, trees, mountain streams and small waterfalls. Hazel is now penciling together the programme of activities for the three days.



“Mujeres con Oficios” (women in trades). This is a non-profit organisation that started a couple of years ago in San Francisco to support women into employment in traditionally male-dominated environments such as woodwork, metalwork, building, painting etc. Teen has just started on a brick-laying course with them, which she is quite excited about. Our hope is that she will see the course through, which in itself would be a positive outcome, and then the next step would be that they help her into getting some work experience.

Church. For those who pray, please remember Lidia on our church leadership team. Her son was beaten to death in police custody on Tuesday night. Unfortunately, police violence is not uncommon in Argentina. He leaves four young children, whom he had custody of despite his drug addiction, so Lidia is now meeting with judges and lawyers to try and gain custody of the children. Whatever the outcome, it is going to be a while before Lidia can stop moving for long enough to begin processing everything that has happened to her family in one short week.

The family are fine. Hazel met with the secondary school head the other day to talk about Danny’s impending arrival. The head said “We like a challenge here... You know what I think, mum? You need to take a break!” Which was a change from our usual school meetings which are a list of everything that Danny isn’t doing and everything else that I should be doing, so hopefully we might start secondary school on a positive note. I have to do the paperwork next week. Thank you for all your prayers and support. We hope you have a good month.



Joni & Daniel

Hazel X Martin

Latin Link 

