



Westnell

Nursery News

News from Peru

April 2009

Issue 92

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We're on the Web!

See us at:

www.westnell.org.uk

As reported in the last newsletter, the money we are able to send to Peru has dropped significantly over the last year as the value of the pound has fallen. In effect they have lost the value of a teacher's and assistant's salary. This means the team has had to increase fund raising activity in Peru. Despite being informed of a budget for 2009 that would imply reduced remittances in soles from the UK, Margarita decided to go ahead and admit 4 very full classes of 3 year olds for the new school year. 136 new children joined the existing classes combining to make a total of 345 children beginning classes in April 2009. Once again the staff opted to take a salary cut rather than reduce number of classes. They are now operating a very tight budget in which Westnell UK meets basic costs of salaries and social security, but other expenses have to be funded in Peru. Nursery parents have begun to make a contribution to their children's education (equivalent to around £1 per month per child).

Fortunately a very important link has been established with Yolanda Williams' family in Peru. Spearheaded by Jose Antonio Ferreyros, the support committee of business colleagues which formed last year has become active in promoting specific fund raising for Westnell in the Peruvian business community. A number of in-kind donations (such as accountancy, cleaning products and educational materials) have been obtained and financial donations have also been successfully solicited. The group proposes to help keep all classes open for 2009 and will work towards putting the financial status of the Society in Peru onto a more stable footing.

Westnell Families - the impact of the crisis

To increase our awareness of the impact of ongoing poverty and the current economic crisis on Westnell families, we have asked Margarita to include stories about nursery families in her reports. This is a helpful way to remind ourselves of why it is so important that we continue to work for Westnell, since however hard the global slump is affecting us all in Europe, it will always hit the world's poor much harder.

Clelia is 4 years old and in her second year at Westnell.

Her sister graduated from the nursery 2 years ago and now attends the French Peruvian primary. Her mother cares for the children and her sick mother who also lives with them in their modest dwelling in Doscientas Millas shanty town. Clelia's Dad collects and sells materials such as plastics, wood, metal and paper from various sources, including the

municipal rubbish tip which borders the shanty town. Since the crisis, prices for recycled material have dropped by 50% so he has to work twice as hard to make ends meet for the family. Giovanna aged 3, has just started at nursery and her father finds himself in the same situation. They have decided to sell sweets at the entrance to their home to try and make some income.

Margarita writes the following about Clelia's father :

'It is important to highlight that despite the adverse economic circumstances in which Clelia's father finds himself, he is always enthusiastic about his daughters' education and collaborates readily in all nursery activities. For the last 2 years he has played bass drum in the nursery band. He is a member of the parent committee and has taken this model of parental involvement forward into his older daughter's primary school where he is highly regarded by teachers and the Directors of the local education authority. He recognises, as do many Westnell parents that the nursery has been, and continues to be, a great help not just to his children, but also to him.'



This story poignantly shows the difference Westnell makes. Not only have these girls from very poor families been given an essential boost in early learning, but Clelia's father has become a respected leader within his community and a key figure in the education of his daughters. This is a great achievement in a society in which men often play a less active role in family life, frequently not acknowledging the importance of education for girls.



U.K NEWS

COMMITTEE NEWS

Eight months ago Westnell Peru received over 6 Peruvian Soles for every British Pound we sent to Peru. However due to the loss in confidence in sterling, they are now getting only 4.5 Soles to the Pound. As all our donations are here in the UK and all our expenditure is in Soles, this means that to continue to run the nurseries Westnell UK needs to send 25% more each month than budgeted. Over the previous few years the Pound/Sol exchange rate was steady and we had always set our budget in Pounds and transferred a fixed amount of sterling every month. The UK committee decided early this year that we had to guarantee Margarita a monthly transfer of Soles independent of exchange rate to allow her to calculate her budget for staff and classes. We have set this at 14,000 Soles per month and Ede, the treasurer, will ensure that we transfer this amount. This takes away the uncertainty for staff in Peru (although this is a reduced income for them, since a year ago they received S/15,000 and in 2007 around S/16,000) but creates a problem in the UK as no-one knows what will happen with exchange rates and therefore how much we need to raise – we are trying to hit a moving target! One certainty is that the Pound is unlikely to achieve previous levels against the Sol so we have to increase our fund raising to fill the gap!

FUND RAISING

Fortunately, our members continue to find ways to help out! We are always delighted with regular donations – these are vital to us, especially as we make major decisions this year about staffing, but one-off events or donations are also essential to meet our expenses in these difficult times. Many thanks to you all and please keep coming up with ideas to support us – whether through fund raising events or please consider increasing regular donations!

Christmas events

The annual music and Christmas card sale extravaganza in Edinburgh held by Eleanor Moffat, raised over £ 750 from card sales, raffle and donations. It must be in the genes as Eleanor's daughter, Suzanne, has cornered the Newcastle market and over £500 has come our way via Christmas card sales and donations. Deborah Hedger and Speech Therapists in South Devon Healthcare Trust kindly made Westnell donations in lieu of sharing Christmas gifts. Gift of Education donations this year raised a fantastic £800. Ryedale Secondary School in North Yorks donated over £260 as proceeds from their carol concert. The Quakers in Leicester, led by the Hewetts, raised £290 at their monthly meeting. Many thanks to all.

International arts students support Westnell

Secondary students at the British International School in Istanbul – where Debra Westlake's children are students – donated over £350 income from their creative arts production to Westnell. This is the second time that the Student Council has selected us as their charity.

In memoriam – Bertita Gallop

We were very touched to receive so many donations in memory of Bertita Gallop, a long time member of the Anglo Peruvian Society who died recently. Friends and relatives of Bertita gave in the region of £1000 to Westnell funds. Thank you so much.

Strictly Come Salsa-ing Debra Westlake and a group of Spanish-speaking expat friends in Istanbul organised a fund raising Latin fiesta for Westnell. This was one of our most successful fund raising events ever, raising a total of over £4000 (10,000 Turkish Lira). Income came from entrance to the event, which included free salsa classes and tapas and sangria for 150 people, plus a 'bad taste' auction of tacky household stuff that people donated – this alone raised over £750 (showing that drinking too much sangria can cause a 'good taste' failure!)



Support Westnell – win a beautiful quilt!



Now's your chance to be the lucky owner of this beautiful, hand crafted QUILLOW: a handy lap quilt that folds into itself to become a pillow. Made by a group of Stitchers whom I met when I was living in the United States a few years ago, we occasionally meet up again now we are back living in England and 18 months ago we were asked to bring along a blue piece of material which we then spent an enjoyable day cutting up into proscribed shapes and sizes in order to make a community quilt ready for raffle for Westnell. The lucky winner could be YOU!

Tickets cost £1 each and are available via Bmycharity online:

<https://www.bmycharity.com/V2/westnellquillowaffle>

or post to Diana Gower, Lostiford, Hillside, South Brent TQ10 9AY. Tel 01364 72616

The draw will be made on 18th July.

Buy your raffle ticket now!

Westnell cards for sale

A huge thank you to everyone who bought Westnell cards over Christmas and especially to those of you who sold them to friends, family, colleagues and at events. It's a great way to raise awareness about Westnell and we do get calls from people for more information as a result of them receiving your card! Most importantly, the profits raised (£2471) will keep one of the classes running for 6 months. You may have noticed there were just two new Christmas designs this year instead of the usual four. This was so that we could invest in the new photo cards of Peruvian children which are blank inside and can be used all year round! We managed to sell lots of old stock of Christmas cards to clear the decks for 2009 and still have plenty of photo cards which make a great gift, as well as handy notecards for personal use.



You can order photocards from the website or by ringing Gareth on 01751 430116.

