

MCC Low German Programs Newsletter

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Mennonite Central Committee Canada, 134 Plaza Dr., Winnipeg, MB, R3T 5K9

Summer Blessings: One of the privileges many of us enjoy in summer is vacation time where we can get away from our work for a few weeks. This year my husband and I enjoyed some time with friends and family who came to visit from far away, three days with our four grandchildren at a cabin by the lake, and a few quiet days where the two of us talked, hiked and read. One of the books I read was *"Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition"* by Christine Pohl. In reflecting on the meaning of hospitality, the thought that expanded my understanding of the meaning of Christian hospitality is that it transcends all social differences and breaks down social boundaries. It is not just about inviting people over for dinner but to value each person and respect their dignity, knowing that God values every person equally. Reflecting on this theme was part of the summer blessing for me this year.

– Mary Friesen, MCC Canada

Winnipeg, Manitoba:

Lois Coleman Neufeld, Director of National Programs for MCC Canada, writes:

"Some of you who receive this newsletter are aware that *Mary Friesen* has decided to resign from her position as Low German Program Coordinator with Mennonite Central Committee Canada, effective October 1, 2007.

We at MCC are grateful for the work Mary has done during her tenure here. Some of the highlights of her work include the development and deepening of relationships in many countries and colonies, a solidly established hemispheric network, the publishing of some of her writing in the form of a book, and significant educational resources developed for schools in Low German speaking communities. We will be sorry to see Mary leave MCC and wish her God's continued blessing and guiding in the next phase of her life."

Cuauhtemoc, Mexico:

Ron and Carol Neisteter from Winkler, Manitoba, have started their three-year service assignment as local program directors for MCCC Low German Program in Mexico. Together with John and Ruth Janzen they visited Nuevo Casas Grandes and Durango colonies in their first two weeks as part of the orientation.

Cristina Wiebe, one of the local MCC staff in Mexico, completed her year in Canada with the International Exchange Program. She worked in the MCC Thrift Store in Steinbach and at the Mennonitische Post store in Steinbach. Cristina will return to Mexico in early September and join the MCC staff in Nuevo Ideal (Durango).

LGM Program Coordinator Assignment:

MCC Canada seeks applications for the following full time salaried position in Winnipeg, MB: **Low German Program Coordinator**. The Coordinator will be responsible to manage MCC's Low German program in Mexico and to exercise a facilitating, coordinating role for the Low German Programs wherever they are found within the MCC system. This highly relational position requires excellent communication skills and understanding of the Low German speaking communities.

The job description may be viewed on the web at <http://www.mcc.org/serve/assignments/> All MCC workers are expected to exhibit a commitment to a personal Christian faith and discipleship, active church membership, and nonviolent peacemaking. Applications will be accepted until September 10, 2007. For further information contact *Marsha Jones* at 204-261-6381 or email: mgj@mennonitecc.ca.

Santa Cruz, Bolivia:

MCC service worker Elma Schroeder reports from Santa Cruz: "The Irrigation project is continuing to move forward in Durango colony. Recently, one of the beneficiaries of this project brought in some "fruits of his labour" from his garden including cabbage, lettuce, and green peppers. He was very excited to show MCC staff the produce and he hopes to be able to start selling some of it at their local store very shortly.

MCC Bolivia has just completed an evaluation process which included the LGM program at Centro Menno. The general conclusion was that Centro Menno's program fits very well within MCC's strategic vision of connecting peoples, working with Mennonites and with churches. The recommendations for the LGM program included a suggestion to focus on a smaller group of colonies instead of trying to connect to all 54 colonies. Another suggestion is to establish another MCC Centre near a cluster of colonies."

Mary Friesen, Coordinator of MCCC Low German Programs, will visit Centro Menno from August 22-25 and connect with the different MCC service workers and other LGM partners. MCC staff in Santa Cruz are looking forward to discussions with Mary related to the program evaluation and the program plans for Centro Menno.

Urgent Service Opportunity: MCC Bolivia is in need of a service worker couple for the position of Low German Mennonite Program Coordinator in Santa Cruz, Bolivia. The aim of this program is to build capacities among the LGM living in rural areas of eastern Bolivia. The couple will help with the day-to-day activities and services provided in the Centro Menno drop-in centre, write articles for the Menno Bote, lead annual program planning activities, and support and supervise the Centro Menno team. For more information or an application form, please contact your local MCC office. A complete job description is available on the MCC web site <http://www.mcc.org/serve/assignments/>

Winnipeg, Manitoba:

The two presentations at the Aylmer Networking conference by **Bill Janzen** (MCC Ottawa office) are available from the MCCC office. One is on the history of MCC Ontario's work with LGMs and in a second presentation provides a historical perspective on the migration of LGMs from Canada to Mexico in the 1920s. To request these documents, send an e-mail to (maryfriesen@mennonitecc.ca).

Taber, Alberta:

Ruben Bueckert, Director of Services for Low German Mennonites (MCC Alberta), reports some staff changes in the Taber MCC office:

"Eve Isaak has been working for MCC Taber as a Community Worker for the last two years. This position was created as a partnership between the Mental Health division of Chinook Health Region and MCC Alberta. The need for counseling and visitation in the Low German community has been apparent for many years. We were very fortunate to have such an important role supported by local agencies. Eve has

worked very hard to address the many needs in this area. She has a great passion for the Low German Mennonite community. We are grateful for the many connections Eve has made with community organizations and with the Low German population. She has resigned effective August 31.

The MCC office in Taber will be having another change in staff. Eva Klassen has decided to enroll at the Lethbridge College for further studies. She has been with us for almost two years and has been a very cheerful and efficient employee. She has been quick to learn all the many angles of documentation and general office procedures. She will be greatly missed by the staff. We wish Eva well in her future plans."

Cuauhtemoc, Mexico:

These are the members of the newly-formed MCCC Local Advisory Committee that has been established to advise, support and inform the Local MCCC Low German program directors in Cuauhtemoc, Mexico. The committee has met twice to review their responsibilities and to get an overview of the MCCC program in Nuevo Casas Grandes, Cuauhtemoc, Durango. John and Ruth Janzen who served as interim local MCCC LGM program directors, were instrumental in establishing this local advisory committee in Mexico.



From left to right: Peter Enns, Cuauhtemoc; Isaak Enns, Durango; John and Ruth Janzen (MCCC); Tina and Abram Peters, Cuauhtemoc; Franz and Maria Rempel, Cuauhtemoc; Johan und Neta Banman, Buena Vista; Front row: Neta Enns (Isaak) Durango; Sarah Giesbrech (MCCC); Anna Enns (Peter), Cuauhtemoc (missing from the picture is Isaac Wiebe).

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