WFWP Stuttgart, Germany - Sharing of Volunteer Experience in Paraguay

Ute Lemme
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Five members of Women's Federation, along with eight guests - observing the COVID-19 regulations - gathered in the premises of UPF Stuttgart to hear a very interesting presentation given by Erika Honecker from Marbach, one of Gabriele Schickert's contacts.

After fellowship over coffee and cake, a prayer by Gabriele Schickert opened the meeting and Erika Honecker started her presentation.

Several years ago, Erika had experienced the sudden loss of her husband and son which plunged her, a person without a religious faith, into a deep crisis. She was invited to Paraguay by a missionary, and a farming family in the north-east of the country, in the colony of the Mennonites of German origin, welcomed her into their home. These Mennonites witnessed to the families in Paraguay.

In the home of her host family, Erika Honecker found faith in Jesus, which brought her inner peace. In the early days she regularly spent her annual vacation in Paraguay, but after retirement she stayed longer - sometimes for several months. She lived with various Mennonite or Paraguay families and helped them, as well as the indigenous people (the Aché-Indians), to improve and add quality to their life; for example, by cooking special dishes, sewing with the women, doing crafts with the children, etc.

Erika Honecker showed us photographs of the wonderful broad landscapes of this area and of the life of the people, their various crop cultivations and animal husbandry. We were amazed by the pictures of special, magnificent wild plants and exotic animals.

After her presentation, we had the opportunity to ask questions, such as how Erika communicated with the people or if she could imagine living there forever.

In closing, we presented Erika with a donation to support the work of the missionaries in Paraguay. Additionally, three women announced the donation of their old, used sewing machines to contribute to the improvement of work opportunities for women in Paraguay.

Reported by Ute Lemme
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