



Marcio Ciechanovicz and Noemi Celeti

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Location: Brazil



What we do: Connecting with people beyond the reach of traditional church, sharing the gospel in new ways and ministering to people's physical needs.

Dear friends,

We hope that you are all well. We are now properly back to our normal routine after a month of school holidays. We feel that our lives are still a continuous process of learning, re-learning, discerning and adaptation.

Looking back over the past three months, we see how much we are on a journey of discernment. While we had some encouraging events, others seemed to be complete flops. Most of our first activities as a team were held in the northern part of the park in the first few months, but we kept feeling a pull towards the southern side and had several walks and bike rides to "scout out the area."

Everything changed one day when one of the team members, pastor Fernanda, took our son Giovanni out for a chat. They decided to play basketball, but all the nice courts in the northern part of the park were full, so they drove towards the south and noticed a neglected court and decided to shoot some hoops there.

As they began to play, a group of children asked to join them. They all played on although the actual basketball hoops were missing. The boys were overjoyed that pastor Fernanda challenged them to a basketball tournament the following weekend. The next Saturday, a teenage youth group came from the neighbouring city of Itupeva to help us out with the picnic, various group games and our hoopless basketball tournament! This event marked the beginning of our first activities in this part of the park.

We have learned three things from this period. The first is the importance of keeping things simple. Planning activities and events is great, but sometimes we can get ahead of ourselves and make things so complicated.

The second lesson is something we all know but often need to be reminded of: that God is working even during times of seeming failure. On one occasion, although we had organised an amazing obstacle course with much effort from all the team, only three people joined in and all the others declined. But that afternoon as we waited for people to join our activity, Marcio met and chatted with a Christian man nicknamed Cobra. This man is responsible for all the radical sports events of the city and he showed interest in the project



Giovanni and Nathanael training basketball with some kids on the south side of the park

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**With Jesus
With each other
To the edges**



and became a great ally and potential partner. He provided free basketballs for us donated by the city council, and basketball hoops for the court.

Recently, Cobra arranged a meeting with the secretary of sports of Indaiatuba and they offered to help us write a project for “the boat”, the structure right in the middle of the park that we were immediately drawn to from the start. There is huge potential, because the boat has a large room underneath which could be turned into so many things, like a cafe or a community space or a hangout for teens, etc.... This space has become a bit neglected and has become notorious for teenagers who try to climb the boat or

just hang out on the steps smoking weed. So we really want to ask what God would have us do and how we might involve the community and listen to them.

The third thing we’ve learned is the importance of accepting help from other “boats” around us. In the passage of Luke 5:1–7 we are told the story of the disciples trying to catch fish all night. Then Jesus tells them to cast their nets on the other side. As a miracle happens and their nets are filled with fish, they struggle to bring the nets in. We read in verse 7: “they signalled their partners in the other boat to come and help them, and they came.” We have welcomed groups of volunteers from different churches who have come to spend time, pray and participate with us in our events. It has been an encouragement for us, since our team is small.

We are planning on receiving a team with a professional photographer to take pictures by the boat. We will be offering families and groups of people the opportunity to have their pictures taken, have picnic refreshments with us and receive a gift. Another event we have planned is for Children’s Day on 7 October. Please pray that we will be able to gladden the hearts of many families and children that day.

We appreciate your support from afar as well, as you donate, pray for us and cheer us on. We would like to share a thanks for a huge answer to prayer. We have found an amazing Portuguese teacher for our children. Her name is Rejane, she is a Christian also and has not only helped them improve their grades in school but has also been faithfully praying for them. We feel truly blessed.

We ask that you continue to pray for our children, who are still adapting to the culture and still really miss the UK. The boys have made some friends, but the girls still haven’t made any good friends, so we would appreciate prayer for that.

Marcio and Noemi



Photos from top to bottom: Teens from Itupeva church helping us play balloon games with the kids at the park; a recent afternoon at the park; parents now stay to chat, kids and teens play and engage in different activities, all making the most of the picnic table; Rejane, the Portuguese teacher, took the kids out for ice-cream; Paul Tester and Andy Roberts, with some members of Du Park Team, praying together on the boat in the ecological park of Indaiatuba



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Adelante: Saturday 23 September 2023. A hybrid event – in-person and online – to celebrate, learn about and pray for mission in and from Latin America. Book at churchmissionsociety.org/Adelante

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