

Happy New Year!

21.01.15

We hope 2015 is off to a good start for you!

For us, 2014 was a whirl of productivity – and fun. Here’s a quick review of what the mission, with support from donors and volunteers, did last year:

- Provided first aid training for local church and community leaders, and gave free, stocked first aid kits;
- Painted the interiors and exteriors of two churches and the interior of a third;
- Provided leadership training for church leaders;



- Seven greenhouses in production – four annual harvests help improve nutrition for poor, rural students who also work in the greenhouses. Schools sell produce to help cover operating costs.
  - The cuy (guinea pig) farm sold about 200 cays, generating about 10.000 Bolivianos, or about \$1,500 USD, to help sustain the Sub District. In this area that’s a LOT of money. Even more importantly, it teaches and reinforces the notion that **INVESTMENT + WORK = INCOME**;
- To help make high-protein quinoa accessible again for poor families (price has tripled due to developed nations’ demand for the super food), in 2013 the mission gave a kilo of certified quinoa seeds to 120 families who pledged to save 10% of their new seed heads for replanting in 2014, and give 10% to their local churches to help cover the cost of human services they provide for the poor. Families could eat or sell the remaining 80%. Some families sold their new seed heads for planting, meaning that beyond boosting their own protein intake, they also shared the wealth with their extended family, friends and neighbors.

- With donor support, the mission built a church kitchen and community latrine in the village of Chani. By sharing a common wall and water and drainage system, the mission, the congregation, and the community conserved costs.
- A team of adult volunteers from the Northern Illinois Conference brought well over 1,000 pairs of used prescription glasses and new or used readers. In July an NIC youth team distributed the lenses at four community fairs. We matched glasses to an estimated 300 people. Ahhh: the joy of watching someone see the world clearly for the first time in years, maybe decades! We came to call it the “Hallelujah Moment.”
- The mission and a lot of volunteer workers installed new windows in *Iglesia Nueva Esperanza* (New Hope Church) in Huacuyo Valley.



- In August we opened Pan America, a bakery and pizzeria, whose proceeds help support the mission’s projects. Our 60- to 70-hour work weeks are tiring but rewarding and delightful. We meet people from all over the world, and continue to marvel at how kind, generous, and good-hearted most people are. Volunteers from the U.S., Uruguay, France and Germany are working with us both at the shop and various construction sites. We’d originally



hoped they’d cover for us while we visited the U.S. for Christmas through the end of January. Alas, document problems and money problems

obviated our international travel plans. (The recent election of a new Bolivian bishop meant the outgoing one



could no longer release our funds to us; the incoming bishop couldn't do so until the second week of January.) Though again postponing a trip home was a big disappointment to us, it seemed impractical to travel to the States for just two or three weeks. In May and June we will attend a stateside training program, and will have some time to see friends and family then. Meanwhile, our January volunteer coverage allows us a chance to enjoy a little free time.



- We and a crowd of volunteers recently trenched for and began pouring concrete for the foundation of a new church in Santa Ana. (Photos above, left and below)



## Morsels from Pan America

(And some snapshots of life here in the last few weeks.)

- In late November we finally succeeded in getting the restaurant listed in the web-based travel guide Trip Adviser. Of the 24 restaurants listed for Copacabana, we are now rated second!
- Thanks to our international staff, travelers can communicate with at least one of us in English, Spanish, German, French, Aymara, or Portuguese.
- The volunteers have created such innovative dishes as a cream cheese and caramelized onion tart with anchovies; frittata of tomato, cheese, spinach, and Dijon; and “brookies,” a brownie base hugging a nugget of chocolate chip cookie. They repurposed some overdone brownies by crushing them up to top dress mango tarts. They are quite an inventive and hard-working group.
- In the first week of the New Year, two male vendors came by shouldering huge bags, and brandishing bouquets of irons, buckets, feather dusters, and mops – “Everything for the woman,” they said. Jeff rolled his eyes at me and laughed.
- Its vacation time for Argentinian students, some of who show up at Pan America, badly but relentlessly playing Andean pipes or a two-octave, breath-powered keyboard (think kazoo meets Baby’s First Harmonica, supersized). They kazoodle in the doorway, hoping for small change – given, we assume, to make them go away. We and the volunteers hate these “band-its” holding us and our customers hostage. We’re pondering solutions and invite your advice.
- Sometimes South American travelers come into the shop asking if we serve “lunch.” We answer, “Sure! We have sandwiches and spring rolls ready to go, or we could make you a fabulous pizza.” “No,” they say dejectedly. “I mean *lunch*.” Here, that’s a gigantic bowl of soup, preceded or followed by a mound of rice, potatoes, chuño or tunta (Andean freeze-dried potatoes), a little shredded lettuce, and a gossamer slice of chicken, beef or pork. The same conversation regularly unfolds, but in place of “lunch” they ask for “food.”



- We take in stride the frequent power outages, water shortages, and the local garbage crisis that can mean three week intervals between trash pickup while a mound of rubbish piles up in the heart of town. Last week we took an extra day off because we could only buy two canisters of gas for the shop instead of the four we need.



Again, we are very sorry we had to cancel our trip home. But we keenly look forward to seeing many of you in May or June.

With much love,  
Deb and Jeff

