

Here and Loving It



Dear Friends and Family,

Sorry for the long absence of newsletters. Now that our restaurant, Pan America, is thriving, we burn about 70 hours a week just running the shop – it's just the two of us plus a helper. On slow days and "free" days, we clean and restock, dash to La Paz – a five-hour ride –



for ingredients we can't get in Copa, tend to mission projects, squeeze in music classes and practice time, attend mandatory neighborhood work days, as well as mandatory meetings, parades and soccer games.

Left: La Paz taxi hauling our 3-piece furniture set for the restaurant.

We are busy, but we're very much enjoying the work (well, not so much the



mandatory meetings and parades), the projects and the people – local folks with whom we work, and customers from all over the world. We continue as the second highest rated restaurant in Copa, with a 5-star Trip Adviser rating. Daily sales run 800 to 1,200 Bolivianos (\$115 to \$180, which is really good money in this part of the world).

Right: Local school kids borrowed work space and oven time for an end-of-year project.



"great pizza, very friendly hosts"

Review of [Pan America Bakery and Pizzeria](#)

Near corner of Av. 6 de Agosto & Calle Avaroa, Copacabana, Bolivia

Ranked #2 of 26 [Restaurants in Copacabana](#)

[65 Reviews](#)

Price range: BOB 7 - BOB 71

Cuisines: [American](#), [Pizza](#), Sandwiches, [European](#), [Delicatessen](#)



After paying expenses, annual revenue covers roughly a third of the mission's budget! In our first year of operation, the restaurant has given more than 90,000 Bs. (more than \$13,000) to local mission projects.

Still, it's not enough to cover the many projects in which the mission is investing. We'll write about those a bit later in this newsletter.



To help cover mission expenses, we decided to sell accumulated things at our neighborhood's new, weekly *feria*, or fair. The first one was two weeks ago; it was a blast! Friends and neighbors tell us the Gringos' stand has created a buzz throughout town: products from the States are HOT commodities!



Mission Fronteras Bests The UK, France and Switzerland!



At a recent Round Table of Methodist Church leaders from all over the world, Bolivian Bishop Modesto Mamani reported that 11% of the church’s national budget comes from Mision Fronteras – more than the United Kingdom, and more than



France and Switzerland combined! He also attributed the church’s rapid growth in our area to the mission’s efforts to help meet basic community needs.

What’s Up and Running

In addition to Pan America, here’s a quick round up of our current projects:

- 8 functioning green houses, and within a week seeds will be planted in the ninth;
- Cuy (guinea pig) farm – now that it’s dry season and therefore harder to feed them, we’ve sold down to about 25 of the best breeders to start the next season;
- Quinoa project – On their own accord, the original 120 participating families have expanded the project by roughly 40% since its launch in May 2013.
- Four church/community centers are in various stages of construction. One is just getting started; two lack only fine work to reach completion.



- The combined community latrine and kitchen in Chani is essentially finished, except for a bathroom, which we’ll leave to the local folks because the mission’s allowance for the project has been spent.

Big construction projects require big chunks of the mission’s budget. So far, we’ve covered much of those expenses with proceeds from Pan America. But the mission’s account now has less than \$3,000 in it. If you’re considering making an end-of-year donation to Mission Fronteras, Advance # 3021288, we and the Andean folks we work with would surely welcome it. Please be advised that the General Board of Global Ministries has again promised to double gifts made on Dec.1, the annual Day of Giving.



Service projects:

- In April a volunteer mission team assessed vision and gave reading glasses to about 300 local people. Women recipients, who knit or crochet to clothe their families and earn a living, were especially grateful.



- In May we and volunteer Will Harris distributed school materials to about 400 students. Not all of them actually needed free school supplies, but we've learned that if we help only the truly poor, whose parents might withdraw their students for want of \$4 for supplies, the poorest kids would suffer the ridicule of their slightly better-off classmates. So in such cases we "let the rain fall evenly on everyone," a local expression.



- We're helping forge a partnership between Engineers Without Borders, Engineers in Action, and the leaders of Chiripaca, a rural village that has *never* had running, potable water.
- We're planning a new project to promote sterilization of street dogs. We will partner with a La Paz rescue animal clinic whose volunteers will speak at high schools explaining the importance of sterilization. After a week of follow-up radio promotions, clinic professionals will offer low-cost sterilization of dogs and cats. The mission will pay 25 Bs. each (about \$3.50) to sterilize the first 50 street animals brought in.



Copacabana is infamous for its roving dog packs, which often threaten people. Once every few weeks 25 to 40 big males vie viciously for a lone female in heat. For two weeks females, constantly hounded by the pack, cannot eat, drink, or sleep. Many die at this stage, or later, if they're carrying puppies bigger than a small mother can birth.

Jeff and a local friend, Elvi, recently tried to rescue one such female, but were run off by the pack. They armed themselves with clubs, returned to the pack, and coaxed the grateful female into a flour sack. Immediately, the biggest males attacked.



Wielding their clubs, they evaded injury, got the female to our house, and bathed her. The next day Elvi escorted her to the La Paz clinic, where she was vaccinated, sterilized, and placed in an adoption program. The experience clinched our decision to sponsor a sterilization program.

Individual Volunteers and Mission Teams

In March we enjoyed a short visit with three Illinois women scoping out projects for a future team. They brought us a lot of goodies we've been missing and some restaurant supplies we can't find in Bolivia – paper bags, a pizza shovel, and big boxes for carry-out pizza orders.

In late April we bid adieu to an 11-member volunteer team from Idaho. They managed the lens fairs mentioned earlier, and dug post holes for a fence to keep cattle out of crops meant to generate money for human services.

A couple months ago a South Carolina team helped level ground for a new church to be built in the village of Sicuani. The congregation there is psyched!

Sword Fights and Scale-y Monsters



We've always wanted to learn to play string instruments. Samuel, a Franciscan monk working at the basilica across the street from our restaurant, is forming Copacabana's first orchestra. Lessons are free. So Jeff bought a used cello and I found a lovely viola for a fraction of what I'd have paid in the States. Last week we played our second concert at Copa's historic, 440-year-old basilica.

The first one was mortifying. We weren't at all ready for a performance. Jeff had only been "playing" for a week. The performance area was too small, so we all skewered each other with our bows. And we were totally unprepared for people peering directly over our music stands snapping photos while we tried to play!



Most of the violinists are 7 to 10 years old, easily bored, and not overly protective of the instruments they borrow for free from Samuel. When he gives one-on-one time to a student, the rest of the kids engage in mock sword fights with their bows. They're not fond of practicing, so when we all play together our music is – ah, rough. Even simple scales are shriek-y.



But Jeff and I love it all: learning a whole new vocabulary, mastering the art of bowing and fingering notes to make pretty music, and harmonizing with other musicians. We are just now confident enough to practice together with the windows open!

We hope you are well. Thanks for caring about us and sending your support in all its forms. Please let us hear from you.

With Much Love,
Deb and Jeff

