

Gingerich Gazette

July 2007 Newsletter from Hubbard, Oregon

Greetings!

We greet you one last time with the Gazette, hoping that these last two months have been as full of blessing for you as they have for us. We say that understanding that blessings don't always come in with easy paths and enjoyable experiences. Sometimes blessings come in the form of challenges and trials too.

Returning "Home"

On May 31st we left Quito for the U.S. We often talked about this trip as "going home", but were surprised to hear our selves sharing with people along the way about "our church" and "home" when we spoke about Quito Mennonite and what had indeed become our home.

We spent two nights and one day in Newton, KS at the Network offices, sharing with Linda Shelly, our director and her assistant, Fabiola Flores. Some old friends of David's, Russ and Kendra Neufeld and their family graciously hosted us in their home.

After our short stay in Newton, we continued on to Oregon, arriving on June 2nd. Family and friends warmly received us. We spent a few days in Portland with Ericka's parents, enjoying wonderful meals and much needed rest. While Ericka continued to rest, David moved all of our belongings from storage to our new house in rural Hubbard, OR and we began once again to make a new home. We have spent considerable time "getting settled", planting a lawn, pouring some concrete and decorating baby Gingerich's room.

Sharing Our Experiences

Even before we left Ecuador we had invitations from our supporting congregations to formally share our experiences with them. The first two Sundays of July we shared at Portland Mennonite and Zion Mennonite respectively about our time in Ecuador. Those of you who have walked with us in our journey know the radically different experiences and cultures we had in our different assignments in Ecuador. So capturing it all in 20 minutes was difficult. We shared a PowerPoint presentation of slides, and shared broadly about what our work included in both Cebadas and Quito.

We also extended an invitation in these congregations to speak with us in smaller group or individual settings so that we could give a more complete picture of our experiences. We have enjoyed several dinner and lunch invitations to talk more in depth, and welcome more of those conversations.

Transitions

Moving back to the U.S. has been and will continue to be an interesting process. We are in a real sense different people than we were two years ago. Learning to be gracious and understanding of our North American culture is just as much or more a process as was adapting to Ecuador. And we hope that those around us may understand as we make this transition.

It is interesting to note that those things we missed so much while in Ecuador and couldn't wait to "come home to" that now seem strange. Ericka and I are organized, scheduled and committed people who were constantly frustrated by the relaxed attitude our Ecuadorian brothers and sisters took towards punctuality and

commitment. We have noticed that we may have become more comfortable with that relaxed style than we had previously thought, as we have had to deal with the many details of our return and of planning for a new baby so far in advance. We are enjoying observing how much this experience has changed us without our knowing it.

It's a Girl!

We are also thrilled to announce to you all that on July 30, we welcomed a new addition to our family. Liliana Belén Gingerich was born at 2:55 AM at Willamette Falls Hospital in Oregon City. She weighed 6 lbs and 12 ounces and measured 20 inches in length. Ericka did a great job laboring, and only had to push for about 45 minutes. At this writing we're still in the hospital and planning to go home on Wednesday morning, as three instead of two.



Liliana is beautiful of course, and we have already apologized a million times for calling her "him" for the last 9 months. 95% of our friends and family in Ecuador had said that she was a boy for sure. Won't they all be surprised!



One Last Thank You

We again cannot express our thanks enough to those of you have so graciously supported us, both financially and in your prayers as we have served in Ecuador, and as we have made our move back to the U.S. As our indigenous friends always say, "May God repay you". Our remaining prayer requests are that you remember us as David looks for meaningful employment, and that you remember our friends and family in Cebadas and in Quito. We hope that in some small way, our service has helped to build relationships between us here in North America and our South American brothers and sisters, as well as bring new understandings and stronger faith to us all.

We also want to express our deep gratitude to Mennonite Mission Network for putting their trust in us, and their support for us while we served. Especially Linda Shelly, director for Latin America and Fabiola Flores, Linda's assistant. May God bless you and guide you as you continue to work with the Network and its projects in Latin America.

We invite you to keep in contact with us, as you would like. Our new contact information can be found below.

Grace and Peace,

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