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Putting down roots in Bolivia



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BOLIVIA

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Unpacking, meeting people, and learning my way around Santa Cruz have been my first priorities since arriving in the big city! I've been putting down some roots and making my home here. With the help of my colleagues J.D., Rhonda as well as my housemates, I feel like I'm getting more familiar as the days go on. Settling into a new culture and ministry is challenging, chaotic, exciting, and overwhelming. There is so much to learn! This is why taking time to adjust, learning my whereabouts, building relationships with Bolivians and fellow missionaries are so important for long term sustainable ministry.

May 24th marks one month of living in Santa Cruz, Bolivia. I can't believe that it's already been a month! These weeks have been filled with meetings with my immigration lawyer, purchasing things for my home, building relationships with my three housemates and other missionaries, and attending a few meetings with pastors in Santa Cruz to introduce myself.

Thank you for constantly praying for me during this transition and giving generously so I can be salt and light in Bolivia and empower Bolivians to do likewise. I appreciate your ongoing prayers and recurring financial partnership that enables me to stay and do the ministry that God has called me to do. I am here because of you!

So deeply do we care for you that we are determined to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you have become very dear to us. 1 Thessalonians 2:8

Cultural discoveries:

1. Siestas are a real thing. Many businesses are closed between 1-3pm.
2. Bolivians stamp everything! Bills, receipts, receipts for your fast food, and legal documents.
3. Greeting each other depends on the region or indigenous group. For example, in Santa Cruz it's one kiss on the right cheek (not really on the cheek). In Cochabamba it's sometimes a handshake then a kiss, but if you're greeting a Quechua then it could be one kiss on their right cheek then you back away tap your left hand on their right shoulder (almost like a hug) then kiss again. Then, there is the two kisses on each cheek, first the right and then the left. It has been quite the learning experience for sure!
4. The pace of life is a lot different here. It's teaching me to slow down and take it all in.
5. Buses don't have specific bus stops. If you see a bus and you want on, then you just wave them down.
6. The traffic here looks like a chaotic dance. The nice painted lines for lanes are just suggestions. In traffic, buses, taxis, cars, and motorcycles make their own lanes. Surprisingly there aren't that many accidents.

Praises and prayers:



Around the table at a leaders meeting in Cochabamba

- Praise God for opportunity in my first month to fly to Cochabamba and share a meal with fellow leaders of House of Hope. I shared my story and enjoyed getting to know one another at our monthly leaders meeting. **Pray that my relationship with these leaders will grow and become a beautiful partnership serving God through serving at-risk children and mothers together!**
- Thankful to have participated in my first mobile medical clinic with House of Hope team of doctors. **Pray for this ministry and all the doctors who serve at our partner ministry sites. Pray for the hearts of the doctors that they will see Jesus in the eyes of the children and women they are serving and vice versa.**
- Thankful to have been welcomed into the missionary community here in Santa Cruz with open arms. **Pray for all the missionaries and the families who serve in different capacities.**
- Praises! I found a church community and a small group of Bolivian women my age to get plugged into. **Pray that this will be a great time of spiritual vitality as well as language development.**

- Pray for that my immigration process for my three year temporary residency visa will go quickly and smoothly.
- Pray for my health as my body adjusts to climate, altitude change in Cochabamba, and food.
- Pray that I will continue to be a sponge by taking in all the cultural norms, ministry visions, language, etc.
- Pray for travel safety to Cochabamba in June and July.



House of Hope Mobile Medical team with Pastor and volunteer from the church

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Sarah in front of the Cathedral of Santa Cruz de la Sierra

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