



Jefferson



Ketelin



Sabrina



Raissa

Four of the loveliest and most responsible of 18 year olds have just bade farewell to Betel. They certainly made the most of their opportunities there, achieving high grades in their secondary school studies, and have contributed positively to Betel life in all sorts of ways including Sunday worship. After her experience of caring for Ana's two little boys **Sabrina** will one day make an excellent home-maker. **Raissa** recently deputised for Elza at the school during her maternity leave and wants to read medicine at Uni. **Jefferson** completed an advanced computer course and trained other kids in IT as well as learning to read his English Bible and passing his driving test. In January he applied to join the airforce. **Ketelin** is a keen sportswoman with an ambition to become a professional footballer.

Two long-standing loyal friends of Betel, Val Francis and Betty Ferguson, have recently died or, as William Booth would have said, 'been promoted to glory'. In 2000 during Ernesto's first UK tour Val travelled all the way from her Cornish home to join in our special event at Wimborne. Way back in the 1980s Betty along with her husband Jim 'adopted' two Betel teenagers - Marcos and Francisco - praying faithfully for them and funding Marcos' monthly insulin supply which was his lifeline until his death in 2001 at the age of 33.

Chris, Paul, Margaret and I will be spending time at Betel during April. We fly out on **Friday March 30** so if you would like us to take greetings cards to your friends there make sure you send them well before this deadline. We hope we'll bring back answers to some of the questions you've been asking. Meanwhile, once again we commend our friends at Betel for your prayers, especially for **Ernesto & Josefina** whose energy levels are not as strong as when they were younger!

Further information available from
Andrew Alford, 35a Telston Lane, Otford, Kent TN14 5NH
01959 523893 andrewalford@onetel.com
www.betelchildrenshome.org.uk



Since we last wrote

In September RENAS, the National Evangelical Network for Social Action, held its annual conference in Luziania in Goias. Betel had linked up with this organisation sending 2 reps to the 2009 conference in Rio and also the following year in Recife. As it was so local to them this year 6 staff members were able to attend. Its theme was 'Integral Mission: political participation and social justice. Brazil without poverty – what's the role of the church?' The programme included biblical teaching, informative lectures and a variety of workshops. Maciel was impressed by the seriousness shown by the speakers in their devotion to God and the importance they attached to the Christian vision of the institutions within which they worked. **Probably the most valuable experience for them was to meet members of other Evangelical organisations from all over Brazil working in the social area as they seldom have the opportunity to network like this.**

Ingela & Richard Larsson paid their 3 monthly visit **in October** to check on the progress of the **H4O horse project**. They were pleased by the way Reginaldo is developing into a responsible leader, training younger lads in the mornings and the more experienced in the afternoons. Ingela writes *"In the advanced group there are nine boys (14-17yrs). The level of skill they have acquired with horses over the last 18 months is outstanding. At the end of the month four of them, plus Reginaldo, were presented with a certificate for passing the H-Factor Horse Handling Foundation Level. To pass they are not only required to show fluency in the 30 tasks, but they must also demonstrate the qualities of a horseman; such as kindness, patience, being a team player, having a good attitude ... Even more special than to see their improving horsemanship skills, is to see the change happening in their hearts. Over the years we have learned that giving the underprivileged skills for a future is not enough. They need to catch a vision for their lives and become motivated."*

Ingela & Richard are currently at Betel for February & March and are expecting to be joined by a number of teams.

December marks the **end of the academic year** in Brazil. 9 youngsters completed their nine year basic education which is very good news. No doubt they celebrated with a lively party at which Brazilians excel. **It was good to see Fabricio among them whom readers were introduced to in the September newsletter.** In addition two 18 year olds, Jefferson and Sabrina, completed their secondary school studies to coincide with the end of their time at Betel.

**At present there are 4 residential units for 90 children & young people
in addition to the home for adults with special needs**



El Shaddai
for teenage boys
with **Antonio**



Principe da Paz
for boys & girls
with **Marleide & Ronaldo**



Filadelfia
for girls & boys
with **Sonia**



Lirio dos Vales
for boys & girls
with **Davina & Iraja**



Filhos do Betel
for adults with special needs
with **Fatima**



Isaltino & the Kitchen

The work in the kitchen is obviously central to the daily life at Betel and is all too often taken for granted. It rests almost entirely on the shoulders of one person. Isaltino's service is outstanding. We are always impressed by the manner in which he motivates his team of young conscripts, the miracle they work on the second-hand fruit & veg which arrive as supermarket beyond sell-by, and the smile on his face which accompanies his service. Isaltino was struggling with some health issues last year; we've heard that the holiday break has refreshed him but pray he will be kept well throughout 2012.



Andrea & the School

This year it's been decided that students in Years 6-9 will go to school in Cocalzinho, leaving only those in Years 1-5 at the Fazenda school. Andrea is rather sad to lose her older students but accepts that this is a wise decision in present circumstances. She needs fewer teachers for 35 pupils so Jesuita and Cristiane have left and her remaining colleagues are Maciel, Elza and Veronica. The 39 older students will attend the morning session at Cocal. It starts at 7am so they'll need to be up in time to get on board the Betel bus by 6.30am. Edu, the driver, leaves punctually! Also on board will be the 15 students at various stages of secondary education.

P.S. You may recall that Patrick had been suspended during last year. He is a bright lad and fortunately is being allowed to resume his studies. Please pray that he really will make the most of his opportunity to learn.



Maciel & the Church

Maciel hopes that he will be able to increase the involvement of youngsters in the Sunday services, especially with the music. He is planning to visit one of the Houses each week to offer ideas to the house parents for the evening prayers they regularly hold. His love of football and computers enable him to build positive relationships with older lads particularly. He finds that opportunities arise to offer encouragement and advice especially as they talk about their futures beyond Betel. He is persevering with his own post-graduate theological studies via the internet and is hopeful that he'll eventually qualify as a teacher/lecturer.

In November the leadership team met up with the external Board of Directors to begin discussions about the way Betel should operate in the future. Among the reasons for this is the consequence of the implementation of recent regulations reported on in the last newsletter. **One outcome is the decision to hold a day conference on March 3rd 2012 in Brasilia entitled "Friends of Betel thinking through the future"**. Participants can also contribute in one of the following study groups **1. Government legislation & regulations 2. Education & Health 3. Communication with churches 4. Legal questions**

In her email to us about the conference Ana writes *"There was a time when I asked God to remove the stones and all that gets in the way so that God's work could proceed more easily. However the Lord helped me to understand that 'the stones' make up the path; they are necessary and contribute towards our growth. We just need to understand how to get over them. Our tendency is always to wish for the easiest path, smooth like a carpet, but truthfully this isn't the best path."*