

11 September 2011

Re FHC:

Greetings to everyone at Sierra Bible Church!

We are so sorry we were unable to be personally with you today. We had every intention of making this trip to California – but because of Clark’s health (more about that in a minute), we felt it was best to stay close to home for now – where it is more comfortable for Clark. But first, we’d like you to know: How is For His Children doing...

*There is **good** news and a lot of it:*

- *FHC in Ecuador is as strong as ever;*
- *We have highly motivated and intelligent and caring staff. They work hard, and just when we think there is nothing to improve, our staff in Quito is improving some important area about the children's care;*
- *Relationships with the government are good;*
- *Mission teams from churches continue to be greatly impacted by their visits to FHC, and the list of churches for 2012 is growing (we have about 10 teams signed up for 2012) and filling up quickly;*
- *We are operating at almost capacity (35 - 38 children in Quito and 15-20 in Latacunga), which is what our current budget allows;*
- *Enthusiasm and moral support from the local communities in Ecuador is steady and positive, as well as state-side, too;*
- *Our staff is working diligently to get the children into forever families or reunited with their birth families as quickly as possible, despite frustrating delays and by the government, adoption agencies, paperwork, etc.;*

*FHC's financial situation is **very challenged** due to:*

- *U.S. economy affecting donations over the past 3 – 4 years;*
- *FHC's reserves have been utilized entirely based on expectations that things would “turn around”;*
- *Ec. govt. mandated increases in salaries mean costs in Ec. are rising;*

FY 2010-11 donations averaged 18% less than budgeted (this deficit was covered by using savings/reserves).

We have reforecast our 2011-2012 budget, which will include a reduction in funds sent to Ecuador as well as reducing by almost 18% our essential FHC stateside expenses. Despite these budget cuts, we will do our very best to not compromise the quality of care for the children.

We have some strong fund-raising activities planned this fall (Matching Gift Campaign), and the Child Sponsorship Promotion in October – which we hope will enable us to have a healthy remainder of 2011 and begin to build our financial reserves again.

Now we'll fill you in how we are doing... (Clark and Melinda) *We're doing OK. We have more “good days” than bad. Clark’s symptoms are increasing, (for those of you who didn’t know, in December 2010 he was diagnosed with ALS, or Lou Gehrig’s disease – a degenerative muscular disease). He uses a walker and wheelchair, and recently has started using a neck brace. Clark is on a trial medication for ALS that is*

supposed to slow down the advancement of symptoms – and he has bi-monthly checkups at the Mayo Clinic in Jacksonville. We are doing things we enjoy doing, and of course keep busy with For His Children correspondence, reports, writing the newsletter, and more. Our son, Phillip, and his wife and our 2 young grandchildren live 5 minutes away from our home when we are not in Ecuador, in NW Florida – in the coastal town of Navarre, about 30 min. from Pensacola.

Melinda is sole Director now of FHC, she will be making several trips a year to Ecuador, and is in daily contact with our staff in Ecuador. If anyone would like to contact the Vaughns directly – they would welcome an email or phone call (melinda@forhischildren-ecuador.org, 818 812 6110).

What are the ministry's needs in the coming months/years?

- *Prayer*

There are numerous transitions going on in the ministry:

- Clark's retirement and Melinda's assuming sole directorship;*
- Changes in Melinda's time and involvement in the ministry as she cares for Clark;*
- our Ecuadorian partner, "Para Sus Niños" is soon to undergo a process of strengthening it to assume more responsibility and leadership in the future; and a local on-site director will be hired in late 2012 who will be responsible to Melinda;*
- the FHC Board has recently grown from 5 to 9 members, our Chairman will be stepping down next year;*
- the financial needs for these transitions will be significant.*

Our prayer needs are for: wisdom, guidance, and discernment of the Lord's will.

Thank you to everyone at St. Stephen for your love and support. We are so grateful. We hope that 2012 or 2013 will see another mission team from Sierra Bible Church once again blessing the ministry of For His Children.

We send you our best wishes, and again, thank you from our hearts.

Clark and Melinda

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