

A CHRISTIAN SCIENCE NURSING CLASS IN ARGENTINA

In the October **Focus** we told you about the Fern Lodge trip in January to South America to assist with Christian Science nursing education and to support a budding facility in Argentina. We interviewed 15 individuals in Argentina and Brazil, and were impressed and inspired by the sincere desire each one had to serve mankind. When we returned home, we prayed for divine Love's direction. In the past, facilities have brought individuals to the U.S. to attend Christian Science nursing classes here. But we were interested in how to assist Christian Scientists to learn near their own homes.

Stella Ibarra, a Christian Science practitioner and the chair of El Arca, an organization in Argentina dedicated to maintaining a Christian Science nursing facility there, visited Fern Lodge in March to learn how a facility operates. We contacted Spanish-speaking Christian Science nurses about the idea of teaching a class in Buenos Aires, but none could leave their jobs or families for one month. But Sharon heard the call. She says, "God spoke to me quite loudly after I asked who would teach this dear group of people: 'You will.' I protested, but the answer kept coming that it was mine to do. I was excited and concerned simultaneously, —excited because my heart was full of love for the individuals I had met in January and yearned to help them, but concerned that my Spanish was not fluent and that I might not be able to communicate well enough."

Two dynamic women we interviewed in Argentina, Marion and Dolores, spoke English fairly well. We made sure they could attend this class! In all, there were ten students in an international class. There were six students from four different cities in Argentina, one student from Columbia, another from Peru, and two from Chile. It was no small thing for these individuals to give up their salaries or use their entire year's vacation just to attend this class, which included a lawyer, a veterinarian, a hospital social worker, a former medical nurse, a Phys Ed teacher, a leadership consultant, a dentist, a high school curriculum assistant, a retired salesman, and a housewife.

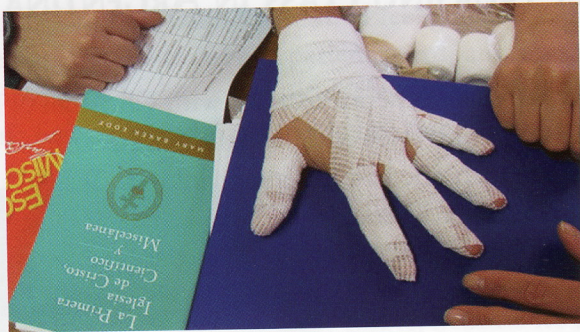
The Saturday of the first week, the class attended a viewing of the Longyear video, *The Onward and Upward Chain*, with Spanish subtitles. "Los Pioneros"—The Pioneers—became the theme for the class. The students realized that they were pioneers for South American Christian Scientists, and that Sharon was also a pioneer for having the vision, love, and courage to undertake this project.

The first rule of the class was: "Habla mas lento"—speak more slowly. Most of the time Sharon could understand the ideas being conveyed. There were a few precious moments when she would ask what had been said, and the translator would begin telling her very slowly—in Spanish! She would have to say, "En Inglés, por favor" (in English, please). But Sharon says, "I always understood their metaphysics and whenever they spoke with deep conviction. How they love Christian Science and Mary Baker Eddy! This love was the very fiber of their being."



Back, L to R: Maria Teresa Fuentes Bórquez; Stella Ibarra, CS; Isidro Alzamora; Lucas Vidal; Juan Carlos Jabłoński, Dolores Caride, Rubén Dario de la Sota. Front, L to R: Sandra Luzio, Marion Frusteri; Sharon Strong; Norma Cordero. In front, Shirley Gonzalez-Rubio.

FERN LODGE PROVIDES SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGEMENT



The class explored the basis for Christian Science nursing: from its Christian roots to its practice today. They loved discovering the metaphysical basis for all the activities and skills of a Christian Science nurse. All that we normally consider to be the basics of Christian Science nursing skills were learned easily, including mobility assistance, bed care, positioning, cleansing and bandaging, food preparation and modification, mental needs, and, of course, ethics. Sharon relates that she, "loved watching them reason through the 'whys' of certain procedures. "Manos suaves" (soft hands) was a key element of each skill. The entire approach was

considering what is appropriate care for a Christian Scientist to give to another Christian Scientist. The students stayed up until midnight or later each night practicing their skills, helping and correcting each another with great laughter. It was precious to witness their dedication and enthusiasm.

The Sunday of the fourth week, the class traveled to the branch church in Quilmes, an hour's drive from Buenos Aires, to present a two-hour care workshop. The students instructed the church members in ways to give simple Christian assistance, all based on the simplicity of caring for one another from Biblical examples.



Dolores and Rubén

Remarks made after the meeting told that those two hours changed some members' lives dramatically, and made them feel closer to each other as a church. They loved seeing the practicality of divine Love meeting the human need, and to see that it didn't need to feel awkward.

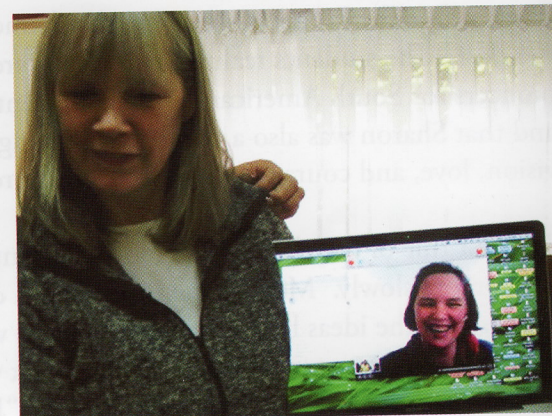
The last week of class, a recital of selected skills was held for the Christian Science public in a three-hour presentation at El Arca. As students performed skills, they described the qualities associated with them. The attendees commented on how gentle and loving the nurses were, how organized, graceful, confident and joyous.

Many individuals helped to make this class successful. Marion and Dolores were Sharon's translators in class, and Fabián Smara, C.S., of El Bolsón, translated several articles into Spanish for class use. Eliane Fidalgo, a most remarkable and precious woman from Rio de Janeiro, translated many of Sharon's modified texts into Spanish, and gave countless, selfless hours to our project. And Stella Ibarra, CS, the president of the El Arca board, made sure we had food to cook throughout the week and drove us to church, sometimes in two trips.

Thanks to the previous visits to Argentina and Peru by Carlos Ley, individuals interested in Christian Science nursing identified themselves. Their yearning hearts and prayers helped form this class.



Sandra



Sharon, with Eliane on the laptop via SKYPE

GRATITUDE FOR OUR STAFF — FROM GEORGE STRONG, ADMININSTRATOR

The **FERN LODGE FOCUS** and our website, <http://fernlodge.org>, give us an opportunity to share with you insights into our work in the healing ministry of Christian Science nursing. In our last issue, some of the Christian Science nurses on our staff told what brought them into Christian Science nursing. Now we will let some of the workers in other departments tell you about what Fern Lodge means to them.



Rosa Minchaca

A short while ago I was looking out the window at the time when a couple of our staff members were going to their cars to leave work for the day. She was off-duty after working a full shift, but as I watched, Rosa Minchaca, Housekeeping Manager, stopped to speak with a patient on the patio. They talked a while, with smiles on their faces, and then Rosa called over one of our Christian Science nurses, who also was headed for her car to go home. That nurse came and spent several minutes with the patient, giving needed assistance. Then the nurse went, with a smile on her face, to her car and home to her family. It was a simple scene, one that is repeated all over the world, for the simple reason that God's children express God's love. But that scene illustrated to me one of the things I love about Fern Lodge: for the dedicated workers at Fern Lodge, loving-kindness in service to those who come to us for care is more important than just doing a job.

At Fern Lodge we always are working to fulfill our purpose. Our purpose is to heal, so you can imagine how happy I was with the following conversation. Our bookkeeper, Clovese Hughes, is a long-time Christian Scientist who has been with us almost four years. I asked her, "What did you think of Fern Lodge before you came to work here?" She answered almost immediately, "I thought of Fern Lodge as a place of healing." Clovese was, and is, right.



Clovese Hughes

A patient told us of her recent experience. She was praying for Fern Lodge, and her son called and said that he wasn't feeling well. He had an instantaneous healing during the telephone call. Our purpose is to heal! Patients come to Fern Lodge for Christian Science healing, and to practice that healing, for others as well as for themselves.

The Fern Lodge staff is dedicated to helping fulfill our healing purpose. Recently we asked some of our staff members, "What would you like our readers to know about Fern Lodge?" Here are some of their answers:



Hilda Palomares

Hilda Palomares, Cook, said, "It's a Christian place where everybody cares about the patient. This is a nice place to work. I am not a Christian Scientist, but I can see their

healings. If I see someone having a challenging time, I pray and ask God to heal them. I get happy to see them healed."

Another Cook, Anna Sunraingross, told us, "To me, Fern Lodge is a special place where family, friends, and people from around the world have found each other and are helping one another."



Anna Sunraingross

IN BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINA

heavenly homesick or hungry hearts are calling on me for help, and I am helping them. ...Faithfully and more than ever persistently, you are now, through the providence of God, called to do your part wisely and to let your faith be known by your works. All that we ask of any people is to judge our doctrine by its fruits," *Miscellany* 127. Mankind is calling on us for help. Outside North America and Europe there are no places for Christian Scientists to resort to in times of physical need. There are just a few Christian Science nurses listed in *The Christian Science Journal* and the *Herald of Christian Science* for all of South America. We take for granted the Christian Science nurses who are in our communities and the care facilities that are within a few hours of our homes. In other countries, Christian Scientists who need nursing regularly are taken to medical hospitals and nursing homes. There are no other options.

At this moment in the history of Christian Science, we are seeing new people and cultures step forward to establish Christian Science nursing in their own society. Many of these pioneers have different cultural customs and procedures than the

Western ones we are used to, but the basics are always the same: they are based on The Bible, Science and Health and Mary Baker Eddy's other writings. Mrs. Eddy says, "Love is impartial and universal in its adaptations and bestowals." Love is universal and adaptable and much like Paul, who



The Class and some church members in Quilmes

spread the good news (gospel) of Christianity throughout the Eastern world, these pioneers are spreading the good news of Christian Science nursing and making it applicable to their culture and society. We have an opportunity—and even a duty—to aid these pioneers who are striving to take this message of love to their community.



You can read a more thorough report and see many more photos of the Christian Science nursing class in Buenos Aires on our web site, <http://fern lodge.org>. We are grateful to our sister facility, Le Verger in Switzerland, for their current work teaching Christian Science nursing courses in Brazil, and we hope to be able soon to give you more information about their activities.

Save this date — Saturday, January 22, 2011

Fern Lodge will present a Bible Workshop on the topic, ***"The Divine Economy."***

This workshop will be held in cooperation with the new northern California committee of The Principle Foundation. Look for a flyer announcing the time and location.

MORE NOTES FROM THE STAFF

Leticia Leon, in Laundry, said, "I feel good here. I love the patients. Everybody loves the patients. Sometimes a patient is sad, and I go and talk to them and then they feel happy. Fern Lodge is beautiful, clean and quiet. Sometimes when I come to work I don't feel too good and I feel better once I am here."



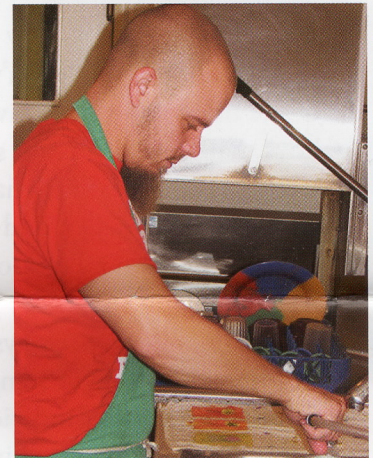
Leticia Leon



Allison Cook

Allison Cook, Head of the Kitchen Department, grew up going to Sunday School at the Hayward Christian Science church. She told us, "It feels like coming home, because it's a family of Christian Scientists and I am discovering new connections all the time. Parents of friends come here and the friends can be reassured that their loved ones will be cared for with love. It really means a lot to me to work in a place that is a nurturing environment. It has a positive impact on my life. I am grateful for the opportunities for growth and nurturing; and the fact that people are praying is comforting. People are working for the higher good at Fern Lodge, not for self-serving, manipulative reasons."

—And Jordan Bunting, Cook, told us, "Fern Lodge is a blooming garden of spirituality and love. We are constantly reminded of how beautiful the world can be through the inspirational landscape and the eyes of caring employees. The kindness and the compassion are visible in the food, the activities and the consistency that our patients experience. I've met some of my closest friends and some of the greatest people in my last three years of employment. This wonderful place has left me with some great memories and timeless experiences. I wouldn't trade it for anything in the world."



Jordan Bunting

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