

BARB DECKER

MISSIONARY TO VENEZUELA

A Children of Promise International, Inc. Publication



Children of Promise International

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Since 1983

Dear Friends and Family,

I returned to the Sabanetta farm home of ABANSA- My Refuge in November of 2008. There are now 10 boys here, ages 8-16. Their main pas-time is to play soccer and anytime there is a moment free or that they don't have to work, they are playing soccer—rain or shine.



The Sabanetta farm is near Barcelona, on the northern coast of Venezuela. For region, culture or the hot, humid climate, there are more things here that remind me of my experiences in El Salvador rather than my experiences in the western border of Venezuela. Perhaps there is a geographical, latitudinal connection that could explain types of trees and plants that are like those that I remember growing in El Salvador.

In December, a month when we normally sit around and reminisce the past year, here at Sabanetta, we were frantically trying to clear a very weedy, overgrown field and get it ready for a rented tractor to

come and disk it and get it ready to plant.. Hereabouts almost all planting is done in the “waning” moon or in the “light” of the moon—for those who remember the seasons of the moon. The tractor didn't come until Dec 31, so being the “waxing” or “dark” moon; we had to wait two weeks for the full moon to start planting.



I am not much in agreement with their methods of planting and irrigation and have had more than a few confrontations with the farm worker. All confrontations aside, we are now all working together to de-weed the field. There are two basic methods: one is to pluck the weeds from around each corn plant and then cut the weeds between the



plants with machetes. One really gets to know their corn when working down at their level all day long. The second method is to cover each plant with half of a

2-liter plastic bottle and spray all around the plants with a weed killer. Both methods are tedious. We are also growing tomatoes, peppers and navy beans. The



boys have to help in the field at least one hour each day. They are in school for half of the day and depending on which half is for school, we work in the cool of the morning and in the cool of the afternoon (after 3 p.m.). We leave the hot part of the day to do other things.



Instead of sprinklers, the irrigation method used is to fill the canals between each row using a 5 hp electric motor to pump water from the river. Better than the Urenya Home, Sabanetta has a river that runs through the property, supplying both house and crops with water.



FROM THE DESK OF

BARB DECKER



February 2009

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December is the start of the dry season here and goes through to May. We have been having some very out of season, soaking rains—even up to an inch of water. The rain is good for the field grasses to grow to feed the animals here, mare, buffalo, and sheep. But it is also producing more work for us in the corn field.



Francisco and Daniel with "Tia" Barbara

I want to tell you about two boys at Sabanetta. Christian is 12. He has been in five institutional homes before ABANSA. He has run away from four of them. He ran away from here, too, but his grandmother brought him back. I tell him to stay in ABANSA, to learn all he can about everything and especially about the word of God. We had a competition to win a Bible and he memorized the required five verses of various Psalms to win. He has a lot of talents but also a lot of anger pent up inside. Please pray that he will accept Jesus as Savior and put all his hurts and injustices behind him to live completely alive in Jesus.

Anthony Jose Perdomo is 13. He should at least be in the third grade but can't read. He needs to be in school with the other boys. When he came to Sabanetta Dec. 16, 2008, he couldn't tell one letter from another. I, along with others, am spending time with him to help him distinguish letters as well as words. Though he doesn't really like to spend time reading from a reader, he does join us at devotions and reads

along with us 1-2 verses of that day's reading. He is learning to read by reading the Bible. I am reminded of Smith Wigglesworth, the great revivalist from England. He also had not learned to read until his wife helped him and he also learned to read by reading the Bible. Please pray that Anthony would continue in his efforts to learn to read and that he would be able to attend school in the next term.

I continue to thank my God for all of your efforts in prayer and in support for my time here in Venezuela, working with these boys and bringing them closer to the salvation in Jesus and the knowledge of the immeasurable love of God, through His Spirit. Please pray that each one of these boys—fighters and liars—would want to come to the cross and leave their burdens there. These are definitely a different bunch of boys than those in Urenya and I find myself being tested and stretched in some areas. Please pray that the mistakes that I make with these boys will never be irreversible. The hardest ones to love are the ones that need it most.

Evelio came and spent just a short time with me here before returning to the start of classes at Pamplona University, Colombia. He was a great help, because he explained to the boys the importance of tending the corn. He also cut and fashioned a handle for the axe, teaching the art to at least one boy. There are two victories for the patience in shaving an axe handle: to get the head to go on one end, and then to whittle the handle down so that the axe head goes down to the other end.



To Him who sits on the throne, and unto the Lamb, be glory and honor and wisdom and power forever. (Rev. 6:13b)

Barb