



The Roberts'



Brazil Update

January 2010

Dear Friends,

A very warm welcome to this month's update. We hope that you are all well and are doing fine. A year has now passed since Rose and I travelled to the UK to go through selection and be married - a lot has happened this year! It's interesting to remember where we were this time last year and the places that we visited. We hope it's not too long before we see you all again - enjoy the update!



Rose and I at a water park with the boys

Urgent Prayer

Sorry to start things off on a downer but we've just been told of the murder of one of our old boys - Rafael. We don't know many details at the moment, one of our current boys who was at home for the weekend called us on Sunday to tell that Rafael had been shot and killed in the rubbish dump. Rafael spent a year or so in the project when he was 14 in 2004/5 and came to us from a very difficult family where he was beginning to become involved with the gangs. He got on really well in the project and became a Christian, but eventually chose to and slid back into gang life. When I last saw him before

Christmas, now 17 and one of the gang leaders on the favela, he told me that he had become a 'matador' or 'killer' and would kill those who had got into debt with the gangs. He also told me that he wanted to leave this life behind and that he hadn't forgotten what he had learnt at the project.



4 year old photo of me and Rafael

It seems that he was shot by a rival gang and that now means that two of our boys have been killed in the past year, Jonathan and Rafael.

Please pray for Rafael's family and for all the boys and ex boys of the project. It's times like these when we reflect on why we're here and doing what we do. We know that without this project many of our current boys could end up like Jonathan and Rafael.... We also know that we need to improve our work so that we can support

our current and ex boys better so that when they do leave they never have to return to gang life. Pray for wisdom, guidance and resources as we seek to do that. That's the motivation to keep going.



With the boys on a trip to Old Recife

Carnival

Carnival has begun in Brazil - an amazing colourful samba-filled week long street party which usually lasts for the whole month of February. Unfortunately, if you investigate beyond the colourful parades carnival has a very different meaning and deep roots in spiritualism. In the past it was created to 'counter act' the effects of Lent, when the traditional Catholics gave up all the 'bad' things that they did for the 40 days of Lent. So, Carnival was created and is celebrated the week before Lent so you can get all these 'bad' things out of your system. So, nowadays, Carnival is an excuse for extreme drunkenness, sexual debauchery, drug taking, prostitution and devil worship. A crowd of around a few million are expected to descend on the streets of Olinda and Recife where the slogan for Carnival is 'Anything Goes' ... and that is really taken literally. Local gangs usually use Carnival time to get rid of those they don't like with the Police normally turning a blind eye.

We used to be involved in street evangelism during Carnival but now run a camp so we can take the youth etc out to the farm to get away from the temptations and effects of Carnival.

Only In Brazil (This Country!)

There are some wonderful cultural differences between England and Brazil, each month I try to highlight one which has particularly humoured me or has even made me exclaim 'this country!'

This month it is **Stray Animals** on the streets. It's very common to see stray animals on the streets of Brazil. On the street where we live we have a pack of street dogs that tend to roam the streets. Apart from dogs it's not uncommon to see stray cats and the odd horse loose. But something which made me smile this week was the appearance of two street donkeys who have set up residence on our street feeding from the dustbins. This Country.



A days fishing

Brazil Life

Things are going well with Rose and I. Rose, on a whim, applied to take the entrance exams to one of Recife's best private universities, she had no time to study as the exam was only a few days away and so we weren't really holding out much hope. The great news is that she passed and has been accepted to do a degree in Psychology! The bigger shock was learning when lectures begin... if you think 9am lectures are hard try 7.30am lectures! Looks like Rose will get to know the 'Early Bird' very well during her degree. I hope that this degree will open more doors for Rose and we could even do with her help in the project - especially in Child and Family Psychology!

Rose has also enrolled in Driving School and is coming to the end of 2 weeks compulsory Driving

Theory and had to pass a Psychological exam before being allowed to start the practical classes!

We are trying hard to close a deal on a new apartment as our current deal is about to expire. We've found a nice place just 5 mins down the coast, with added security, another room and at a good price. Hopefully we should find out tomorrow whether we've been successful or not.



The catch of the day...

We have also launched a **new website** which explains a bit about us, our work, the project etc... Do check it out and pass it on to others who are interested in our work - www.andyandrose.yolasite.com

The Project

January has been an extremely busy month in the project as all the boys have been off school and two staff members had 2 weeks holiday. Thankfully, we still had some money left over in the Christmas Fund and were able to use it to put on some trips for the boys to get them out of the project for a while. I was able to call up a few places, explain who we are etc, and managed to get some great discounts to various places. This month we've been on trips to a few different beaches, the cinema (the look on the guy's face

when I asked for 20 bags of popcorn), Old Recife, a Water Park, the farm for a few days and a private Fishing/Holiday Centre.

It's been great to take the boys on these trips, many of them had never been to the cinema or to a water park before. We're extremely thankful to all of you who generously donated to the Christmas Fund - it really exceeded our expectations and also allowed us to put on some great trips during the holidays!



Fishing has been the 'flavour' of the past few months and so it was great to take the boys for a day to some private fishing lakes which are packed full of massive fish. Our make shift rods weren't good enough to catch the real monsters but it was funny to see the boys running for their lives as they caught a glimpse of some of these whoppers just under the surface. The boys managed to catch a good deal of fish and the restaurant cooked them for us to eat. I, on the other hand, didn't catch a thing.

The boys return to school this week, although they won't be there for long until they break up for carnival.

SAMS and CMS Merger

Some of you may be aware that SAMS and CMS are merging and from Feb 1st shall formally become a new joint entity under the name of CMS. I haven't quite got my head around everything but I presume that now makes Rose and I CMS Mission Partners from now on. We look forward to an exciting 'global' mission society.

Prayer Points

1. Pray for the family of Rafael and for all the boys in the project. For protection and guidance in their lives.
2. Help Rose and I as we learn to live and work together. Let the Lord guide us in what he has for us to do.
3. Pray for the project, that we might pull together and improve what we do. Bring some much needed organization to the project.
4. Please pray for the financial situation of the project. That more regular monthly income will be committed to the project so that we can cover our running costs and look to expand out work.
5. Pray for SAMS and CMS as they formally merge. Pray that the process runs smoothly and that the Lord may bless this new mission entity.

Thanks again guys for all the prayer and support that you are showing us and the project.

Please do keep in touch with how you're doing and what you're up to.

Prayers.

Andy and Rose ☺

Contact Details and Useful Info

I thought it might be worth adding these details on the end... they might come in useful!

Project Address –

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Phone Numbers –

You can call me for 2p/min from an English landline using the following number 08444621621 then just dial one of the following numbers.

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My Cell – 00558191962959
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Bank Details

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