



Westnell

Nursery News

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We're on the Web!

See us at:

www.westnell.org.uk

Christmas Message

Feliz Navidad! A very Merry Christmas and a joyful 2008 to all our supporters. Many thanks to all who have sustained the two nurseries in Lima this year.

Want to send a Christmas present that will make a difference?

Why not send a Westnell Gift of Education - a Christmas wish for friends and family and a greater gift to the community served by the nursery schools in Lima, Peru? Simply fill out the enclosed form and we will send you a greetings card and voucher describing your gift for Westnell. You can then write your own message in the card and send it to your chosen recipient.

NEWS FROM PERU

The news from Peru is inevitably dominated in this edition by the earthquake of August 15th 2007. The quake measured 7.9 on the Richter scale and was one of the worst natural disasters to hit Peru in the last hundred years. Over 500 people died and 1,300 were injured while over 58,000 homes were destroyed in some of the poorest areas of the country. Although the quake's epicentre was 90 miles south of Lima, in the province of Ica, the effects were strongly felt in the capital where people took to the streets for fear that buildings would fall. Families by the coast were evacuated in case of a tidal wave, which fortunately did not materialise, but there were 480 significant aftershocks which left much of the country in chaos. NGOs and international organisations have claimed that provision of emergency aid plus reconstruction and restoration of basic services such as water and electricity has been very slow in the most seriously affected provinces. Poor communication and lack of State organisation have been blamed, as well

as lack of response from the private companies that deliver utility services in Peru.

Thankfully no Westnell families were injured, but the original nursery in Doscientas Millas suffered serious cracks to walls and supporting beams such that it was deemed unsafe for classes to run. We were fortunate that Terry Browne, Treasurer of the Anglo Peruvian Society (APS) visited the Westnell Nurseries in October and was able to report first hand on the situation.

'I visited both Lima Schools to see what damage had been suffered in the August earthquake and how they were operating classes currently. The Boca Negra school did not suffer major damage and classes continue as normal. The original school in 200 Millas which looks after some 100 pupils aged 3 to 6, all from a very deprived area, was badly damaged and is unsafe for use. Fortunately one of the teachers lives across a dirt square in front of the school and has for a small rent allowed the use of the first floor of her house as temporary schooling accommodation until the end of the present term in December.'



The facilities are cramped but the children and the teachers are cheerfully making the most of them and carrying on the excellent work of the school.'



westnell - Working with Children in Perú



NEWS FROM THE U.K.

Giving and fundraising:

We are delighted and overwhelmed (but not surprised) by the response of our members and personal contacts to the earthquake appeal. Westnell is described by Margarita as 'a family'. We know that the family helps out in a crisis and this is precisely how the UK Westnell family has responded to the need of its brothers and sisters in Peru. It has given us great strength to feel the warmth and generosity of people we knew we could count on. THANK YOU is not enough, but is what we can humbly offer.

We do not feel it appropriate to name individual donors in the newsletter, but as usual will describe the ingenuity of certain methods that have generated funds for both the earthquake and general purposes! Sue Bailey, Director of SJB Tennis, along with the Anglo Peruvian Soc kindly donated £1,500 to general funds from their annual tennis tournament. A Friends of Ducks event at the Fehrenbach/Partington's children's school raised £250. The Amice family in the US organised a change collection in their school – Rowan Woods, St Louis. Recycled collection boxes were given to each child and they raised over US\$500. James Cunningham has again excelled himself in sporting efforts and raised some £600 for a sponsored triathlon. Elaenor Moffatt raised over £600 at a coffee and piano fundraiser. Earlier in the year Accenture (UK) donated £2000, the Devon supporters ran a 'chilli and charla' evening and raised over £400, Our Lady's Catholic Junior School in Ellesmere Port and Brunswick School in Carlisle continued to support us.

A word from Diana Gower – our new correspondence secretary

"When I heard the news a few months ago that Debby and Dave were moving to Turkey for a couple of years, I happily agreed to be the correspondence address for Westnell in the UK, little knowing just how many people they know through this amazing charity! I naively thought I knew quite a bit about Westnell, having known Debby since university days, but there isn't a week that goes by without a letter or donation arriving on my doormat to teach me about the fantastic network of loyal Westnell supporters. And this is without even seeing the impact in Peru which is so much more inspiring. I am in awe of what they have achieved and continue to do on the children's behalf and feel very privileged to play a small part. I even have a new assistant in the form of my 14 year-old son, Alec, who is helping me as part of his Duke of Edinburgh award and we look forward to your letters!

Christmas Cards it is still not too late to place an order! Check the designs on our website.

CHEQUES TO WESTNELL

PLEASE MAKE SURE ALL CHEQUES ARE MADE OUT TO WESTNELL NURSERY FUND NOT 'WESTNELL NURSERY SOCIETY'.

Thanks to Chris Bowker of the Liverpool Spanish Circle for desktop publishing and to 'Antastic' of South Brent for printing.

The UK committee was in close contact with Margarita in Peru during the initial period of the quake. A local builder and an engineer - the team who constructed the second nursery in Bocanegra - were called in to give an opinion on the status of Doscientas Millas.

They recommended demolition of significant areas of the first and second floors including the front of the building, 2 beams and 5 columns and part of the roof. This was to be followed by reconstruction of front walls and interior walls, construction of reinforced columns and beams, repairs to roof, replastering of all walls and relaying of concrete floors. These were the basics.

A fundraising campaign was immediately launched in the UK to meet the costs of rebuilding the nursery to make it safe to use now, and more resistant to any potential earthquakes in the future. Our members' response was magnificent. By October we had raised enough funds to give the builders the go ahead. Work began in mid November and should be completed by March in time for the children to begin the new academic year in a strong, safe school. The team in Peru were aware that there would be additional costs to complete the building if sufficient funds were found– such as replacing doors and windows, rewiring certain areas and coating the concrete floors. The UK committee is currently in contact with some of our supporting organisations in the UK and if fund raising permits then we will also cover these additional costs.

We must pay tribute to Margarita and her staff who have endured this harrowing and difficult time, while keeping classes going. Terry Browne took this photo aptly demonstrating that the children are still happy and



learning well despite the disruption, He also gave the following gratifying account of their academic progress:

'The children in both schools are well dressed in their uniforms, polite and cheerful and above all full of enthusiasm. The teachers clearly bond with the children and work in a cheerful and happy environment

The academic level of the pupils of all ages is amazingly high; I would venture to say better than one would find at this age in a British school: a five year old who not only can read and write but also instantly answered with 64 my question of 8 times 8! I left feeling proud of being involved with an outstanding project for which all concerned deserve to be congratulated for creating an opportunity for a great start in life for over 300 children from very poor families, although from seeing and talking to them you would never guess this was the case, so well are they being looked after.'

Thank you Terry for such a vivid and immediate account. The APS has supported us extensively over the years and made a recent donation of £500 to the earthquake fund.