



NEWS FROM THE GIRARDS IN ARREZO, ITALY

April
2024

April Newsletter

First, welcome to all our new subscribers! You gave us your email address during Leia's stay in the US and we added you to this newsletter.

I (Leia) have been back from my trip to the USA for 1 week. To say the trip was incredible would be an understatement. Just to give a short recap of how the trip went. The first month I was in Wichita, Kansas. I had the chance to attend 3 services in the church very dear to our hearts, New Life Covenant Church. I was able to share there with the leadership team in more detail about how we are bringing Christian education back to Italy and we got such a beautiful response from them. I'm even in the process of making a mission's trip available to them for spring 2025! I spent the first 3 weeks visiting so many wonderful people in the body of Christ, old friends and new ones! As always, we stayed with Phil and Andrea Simpson who opened their home to us with open arms and **THEY BLESSED OUR SOCKS OFF!** Here are some photos of some beautiful people who have supported our mission the last 20 years and still support us today, either financially or in prayer. (Please forgive me if I forgot to take a picture while I was with you! To my shame it happened more than once...) I was also able to spend time with my 95-year-old grandma, which was special. It was my first time back since my grandpa died, so it was good for me to grieve his loss in person. To top the cake, our first born Eva, who is a student in Colorado, flew down for a week. It was so special to spend some time together!



We want to thank and honor New Life Covenant Church's leadership for their steadfast prayer, love and support. As many of you know, Leia started her journey with God under NLCC's founder, the late pastor Kit. Today, Pastor Tim and his wife lead this local body with passion and dedication. NLCC leaders - we love you and honor you for all you do for the Kingdom and for us!

What I can say is, while in Wichita, having the support and having YOU back up our project through finances and prayers will change the future of Italy! We need the body of Christ right now to help us bring Christian education back into this country. I was able to set up a booth at the church and sell coffee, silver chains, and cutting boards to help with my travel expenses and that was a great blessing and a great way to have convo with each of you.

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We also received very encouraging words of prophecy and direction from the Lord so **THANK YOU** to all of you who stepped out and spoke life into this project and into our family. It was also a total surprise offering the church gave us and will help with our upcoming move to Florence. We will be able to make the move from Arezzo to Florence this year, thanks to your help and giving!



The last part of the trip I went to Phoenix, Arizona to my sister's house. It's nice to see Olivia get to know her cousins that are close to her age! They are so sweet together. Isaiah, who is 12, also came back with me and he hadn't been in the States in 6 years. He was so funny to watch observe the "American" way of thinking and doing. He was most amazed by the trucks that everyone drives and how big they are. How amazing your sports and play places are, and how fun American game nights are. On the flip side, he noticed how much junk is sold in American stores and how everything is sweetened (including pizza and pasta!) My brother Alex flew in from Colorado for a few days and it was great for the kids to spend time with their uncle.



We are prepping for the arrival of 4 different families to come the next 3 months and giving them some tours about the martyrs and some background of Christianity in Italy. 2 of them are ministers and then my dad is the last to come the last week of July (it will be his first visit.) Hosting people is a big part of our ministry and one of our great joys! Just for fun with the kids last month, we decided to do a full on count of how many people we hosted (as in, people who slept at our house) over the last 10 years and we stopped at 350. The relationships that we have built from hosting through the years have been very near and dear to our hearts, and we are still in contact with many today!

In June, Sophie has to take her middle school exams to get her middle school diploma. It will be great for her so she can attend our school in 2025 and she will need the proper documentation to attend. Also, Isaiah is finishing his 5th, 6th and 7th grade exams (to homeschool in Italy they are required to take end of year exams.) So, we are busy working with tutors and such these next 2 months in prep for the exams. In June then we head to the North like last year for the Christian American style sports camp that we volunteer in and our kids attend as campers. We have a busy next 3 months also with an outdoor evangelism team coming, personal healing for the nations meetings/counseling going on, and normal church business. To be alive at such a time as this! In the darkness our light shines brightest.

Updates about the school project. We are releasing a video and brochure about the project this month and the needs involved to get it started. Along with announcements about the family coming to direct the school and much more. So be on the lookout for that! On a practical note, Nicolas is starting the search for a job in Florence and we will let that be our guide, when he finds the right job he will give his 4-month notice (required in his contract) and we will start to think more seriously about moving. He will need to still work until he could be potentially hired into the school as an admin/teaching role but that will take some time. Plus, him working a job has been an incredible way to reach the society around and build friendships with Italians.

Thanks again everyone for the hospitality and amazing time we had in the US. We look forward to seeing some of you in the next few months and cherish our relationships! We are blessed to have you in our lives!

Nicolas, Leía, Eva, Elise, Sophie, Isaiah and Olivia

PRAYER REQUESTS

We covet your prayers!
This month please agree with us on:

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- Financing the school project
- Favor with local churches to share the vision
- Finding a location for the school
- Transitioning as a family to the Florence area