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# New Hope for Children



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Dear Friends,

April 2020

After terrible hardship, God's people were freed from the captivity of Egypt and 2 Chronicles 30:21 tells us of future thanksgiving, "And the children of Israel that were present at Jerusalem kept the feast of unleavened bread seven days with great gladness; and the Levites and the priests praised the Lord day by day, singing with loud instruments unto the Lord." Due to Covid-19, we are all in a battle, eventually there will be thanksgiving for victory. Here in Colombia, as far as we are aware, all of our children, their families and our employees are well. Praise God!

Back in January, we took in a whole new group of children, some to study and some to live and study, but for all a life-changing opportunity. 'A' is 5 years old and has come to live in Genesis House. Before he was born, his Mum's house was burned down and she lost everything; A's home with his Mum is now a basic brick building on the mountain. She sells knitted hats from a cart she pulls around the streets and would often need to leave him locked up and home alone. His Dad is not present and A did not begin to speak until he was 4 years old; his first word was Mama!! He is full of energy and is like a little sponge that is soaking up all there is to learn in his new world in Genesis House. 'JP' is 14 years old and has come to live at the Exodus House. He came to Bogota from the city of Armenia to live with his Grandpa. His Grandpa was, with much love and also much financial difficulty, taking care of him after he had been abandoned by his parents. He had not been able to study for a couple of years, and it has been a joy to see him enjoy learning once again. 'S' is 14 months old and has come to live at the Genesis House, a little boy who is just full of smiles and loves to blow kisses. S is cousin to one of our other girls, and comes from a family where the violence has been devastating. Two of his uncles, just young men, had been murdered, decapitated and cut up. When we saw his black eye and that his fingers had been bitten by rats, we knew that this was a little boy who just had to be helped. Today he lives safely at the Genesis House, another life transformed.

Due to Covid-19, we have been on total lockdown since the 19th of March (including schools that were shut down a couple of days prior to this). This has meant that our children couldn't stay in the homes here at Children's Vision and had to return to live with their very poor families. People can only leave their properties to buy food or for medical appointments. Only those in key positions/industries, food producers and health sector workers are allowed to go to work. Most of our children's families make their living working on the street; it meant the majority of our children's families all lost their jobs instantaneously, not to mention now having their children to feed as well. Helping these families was our first priority. Our first concern was to make sure that all the families had enough food. So, in the midst of all the panic buying, Jeanene was at the supermarkets, purchasing food for 1000 food packages. All that people saw were greedy foreigners buying up great quantities of food.....there were bad looks and rude comments of every kind. Nobody believed us when we said "We have a big family", and we couldn't tell them it was all to be given away as they would have followed us home!!

The government instruction was that the children must keep studying at home. As our children are very poor and mostly have no internet access, virtual classes were not an option!! Our teachers have been working so hard from their homes on educational guides. They send these to us here at the foundation via e-mail and we print thousands of pages of schoolwork. People are allowed to go out to receive our food bags, so they bring the completed work, and go home with the next set of guides and a food package in their hands, it is a great stimulus to ensure that our children keep learning, it is food for learning.....literally!

We had a chicken miracle!! Due to panic buying, food prices have gone up. Tins of tuna were the planned protein for the food bags, but were £2.30 for a tiny tin! That would have been £2,300 on tuna which we just couldn't justify. God had a better plan! After initial panic buying, food sales dropped hugely due to the lockdown and a chicken supplier donated us 400 fresh, unpacked, and bloody chickens. Praise God we had our protein and in perfect time! We bagged them up, and as one member from each family came to receive their food, personal hygiene bags and two chickens, they jumped for joy! It is a joy to be God's channel of blessing. The owner was so happy about the photo report we sent him that he donated again.....another 500 chickens! We gave these out to our neediest neighbours at the weekend, and on Wednesday we will be giving out the rest, along with food and hygiene bags to all our families. A time of such need, and yet our fridges and freezers are full of chickens. Although they caused much work, putting a smile of joy on a sad face couldn't have been easier; it came in the form of chicken!

Colombia is one of the world's countries most affected by landmines (or IED's – Improvised Explosive Devices). This is due to the continuing guerrilla war here and it is estimated that over half of Colombia's

municipalities could be affected to some extent, which is 52 million square meters of land! In January, Jeanene and I had the privilege of having some of my closest UK friends visiting us here. We travelled to the village of Costa Rica, near Vista Hermosa in the department of Meta to work alongside the army. They were carrying out the demining process in this, one of the country's most severely affected areas. It was a deeply impacting experience for us, especially as years ago we had lost one of our boys Brandon to such a device after he had become a soldier there. We gave out 400 school packs (books, pens, pencils etc.) to children as well as hundreds of humanitarian aid packs to a very needy community that is still rebuilding from the devastation of war. Fields, literally just meters from the school buildings were cordoned off for the possibility of mines, with families trying to live a normal existence in the middle of such danger and poverty. It was difficult to think that some of those who we were helping, were re-inserted from the guerrilla group back into the local community, and perhaps had even been planting the landmines that the army were risking their lives to take out. It greatly highlighted the need for profound healing in these places, and nothing gave me more joy than to know that, in all of our humanitarian aid packs were the bible tracts donated to us from Revival Movement in Northern Ireland, the gospel having an impact.

At the end of February I went back there with Colombians from my worksite team who had volunteered their weekend. Working alongside the soldiers, over the two days, we did an 18 hour makeover of a school house. We repaired the water tank and pipes, getting the water working again; installed new electrical cable, meaning the lights worked again; replaced part of the dining room floor, installed new roofing tiles, did some concrete work and not to mention a fair bit of painting. It was amazing to know that we could, in some small way, sew into the rebuilding of a community and give more young lives the opportunity to enjoy studying.

Finally, to give you a quick update on our new Blessings building. We have got a lot more done since the New Year; one of the highlights was finishing part of the back patio which is shared with the Genesis House. Our youngest children at Genesis have lived without any outside area for 18 months now, so it was a joy to see them once again run around, jump, kick and throw balls and enjoy races around the patio on a beautiful sunny March afternoon. They hugged and thanked our work team, "Thank you, Thank you" accompanied by smiles from ear to ear. We are almost wholly doing internal work now; the floors are in, some internal walls are built and ceilings and lighting are being installed. I have to say that this new building has already been a hugely important resource as the humanitarian aid bags for the current Covid-19 crisis were prepared in our new humanitarian aid storeroom. So many times, and especially over the last few weeks, have we given thanks for this storeroom which is just one part of the building; I cannot wait to see the Blessings building when it is fully operational. It gives us such great opportunities to help others and to bring joy and blessing, and we believe the Lord will allow us to finish this amazing project, both financially and physically, in the coming months and begin to enjoy its immense potential to change lives.

Our life dream has been to help the needy, so for our children: to give them a home, an education and a hope for a future, and in addition to this, helping many thousands more with humanitarian and medical aid. The same way as help is needed in the UK and around the world right now, it is very much needed here too. Jeanene and I were not able to travel to our home countries as we would normally do in April. We believe and trust in our great God, not only to help the families of our children, and many others who are needy, but also that we can comply with our employment obligations to our staff and their families who depend on that provision. We thank you with all of our hearts for your prayers, support and help, especially at this time of such need.

We pray the shelter of the Most High over you all - Psalm 91:1-2, "Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord that He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust."

*With blessings and hugs,*

*Richard and Jeanene Sanderson and our large Bogota family.*

**Please help our large family to continue forward: food, staff wages, medical care, gas, water, electric, telephone, transport, maintenance, school supplies, and new buildings among others! Please join with us in prayer for the expansion of our UK support, we are very much looking for new opportunities to share about our work and if you or a contact would like to book a free presentation, for any time of the year, then please contact UK Diary Planner Ruth Brierley on 07538 887305.**



Trustees: Richard Sanderson, Christine Hodgson, Margaret Swift, David Hodgson and John Hawksworth