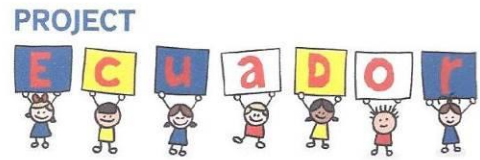


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11<sup>th</sup> June 2016

Dear friends,

“Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken, nor my covenant of peace be removed.” Isaiah 54 v 10

At the end of a busy Saturday, on the 16<sup>th</sup> April, we were just putting our girls to bed, when the house started shaking... and didn't stop. We grabbed the girls and ran outside into an open area. We stood, clinging to each other – Tamara was trembling and Emily crying. We felt utterly helpless as we watched our house pound up and down, felt the earth moving beneath our feet, and listened to things smashing inside in the pitch black.



*Perdenales town after the earthquake. 660 died, 113 rescued alive, 26,000 displaced (Official figures)*

That was our experience of the 7.8 earthquake that hit Ecuador, about 70 miles from our home. Four sponsored children from the same extended family were at the beach. The hotel collapsed on top of them as they were showering. Thankfully, they escaped with cuts and bruises. Others in the

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same hotel lost their lives. It took 5 days for trained rescuers to reach that town. Looters had a field day in the meantime.

Another three of the sponsored children were visiting family in the earthquake zone. Again, they escaped without physical harm.

Everyone was left feeling nervous. This was made worse by the two strong aftershocks felt a month later. We were imagining everything was shaking when it wasn't.

The first days after the quake were confusing. The government took control of the media and only their official reports were aired. Facebook was full of missing people appeals. Local people immediately started to take food and water to the earthquake zone and were horrified by the destruction. People who had been left with nothing began to arrive at relatives' homes here in Santo Domingo.

At the girls' club 3 days after the earthquake, I shared the verse from Isaiah with the girls. We decorated it with craft donations and took courage from the fact that our God is stronger than earthquakes, and His love never fails.

A week after the earthquake the military cordoned off the town on Perdenales and no one was allowed in. The diggers began clearing the rubble and dead bodies out of sight of the public. The military took any aid taken to the major towns by the public and repackaged it in government bags. There were rumours of mass graves and a higher death toll than the official one. Those who went to the area at that time reported a terrible smell.

We are very thankful for the response to our earthquake appeal. Thank you for all the generous donations we have received. We chose to support the relief effort being run by Pastor William of the Baptist church in Santo Domingo. He has many contacts in the affected areas and immediately began organising teams to go and take aid to these areas. He went to the small villages, which no government agencies ever reached. He took food, hygiene supplies, medicines and water. He also took Bibles and Christian messages of hope to the people.



*Aid bags*



*Bibles*



*Jenna*



*Tents for refugees*

We used and continue to use the donations to buy supplies for this relief effort. At the beginning of May, Jenna, a medical student from Birmingham came to help for the month. She helped pack the supplies into family kits and went on the trips to distribute the aid. She stayed with us, and was a great help as she calmly did all she could in the emergency situation.

Now, Pastor William is continuing to visit the refugees in refuges here in Santo Domingo. We are continuing to buy supplies and Mairi-Louise, a school-leaver from Skye, has joined us, and is helping pack and distribute the aid. Mairi plans to be here until August, and her brother, Hamish,

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is planning to come and join us at the end of June. We will be using some of the donations to rebuild housing, and Hamish hopes to be able to help with that.



Mairi is also teaching English in the Carchense primary school twice a week and teaching piano to some of the local youngsters. She is doing very well learning Spanish and making friends fast.

In July, we also have Lucy, another teenager, joining us for a couple of weeks. She has been doing a great job fund raising for us before she comes.

So, my time in April & May was very much taken up by responding to the earthquake and hosting and organising visitors. In addition, I gave out the help from sponsors to the 160 sponsored children. This involved first giving each child money to buy their shoes and uniform. Then, they brought me their receipts and I gave them their stationary kit (which I had previously purchased for them). The children started back at school at the beginning of May. There were several children who had moved away this year because of a lack of work here in the countryside (reflecting the general rise in unemployment and rise in the cost of living in the whole country). I found replacements for these children, so that more children continue to benefit from sponsorship and the chance to go to school.



*Stationary kit & receiving schoolbag*

I have also been running the girls club once a week for all the age groups. Johanna continues to help me with the little ones. The 9-12 year olds have been learning about Paul, and the teenagers about friendship with God and others.

My parents arrived the last week of May, to visit us for 3 weeks. They took us to Peru for 5 days for my birthday. Visiting the amazing Machu Picchu was a wonderful gift and a welcome distraction from the stress of the previous weeks!

They brought with them the craft supplies that you donated, so I now have the shelves stacked with creativity waiting to be done with the girls at club. They will love it, thank you.



I am planning a camp for the girls in July, which Mairi and Lucy will help me with.

We would like to thank those who gave us gifts to help us repair the damage to our own house following the quake. Vlado spent most of the last month doing the repairs and finishing off the extra room, which he has been building on and off during the last year. We have two bedrooms in our house, so the extra room is a guest bedroom/home-school room/playroom! We are very thankful to have it finished in time for the influx of guests! In the next couple of months, he will continue to work on the campsite and start building houses again.



*Emily's drawing of Luna*

Through all the chaos, we continued home school, and then had three weeks break while Mum and Dad were visiting. We start back on Monday. Tamara will be beginning an official home-school English course, with an online tutor to mark assignments once a month. I am looking forward to the help with this, as English is the subject she struggles with. I hope to be able to start using this system for maths and science as well in due course. It will cut down on the time I currently spend planning everything, and also give us a better idea of her progress and help if we have a problem. Emily is starting to read and write, and is full of imagination.



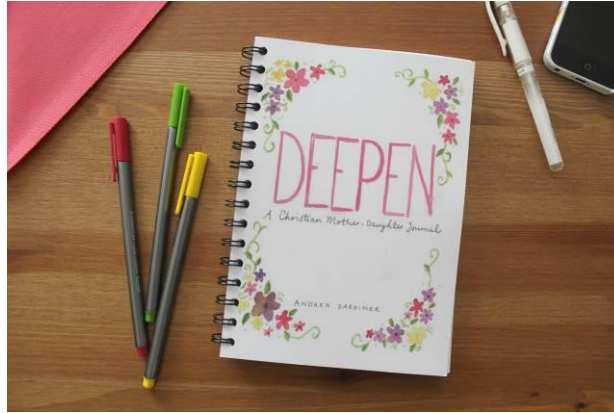
*Emily's drawing of the earthquake*

Tamara celebrated her 8<sup>th</sup> birthday in May and had a trip to the cinema with her cousins. Emily cannot wait for her birthday to come next week. She will be six. They are both enthusiastic and full of life. Tamara is a strong swimmer, a deep thinker and a sensitive soul. Emily is full of imagination and determined. Tamara has a steady stream of colds, which drag her down sometimes. Emily is still nervous after the earthquake.



My Christian Mother-Daughter journal, **DEEPEN**, is now available for purchase. It is written for those who have daughters aged 10-18 years. Inside you will find questions, fun quizzes, writing and drawing prompts, prayers and Bible studies to complete together. The idea is to open up conversations between mother and daughter that will help deepen your relationship and address important issues in a non-confrontational manner. My dream is that it will help your relationship with each other and with God to grow. You can buy it at

<https://www.etsy.com/uk/shop/AndysintheAndes>



I need your help in letting Christian mums know it exists! You can help by mentioning it to your friends, telling your church about it, buying a copy for a friend, writing a review on Amazon, or sharing it on social media. I am attaching a poster you can use digitally or print off should you be able to use it for publicity. Thank you.

Things to pray for:

- Ecuador, as the economic crisis deepens. Prices have risen again, with new taxes to pay for earthquake damage, and jobs are scarce.
- Peace for those recovering from the trauma of the earthquake, and strength for those continuing to help the refugees.
- Pray for Pastor William and his team. Also Mairi, Hamish and Lucy while they spend time helping here.
- Vldy – so much to do and too little time! Wisdom to prioritise.
- The girls attending club, that they will grow in faith. Also the camp in July.
- The sponsored children, to make the most of the opportunity to study, and seek the Lord.
- Tamara and Emily – in their emotions, schooling and health.
- A regular significant donation to Project Ecuador general funds has ceased. Pray for funds for our ongoing projects, such as glasses for the schoolchildren.
- For further volunteers to continue to develop the work in the school / among the youngsters.

Thank you for your messages, prayers and support in recent days. Sorry if I haven't thanked you personally. We really appreciate all you do on our behalf. May it result in more people coming into His family.

With love from,

*Andy, Vldy, Tamara & Emily*

[www.andysintheandes.blogspot.com](http://www.andysintheandes.blogspot.com)

This letter is distributed by Maryon Gardiner. If there are any address changes or should you no longer wish to receive this please let Maryon know at the address at the top. Many thanks

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