

WEB History Pages

2020

Feb:

We finally received our visas so that we could return to Ecuador after a long absence (we last left Ecuador in October 2019).

The first order of business was to have a special dinner meeting with the whole clinic/water staff as well as some members of the Ecuador foundation we support (Fundación el Buen Samaritano) (FBS). The reason for the staff meeting was to acknowledge their efforts and to explain changes that were to be made in the way we operate.



Clinic/Water Staff and Fundación Buen Samaritano Board of Directors



**Elizabeth and Dra. Karolina
(Orthodontist)**



**Elizabeth and Angelita
(Medical Assistant)**



**Dolores and Elizabeth
(Office Manager)**



**Jose and Richard
(Water Technician Supervisor)**



Elizabeth and Dra. Silvia (Medical Director)

Mar:

Elizabeth had to return home to help with our daughter Anna's baby Cora. But Richard stayed behind and was able to attend the high school graduation of two of our staff members – Jose and Angelita. Jose had to quit school in the ninth grade to support his family as his father abandoned the family. Angelita accomplished her life-long dream by finally obtaining her certificate at the age of sixty-five.



Angelita with her husband and son



Jose's wife, mother, and daughter

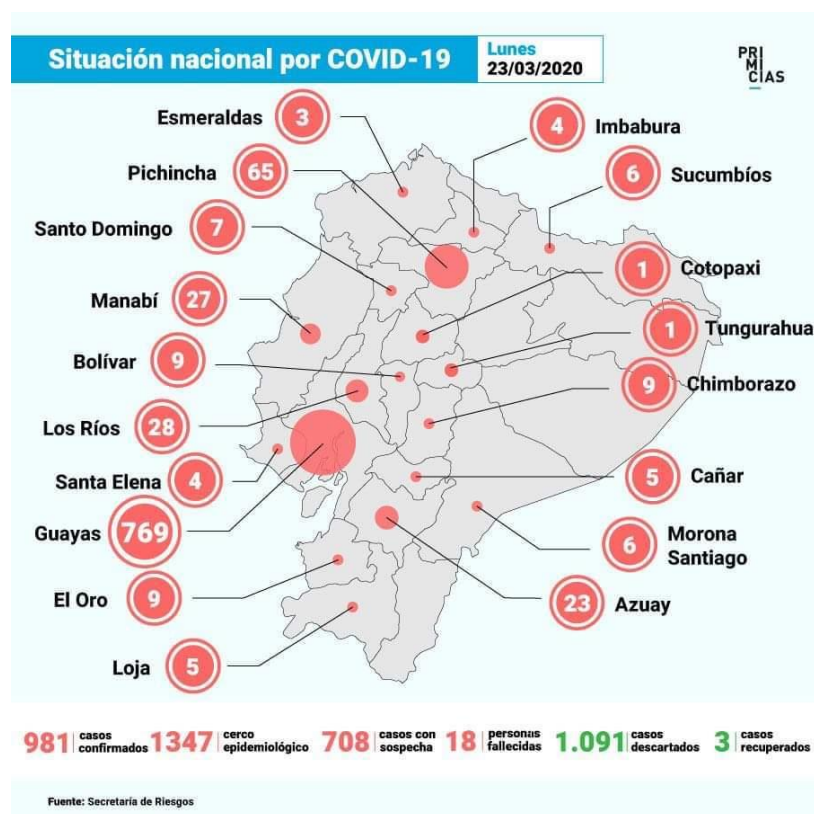
Floron 8:

Before leaving, these snapshots were taken of the newly reconstructed church. A Sunday School room was added to the Floron 8 church. After last summer's Vacation Bible School by Colorado Springs Dr. Heather Sharp, daughter Lexi and friend, Kirsten went home and raised funds for this project which was destroyed in the earthquake 3 years ago.



Church in Floron 8 – led by Pastor Meza and his wife Bella

Mar 26th – Bags were packed but:



Our water team along with Pastor Mesa knew the importance of prayer as they are able to continue producing vitally needed pure water to the community.



Masks:

Masks are important, even homemade masks. They do not protect one from getting the Covid virus, but it does protect others from getting whatever that person may have.



Pastor Alexi produced these at home.

Apr:

In Ecuador, the cost of Covid-19 deaths is high. Thankfully, our clinic staff and the surrounding community is currently safe, but lack of food is paramount. The clinic closed for several reasons but one being government regulations. However, the water production is going full force. Our day guard, night guard and clinic custodian are assisting the four water technicians with production and deliveries.

A few weeks ago, the government locked down the citizens' rights to be on the street (walking or driving) from 2pm till 5am the next morning. The government also said that no one could be out at all on Saturdays or Sundays – which meant that no one could grocery shop on the weekends – basically only mornings Monday thru Friday.

May:

It was our understanding then that Covid-19 had not invaded Floron. . . but, it has. To compound the viral attack, Dengue (mosquito born disease) is also a major issue in Floron. In fact, a 50-year-old lady – Felipe – who Elizabeth knew for the last twenty-two years succumbed to what they think was Dengue.

Dra. Silvia took many calls from patients. Most patients were either under 10 years or over 50 years. Floron (where we reside) was one of two areas in Portoviejo that had the highest concentration of Covid-19. A 71-year-old lady tested positive. Five others in her home could not be tested because they did not have the money to pay for the test. Reports from impoverished areas might have a much higher incidence if all were tested.

Dra. Mayra Quijije, the water production Chemical Engineer, succumbed to Covid-19. She was a mother of two young boys.



Things seemed a little topsy-turvy, but Fabricio (our custodian/law student) kept the grounds looking nice as the garbage bags were evidence that the bushes had been trimmed.

Jul:

Thanks went out to all that supported our mid-year fundraising letter. Only two per year are sent out – July and December.

Twelve-year-old Isabela took it upon herself to fundraise and brought in \$853. She also is quite the artist and designed the invitations in Evite and also our poster for the Colonna's Pizza and Pasta Restaurant fundraiser.



Isabela with brother Owen giving moral support.

The clinic reopened June 23 after Dra. Silvia held an in-service with all staff to introduce Covid - 19 biosecurity protocol for staff and patients. The clinic waiting room was no longer open to patients. . . Patients had to make an appointment and prior to entering the clinic they are sprayed with ozone and given a gown.

Richard and Elizabeth were detained from two attempts to return to Ecuador. Bags had been packed for months! The first attempt in June was halted by Ecuador closing their borders to foreigners; and plans for July were halted after both Ecuadorian national airlines cancelled all flights and an 8-hour trip by car was impossible with restrictions going from province to province and in some cases city to city.

Celebrating Cindy:



Lastly, final finishing touches to our 'renovated' web site were complete. . . . All because of Board Member Cindy Regan took great pains and endless hours (actually months) with this major project. If she were to send us a bill, we would be out of business!

Sept:

Left for Quito to retrieve the remainder of our fundraiser items. Richard went on to Floron to inspect the mini water plant, deliver medical supplies, repair our aging car with new headlights and lend support to the four water technicians.

Unfortunately, Avianca Airlines publicized flights from Quito to Manta but did not fly as advertised. Thus, Richard had to be driven to Floron (7 – 8-hour drive) from Quito.

The Covid virus in Portoviejo increased severely and the loosened hours of home quarantine returned to the original 5am to 2pm one could be out of Their home. This was strict; police came to Floron to enforce these times to abusers. A patient that Dra. Silvia examined, was sent straight to the hospital, and died the next day. . . followed by Dra. Silvia becoming ill. She was tested and though the test was negative she did experience Fibromyalgia.

All fundraisers except one had been cancelled. A 'virtual fundraiser' in October on a website that displayed all Ecuadorian items.

Oct:

Our Floron church held outside services on Sunday morning. The hot sun forces some to seek refuge under the trees. With no Sunday School for the children the service only lasted 2 hours instead of the usual two ½.





No organ but a keyboard



Pastor Gruezo preaching

Richard did have time to have a short visit with a couple of families dear to our hearts.



Magy, Nathan, Emily,
Meggy, Yandry



Elizabeth, Jose, Merly, Carlos
(husband Daniel not available)

Masks were a priority but face shields in short supply. Below our medical staff proudly displays their everyday costumes.



Dra. Silvia – Medical Director



Angelita – medical assistant



Dra. Karolina – dentist



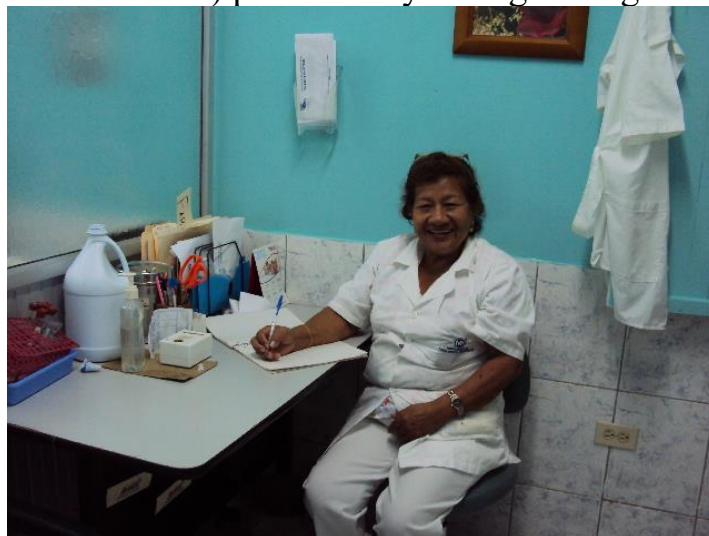
Eliana – accountant subbing for Dolores



Dolores – Admin specialist

She was removed from working with patients as she found out that she was pregnant. Her recent marriage to Carlos (previously on the water staff until he joined the police force) is the wedding we missed by not being able to travel back to Ecuador last March.

A day before Richard's departure for Quito our beloved medical assistant Angelita (that we fondly call our 'nurse') passed away during the night.



Dec:

Richard's trip was again difficult with another loss. Our beloved Pastor Gruezo at the church next to the clinic; at the age of 53 he succumbed to a heart attack. He was survived by his wife, Jacqueline, five children (three were still in the home) and five grandchildren.



(Top R) Pastor Gruezo brings a friendly iguana to show the unbelieving staff.
(Top L) Pastor Gruezo and beloved wife, Jacqueline.
(Bottom L) Pastor Gruezo and family at his 50th birthday.