

Education Centres.

According to Gonzalo Alarcon, one of our directors, this second semester has gone well with normal activities in the two centres, Techo Propio and Mocha, communities in the Andes in Ecuador near Ambato. Ambato is near to the most active volcano in Ecuador, Tungurahua and its smoke, explosions and dust are a constant worry to the villagers. In October the AFET centre moved to a new house in El Porvenir (where we started) and we remain in our current centre in Techo Propio until April, when we have to find somewhere else. Gonzalo and Maria Teresa much enjoyed having a previous volunteer, Liz Porter come back again to spend two months running courses in both centres and helping to improve all the students' approach to learning English.

The total number of members of the centre in Techo Propio is 51 with an average of 24 attending on a Saturday morning, there are 15 in Mocha with an average participation of 11. The main activities are reading and borrowing of book, watching videos, short computer courses for primary school children, board and creative games.

As far as equipment is concerned there is one computer, a camera and tripod and a projector in Mocha, and three computers in Techo Propio plus a DVD player. In each centre one replacement computer is needed with a new printer/scanner in Techo.

Activities in the centres. Gladys, our University student, continues to help, despite her studies, in coordinating the centre in Techo, and her Mother, Senora Anita runs the Mocha centre for day to day activities. Gladys gives computer courses and helps the children with their spelling. They both receive a grant for their help. Additionally seven secondary school students help by cleaning the locations and organizing the books and games. They too receive help for their studies in the range of \$10-\$25 monthly. Liz our volunteer gave 4 courses, each 9 weeks long in English Language. There is also a traditional Dance group and a Choir in Techo, and an Ecology Club and Dance group in Mocha. The Ecology club is very active and they went with their parents to a Camp Day in the nearby mountains to visit the reservoir which supplies their homes with water.

Having bought 53 new books and magazines, there are nearly two thousand books in the Library in Techo. Each month a batch of books is rotated to the centre in Mocha.

There was one reading contest in each centre, a camp day with children and parents to Papas de Salassaca (the reservoir); a drama produced by Liz and performed by the children about St George. There was a Christmas party in each centre.

School This school year ten more children entered secondary school (remember in the past it was difficult to get children to stay on at school), and we now have 22 secondary school students who actively support and attend the library. Most of the grant that is given is spent on their using the Internet at Internet cafes and for photocopies, camp days, transport, books and supplies. Some needed new uniforms and back packs. VDO will continue helping each one according to their needs and the amount they help us. Parents are very grateful.

Objectives for the next semester, include finding a safe place for the Centre in Techo, to hold a drawing contest for the next Christmas card, to continue with the reading contests, to improve the choir, ecology and dance groups, and to continue presenting plays based on the stories read.

Child sponsorship programme.

There are 16 sponsored children with a further 19 who are their siblings also receiving benefits. Ten others who are registered library attenders also receive some support. There is a monthly meeting with children and parents and eighty four food parcels were distributed. They contained rice, semolina, pasta, a variety of flour, oats lentils and sardines. Eight items of clothing (trousers, sweaters and shoes) were given.

There is one sponsored girl in the second semester of University, 22 are in secondary school and 22 in primary school. Today, at all levels teachers are using and expect the students to use the internet for research and homework. Most of our students do not have computers at home and use internet cafes. We help them with this expense.

We have mentioned above the fantastic help that Liz Porter gave to the children, particularly with their approach to learning English, which they find very difficult.

Health

We supported fourteen children who needed a medical examination required by their schools at the beginning of the school year and for which they are charged. Three children had accidents, one had a cut foot, another was hit in the face by a swing and the third was hit by a motorcycle and had a fractured clavicle. We helped with transport, medical consultations, x-rays and medicine. Another child was referred for diagnosis and treatment of vitiligo.

Other Activities.

Additional help from the sponsors enabled small Christmas presents to be given to each sponsored child and their siblings (clothes and sports equipment to teenagers, toys and games to the younger children), and additional food for the Christmas celebrations. This included oil, sugar, tuna, jelly, peaches in syrup, biscuits, pop corn, cocoa and chocolate. The Christmas Party held in Techo Propio and in Mocha was supported by Andrew's friend John Potts of the travel agency Happy Gringo. The finalists of the Christmas Card competition also received their prizes. Photos can be seen on Voluntarios facebook page.

There was also a day's outing to the Parque de la familia in Quisapincha, a village near Ambato in November, 2016.

All the children and their parents thank everyone for their help and support. They are really grateful.

If anyone would like to help in any way, or donate amounts however small please do contact one of us. As you can see help is always needed for food, clothes, computer equipment, support to attend school, books, medical treatment and of course supporting our first University student. Her costs for the year were about \$2,000. You can define what area you would like your donation spent on.

www.afetuk.org

www.voluntariosdeoccidente.org

adriennefinch@btinternet.com