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Back in Ecuador

By Nancy Wesorick

We are back in Ecuador and have returned to the glorious rainforest. Even after spending so much time here, we continue to see new insects, birds and animals. Of course I always have to share at least one funny experience about our time in the rainforest.

One night as I am returning to the cabin I placed my hand on the door to push it open. Now remember I am half asleep because this is the middle of the night...as I push I feel this quite large thing drop on my arm! As I swing my arm to shake it off when I realize it is a very large gecko! I let out this yelp and immediately slammed my hand over my mouth as to not wake the entire station.

Of course Jim sleeps through this entire episode--he is content in the forest and rests easy.

Reconnecting With Our Friends

It is wonderful to reconnect with our friends at Jatun Sacha and at the communities. You know that you are known here when the person who sells the bus tickets in Tena still remembers Jim's name after 6 months of absence!

Our work begins with us visiting each school to get information about the number of students and teachers they have for the year. Then, Jim and I pack up a "care package" of materials for delivery. So far we have delivered materials to the communities of Nuevo Paraiso and Ñucanchi Causai.

Friends Of Ecuador Schools (FES) is a non-profit humanitarian organization established to partner with schools in remote communities in Ecuador.

Our Mission is to improve primary school education in remote communities so that the young people are better able to cope with a changing world.



Children of Nuevo Paraiso presenting gifts

The children are all eager to see us and we are greeted at each school with squeals of "Jimmy", "Nancy", which is very fun.

Even under such difficult conditions in which many of these children are living, no extra food, no extra cash and often no father or mother they manage to smile and are thankful for the few things we give them.

We realize that we are making small differences for them in their education. It is wonderful to see them be excited about getting a new pencil.

Making Deliveries

Nuevo Paraiso is about 45 minutes by truck from Jatun Sacha. Our friend, Pamela, has been our transport person as she has a truck and takes us on our deliveries.

Nuevo Paraiso is impressive. Their community leaders and school personnel are very friendly and have a very organized school. Classes are from pre-school through virtual university (learning on line).

Even though this community is two hours by bus from the closest town, they have internet and now cell phones. Students come from farther into the

dia de difuntos



Students being served colada and pan

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The day we visited to deliver materials was the celebration of "dia de difuntos" (the day of the dead).

After the presentation of the school materials we brought to the school principal and the singing of songs to us. The teachers served a traditional drink, colada morado, and special bread in the shape of a baby, guagua pan.



rainforest to go to this school. Some students even board during the week and only return to their homes on weekends.

This school also has a wood shop and machine shop as part of the high school. Currently, they are building bookshelves for the new library at Chichico Rumi in which FES is sponsoring.

All 100 students lined up with their own cups to receive their drink and bread.

The children have been taught to line up by age or size so the youngest get served first. (See pictures) It is amazing to watch as there is no pushing and shoving in line! Somewhat different from my personal experiences in schools in the US!



Patently awaiting their turn

Ñucanchi Causai

Ñucanchi Causai is the closest community to Jatun Sacha. The leader of this community is Gabriel Tapuy, a friend and also a forest patroller for Jatun Sacha.

His community is made up of immediate family including 3 daughters, 3 sons, some cousins and all of their families. The community has about 30+ people.

Their school has 29 students, some family and also other children that live nearby. Ñucanchi Causai has two teachers who teach mixed grade classes. One teacher teaches grades kindergarten - 1 and another who teaches grades 2-7.



School at Ñucanchi



Playing futbol at recess at Ñucanchi Causai



Jim with boys at Nuevo Paraiso



Boys at Ñucanchi Causai helping unload truck

The Purpose of FES

The purpose of the work of FES is to give opportunities for these children to learn. Many children only go to school through 6th grade so it is important that the opportunity to learn is available for them. Without some tools, like pencils and paper, it is difficult to obtain the basic education the children need. Their future could be in jeopardy for exploitation by others—foreigners, oil companies, and the world beyond what they know without a basic knowledge of Spanish and math.

Jim and I hope all of you are healthy and happy. We think of you often. The work of FES depends on your support. Please spread the word for the children of Ecuador!

Abrazos,

Naney and Jim

Find out more on
the FES website at
www.friendsofecuadorschools.com