

Report No. 1 from Alto Cayma - 5 Aug 18

Back in Alto Cayma

I arrived in Arequipa 4 nights ago, on Wednesday evening, and encountered a whirlwind of activity, so even though it was a "short week", there's a lot to talk about.

A New Friend

We have a new friend living in our park across the street from our house. His name is Owl, and he's very talented. Not only can he look wise by



day, he can also screech at night. I suspect he's not as popular with the small animals living in our ravine as he is with us, however.

Thursday Afternoons in Mujeres con Esperanza

John's 3 activities he offers Thursday afternoons in the Mujeres con Esperanza ("Women with Hope") settlement up the hill (the elderly group, the English class and the Kids' Club) continue to be popular and well attended. The elderly especially like the opportunity to get together for an

activity. John uses games, not only to give them exercise and entertainment, but also as a means of distributing "prizes" (note that everybody got one)



which will brighten up their homes and their lives. Those quilts came from the Quilting Ministry back in John's home church, First Baptist in Salem, OR, and were brought down by their Mission Team that recently visited Alto Cayma.

Cold Wave

We're in the southern hemisphere, so the seasons are reversed. Instead of hoping for cooler weather, we're hoping to leave the cold of winter behind, but it doesn't want to leave us. The cold weather persists and is predicted to continue for at least another month. So, how cold is cold? It was 50°F when I got off the plane Wednesday evening, and the temperature was still going down, headed for the 40's. Now, that doesn't sound so cold until you take into account that the people have no heat inside their makeshift houses, and if you're an elderly person with poor circulation, that spells suffering.

While I was up in Mujeres con Esperanza on Thursday, I visited Sra. Benencia. Sra. Benencia had a stroke a couple of years ago that left her partially paralyzed on her left side, as you can see in this photo. Her refuge from the cold is



her bed, which she sometimes crawls into as early as 4:00 in the afternoon. This solution works for Sra. Benencia because she's fortunate enough to have these heavy alpaca wool blankets, which she got through our sponsorship program. Many



elderly in Alto Cayma are not as fortunate as Sra. Benancia, but we are constantly giving out blankets, purchased from our Blanket Fund, to those we encounter who are in need. A new blanket costs just \$10 here, and we always need donations to keep our Blanket Fund going. If you would like to extend this help to a person in need, please write a check to Advent Peru Mission Support, with Blanket Fund on the memo line, and mail it to Susan Hartsell, 2900 South Devon St, Charlotte, NC 28213.

Youth Camping Trip

Victor and John, with help from Briza and Sabina, took 13 members of our New Horizons Youth Group on a camping trip Friday and Saturday. The objectives for this outing fell into 3 areas:

- To enjoy some recreation, but also, through the camping experience,



to learn to fend for themselves and to learn how to appreciate the relative comfort



they enjoy at home.

- To build healthy new friendships and to develop emerging



leadership through the dynamics of interacting in this atypical environment.



- To model making spirituality a part of their daily lives. The first day, John led a reflection on the importance of making healthy decisions, guided by the Bible as a manual for life. The second day, the topic was the importance of



friendships, and what to look for in a true friend - one who will be honest with you, but will also stick with you and grow mutually with you.

All the objectives were met, plus there were a few pleasant bonuses encountered along the way. John and Victor had debated long and hard about whether or not to take 2 younger kids who had exhibited very immature behavior in their home environment, but they finally relented and let them come. As it turned out, both kids rose to meet the challenge, and captured the teachings and participated in the activities very successfully. John was surprised to see the extent to which the older kids accepted the younger ones, rather than isolating them, as would commonly be done in our country. This opened his eyes to great possibilities for mentoring in the future.

At the end, the kids were asked for feedback on the experience. One of the kids responded that there's no need to program these outings too often, that once a month will suffice. (We still don't know if he was serious or joking. :-)

Acercádonos Children's Meeting

Jonathan Tellez, a very dynamic young psychologist whom Briza had



invited, practically became the entire meeting at our Saturday reunion with the families of the children in our sponsorship program. He had the folks doing all kinds of dynamic activities at a high level of energy, and was able to



get close to 100% participation. The core of his presentation had to do with communication within the family, with 15 questions that parents and children should ask each other, like this one - "This week, did I tell you, my



son, that I love you?"

He ended with the Trust Fall, with participation by kids



and parents alike,



ending with a pretty weighty challenge.



Rotaract and Interact Clubs

Last night we had the formal ceremony to install the new leadership of our Interact (ages 12-17) and Rotaract (ages 18-30) youth service clubs. It's always



impressive to see how well these kids "clean up" for these rare formal occasions, but



it's even more impressive to see how they "grow up" week by week, and month by month, with all the opportunities to practice leadership, service and public speaking



that their active participation in these clubs affords them.

Call for Letters

I didn't issue a call for letters before leaving the country this time because our translator (one person) was still finishing the last few letters going in the other direction, from the "ahijados" (sponsees) to the "padrinos" (sponsors). We are ready now, however, to reverse the flow, so I urge all sponsors to write to their sponsees (even if you don't have a letter from them to answer) and e-mail your letter to me for translation.

The importance of this personal communication link cannot be better stated than it is in this statement I received from Susan Casper, who recently visited Alto Cayma (accompanied by her college-age granddaughter) for the first time, after having been a sponsor for over 13 years. Susan wrote:

" After my recent trip to Alto Cayma, I have decided to double down on letters and not assume my monthly check is enough when sponsoring someone. When I visited people Steve and I have supported in the past, I realized that the personal connections mean as much or more to them as the

sponsorship. They are so loving and welcoming, the ahijados AND their extended families came out to express not just their sincere appreciation of the support but their real love for us. I started out thinking it was a mission trip to deliver beds and see what Alto Cayma is all about, but came back with the realization that I was the one who was blessed, not by what I have or what my life is like compared to theirs but by being in the presence of people who love others and share what they have, even when it is very little. They are quite gracious and "you're welcome" seemed a trite response to all the love that came our way.

The daughter of an elderly woman I sponsored who passed away 7 years ago still has all the letters and photos I sent her mother. My granddaughter was amazed when she saw her own picture in their family album. It's easy to wonder what they want from us but I can tell you, it's not what we have, it's who we are that they're interested in so I'm going to send more letters to our new ahijado and encourage him as he completes his studies in mining engineering. I want him to feel some love coming from us the same as we felt from them."

"Love God, Serve Neighbor/Serving Alto Cayma",

Jim

