

PERU DIARIES

FAREWELLS

MARCH

Hiya,

To be honest with you this copy of Peru Diaries is going to be quite an emotional one for me to write, due to all manner of reasons. I have found the task of starting to write this March copy quite difficult and I shall explain why.

We all are aware of the Coronavirus and what effect this has on our way of life. Due to the virus, we had to fly home two weeks earlier than planned. On Friday the 14th of March in the afternoon our supervisor ,Laura, received a call from BMS briefing her on Peru's government plan to close all borders to Europe by Sunday. We had to leave very quickly from Nauta, getting into Iquitos on the Friday evening to then fly out the following Saturday evening. Although, this was very rushed we are so thankful that BMS got us out in time, although it did mean a rather long layover of 18 hours in Sao Paulo (Brazil) Airport, but we did get home safely. So, as you can imagine, having to leave so urgently without saying goodbye to the churches in Iquitos and not being able to do our holiday weeks made it quite emotional. We are aware that other teams experienced the same things as us by flying home early.

On arrival to the UK - I was struck by how cold it is and everything was in English. I was quite pleased to see my Mum at the other end; we had been on a long journey and I was shattered! The roads were quite quiet when we left the airport and we stopped for tea at a service station and the restaurant was completely empty apart from us and then I realized the true effects of the virus!

Asides from all the drama that is going on at the moment, I hope this copy of Peru Diaries will entertain you. I shall wrap up the last two weeks we had in Nauta and shall reflect on so many favorite memories of Peru.

NAUTA

As you probably have guessed, I loved Nauta so much! The projects we got up to were so much fun, the people we met and lived with were amazing and I do have many fond memories from our time spent there.

For the first week in March we had our last week of English classes both for the adults and kid class we taught at Campamento. This was quite a sad moment for Erin and me as we really had built up relationships with the kids and started to really enjoy teaching them English. We taught them a quite a lot of material in the five weeks and they seemed to remember a fair bit of what we taught them, so we were chuffed with ourselves. Our last two sessions were on food, numbers, clothes and daily routine. We managed to get them remembering previous content we had taught them with fun games! Ladders were a hit – in pairs each pair sat feet to feet with each other all in a line like a ladder, we numbered them and when we called their number they had to run up to the ladder and back to their spot. I shall leave some photos of the kids and them getting stuck into some of the activities we provided.



Now going into the second week of March, there was another annual Training week. If you aren't aware, Training Weeks are put on at the centre every two months for minister training and we run a kids club for minister kids and the local community. We based this week on the theme of the Fruits of the spirit or in Spanish 'frutas del espiritu'. We had to put our thinking caps on for fruit themed crafts, but thankfully google is very helpful at giving us resources. We got the kids learning a song and were able to figure out fruits which would match all nine spirits and then worked out fruit themed crafts with little supplies. The kids seemed to really enjoy themselves, we had a good structure, had lots of games and our experience from the English classes really helped us with this and our Spanish had improved quite a fair bit too!

We obviously had planned for the last session to be 'templanza' or self-control, but this was cut short by having to leave. But we had planned to make pineapple crowns as the fruit for self-control is a pineapple as you must have self-control to eat a pineapple as you can't eat it straight away!



Frutas del espiritu



Saying our goodbyes

These were all the last memories I had in Peru, but I would love to share with you some of my favorite memories of my time in Peru.

FAVORITE MEMORIES

From living in Arequipa to learn Spanish to then being in the Jungle to carry out our work, I had the best six months possible and I seriously miss it so much but here is a rundown of my favorite moments of the past six months.

COLCA CANYON

Looking back at our earliest memories of Peru, when we were living in Arequipa. We decided to do a weekend tour of Colca Canyon. We had such a great time, we really got to take in Peruvian culture, and we went with our two friends from Germany who also went to the language school. I really enjoyed partaking in the traditional Peruvian food by eating alpaca and watching Peruvian dancing filled with good company. We saw lots of alpaca and llamas, visited the canyon, saw some condors and even went for a dip in some thermal baths.



Such a beautiful place, if you ever visit Peru - Colca Canyon must be on your list of one of the places to visit

AREQUIPAS FOOD

Arequipa had the most beautiful views and architecture, but one of the most important things for me in life is food and Arequipa delivered! We went to so many spots and it is something I seriously missed when we got to the Jungle. If you ever visit Arequipa, I seriously recommend checking out ChaqChao a famous chocolate café where they have the best hot chocolate, we had some amazing crepes from Le Petite Francaise, and Caprichos is the best place for Oreo Frappes. Beside the food, as a team we loved exploring and a quick food fix was always needed.



Moving onto our time in the jungle ...

COMMUNITY

In both our times in Nauta and Iquitos, I found the true meaning of community. Peru's culture is based around the power of being together and I found this when we lived in La Union in Nauta. You would often walk out the house and down the road to find groups of women playing volleyball or at the training weeks when the power of prayer and song were a key part of being together. I loved how kind Peruvian people are and although our Spanish was certainly interesting at times, they still listened and made us feel a part of their community. I think the key of this whole experience of being away was to learn and I learnt so much about not needing much but being present and being together with others as a community.

CHURCH LIFE

One of the biggest memories of being in Iquitos was the church life we encountered, from being surrounded by other missionaries who worked within Iquitos. Or, attending church services I found the importance of fellowship and family. We really fell in love with El Olivar church in which we helped in youth services. Although the youth was very small they were so grateful for our presence and really showed us deep love. This was a big highlight.



Sharing our testimonies at church



El Olivar Youth Group



El Olivar Kids service @ Christmas

CHOCOLATADA

One of my favorite memories while being in the jungle was during December. We went up river for a 'chocolatada' which is where we joined a local church who are supported by Jungle Masters (which the Amy and Joel McGee minister for). We handed out panettone and hot chocolate as a gesture of good will over Christmas also sharing the word of God to remote river villages. We also got to swim with pink dolphins, I really loved this part of being away I truly felt God with me and being around lovely Peruvian people was a bonus.



Chocolatata highlights!

I thought I would also drop in some holiday highlights, we got to see so many places while in Peru. But holiday certainly had its excitements.

RAINBOW MOUNTAIN



One of the biggest accomplishments of the whole six months for me was climbing rainbow mountain, it was so high up and very challenging, but we did it and by far one of the best moments while away. This also was a brilliant way of starting 2020 as we climbed it on New Year's Day.

MACHU PICCHU

I obviously must write about Machu Picchu, such a highlight such an incredible day and something I will never forget.



So, there we have it, my highlights of Peru obviously there are many more I could go on to write about. The six months I spent away were incredible - I learnt so much about myself, I learnt that God truly does provide, and God walks by my side always. I do miss Peru so very much, especially the people and I miss being around my team daily!

I think the verse from Psalms truly sums up my experience...

'I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful; I know that full well'

Psalms 139:14

As some of you may know my Dad has not been well. He is getting better every day, I am glad to be back home to support him and we can thank God that he is making progress. The recent news that the UK Tour is all cancelled has made times challenging. This is something I cannot change, and it is all within Gods plan, I do find it hard to get my head round, but I am remaining positive and trying to keep productive in these uncertain times.

For now, this is my last copy of Peru Diaries but if things do change, I may write another! I have found writing a great comfort to me while away and have always been thankful for people's prayers and support during my Peru Journey.

I have left some short prayer and thankful points which is regarding the current climate of the world at the moment.

PRAYER POINTS

- Please pray for our NHS, I think it's as simple as that. The people who work for the NHS, are really our heroes, currently our health is paramount, and the NHS are there for us in our time of need. Pray for strength of our workers and that God will give them calm minds and he will keep them safe.
- Please pray for positivity and productivity, many of us are stuck at home and with much so much time on our hands that gives us time to overthink and worry about the current situation. Let's pray that with this time we can use it as a source of rest, that we can be productive and positive.

THANKFUL POINTS

- I am so thankful for BMS! The work BMS did to get all action Teams out of country within a week was crazy, the fact they got us out within 48 hours was amazing and we did get home safely. The support they gave us as a team was awesome while being away.
- Thankful for the support of friends and family, within this time Facetime, social media and telephones are essential in keeping in contact with my family and friends. I obviously have not been able to visit my loved ones and church family. Not seeing everyone for six months is difficult and then not being able to see everyone now I am home is a bit of a pain, but it is for the greater good. I am so thankful for the use of our mobile phones which means I can contact people easily.

That's a wrap for this copy of Peru Diaries, thank you for bearing with me as this is emailed a little later than March but its been a sad one to write in a way.

Thank you for your patience and your prayers.

All the best and stay safe,

Sophie x