

Dear Everyone

Happy new year, and warm (overcooked) greetings from scorching San Francisco. January is our hottest month; above 40 most afternoons. Our car was registering 42 degrees when Hazel went to the supermarket today.

Our main story this month is our school leavers' trip. In the planning since last April, it took place last week. It would be utterly impossible to do justice to this experience in a couple of paragraphs, but it surpassed all our expectations, thanks, we are sure, to the prayers of so many friends on both sides of the pond. The group of adults really worked together, despite Hazel being the only one with any experience, and some of us had not met each other before getting on the bus. The kids behaved impeccably. Most of them had never done anything like it before, and some had never slept away from home. They participated enthusiastically in everything we offered, and this even though one of the kids had finished the year excluded from school, and another had spent most of the year on the verge of being excluded.

Probably most significant was the quality of the interactions that we shared with the kids around the activities. Many of them are living with challenging situations; the mum who is a prostitute, the dad in prison, the mum who was widowed in her twenties with three little kids, the parents who both have learning disabilities and owe money to every shark in San Francisco, the boy who was abandoned by his mother, then his father, and currently living in a children's home... the list goes on. We are so thankful that these kids could have the opportunity to experience something completely different, to be challenged in fun and healthy ways, and to be able to start to think about broader horizons and possibilities beyond their own realities in their little neighbourhood.

The open question now is "then what?" Hazel has made follow up contact with everyone in the last few days, and she is meeting with one of the mums tomorrow; a lady celebrating three years clean of drugs, and desperately trying to make up for everything she put her family through. Clearly some may stay in touch, and others may not, but we pray that seeds have been sown that they might come back to in the future.



2022 all told was a good year in terms of projects coming together. The photo left is the current situation of the building work at Joni's school. Some of you may remember that we started the year with a media campaign to build the six classrooms outstanding to accommodate the full quota of students, some of whom were being taught in the corridors. Like government projects the world over, it is behind schedule, but progress is unmistakably being made.

Church continued to chug along. We take our preaching slots as opportunities to teach, to enable and encourage folk in their faith. Hazel also learnt to inject a horse, which may not count as saving Argentina, but it made her feel clever. Now we are involved in the summer holiday scheme in the mornings at the riding school, taking some down-time with the kids in the afternoons, and watching to see what opportunities God might have for us in this 2023. Thank you all for your prayers and support. We hope you have a good month.



Hazel X Martin



Joni & Daniel

Latin Link



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