



Mosaico

The American Citizen Newsletter

Volume 1, Issue 1

April 1, 2009

Welcome to the quarterly newsletter dedicated to U.S. citizens living in Brazil. Find news, updates from your local U.S. embassy or consulate, and more...

São Paulo Consulate Helps Out “Cidade Dutra”

A group of more than 30 American and Brazilian employees from Consulate General São Paulo participated in a service project this past December to benefit Projeto Sol (www.projetosol.org.br) in the Cidade Dutra neighborhood of São Paulo.

During their service project, Consulate employees planted a garden, cleaned a large gym and worked on painting projects.

Projeto Sol is a non-profit community center that was started in 1978 by Sister Angela Mary and Luiz Carlos dos Santos. The cen-



Volunteers from U.S. Consulate São Paulo test their green thumbs at Projeto Sol



ter offers literacy, arts and sports as alternatives to drugs and violence in one of São Paulo’s “favelas.”

More than 220 children from ages 6 to 18 benefit from Projeto Sol programs.

Inside this issue:

Consul General's Corner	2
Tax Update	2
Health News	3
Student Visit to Rio	4
ACS Corner	4
Security Tips	5
Contact Info	6

U.S. Marines Deliver Cheer to Rio’s Neediest Kids

Since 1947, the United States Marine Corps has delivered new toys to needy children throughout the United States and, thanks to the participation of U.S. embassies and consulates overseas, to underprivileged kids around the world.

Last year, with the generous cooperation and



International People’s Center, a local orphanage.

support of the JW Marriott Hotel in Copacabana and Continental Airlines, the Marine detachment at the U.S. Consulate in Rio de Janeiro collected more than 1,000 donated toys to make the holiday season a little brighter for young residents of Rocinha, Rio’s largest favela, and the

Consul General's Corner

Welcome to *Mosaico*, our first country-wide newsletter dedicated to American citizens living in Brazil. Our goal is to strengthen the connections amongst members of the American ex-pat community and their connections to our Embassy and Consulates in Brazil. We also aim to provide news and information that makes living far from home a little easier.

Our Non-Immigrant Visa sections wrapped up an extremely busy season of processing temporary visas in an effort to reduce wait-times for Brazilians traveling to the U.S. The U.S. Mission in Brazil doubled visa processing capacity, and found ways to streamline operations and expedite the interview process. In Rio de Janeiro alone, we processed 52,000 visas from September to December 2008, up from 18,500 during the same period in 2007.

The summer months in Brazil are an active time for our American Citizen Services sections. Thanks to Carnival and local school vacations, many American families have been vacationing in Brazil and heading abroad. We want to remind everyone not to carry your passport with you

while visiting tourist sites. In most cases, it's better to keep passports and other important documents locked in your hotel safe and carry a photocopy of your passport. You'll find more tips about security in the following pages.

Summer in Brazil means dengue fever. Fortunately the number of incidents has reduced dramatically as compared with prior years. However, it is still important to take simple precautions around your house and to adjust your behavior during high season, especially those most vulnerable to the disease -- children and the elderly. We've included some preventative health tips on page 3. In addition to country-wide health and safety information, *Mosaico* will provide city-specific news from each of our missions in Brazil whenever possible.

We invite you to be a part of this quarterly newsletter, too. We welcome your suggestions on articles or even contributions. The more shapes, colors and textures we include, the richer the mosaic.

Marie Damour
 Consul General
 U.S. Embassy Brasilia

Our goal is to strengthen the connections amongst members of the American ex-pat community and their connections to our Embassy and Consulates in Brazil.



2008 tax changes include new earned income credits for some individuals

Homebuyers, others benefit from 2008 tax changes

The April 15 deadline is rapidly approaching, but you still have time if you haven't yet filed.

American citizens living overseas are automatically given a two-month deadline extension. But for Americans who owe taxes, interest and any penalties begin to accrue as of April 15th,

no matter where you live. Payment to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) is only considered "received" on the date of receipt of the payment by the IRS, **NOT** the postmark date.

Tax Updates

Among the more than two dozen

new tax updates made in 2008 was an increase in earned income credit for individuals and families earning below specified amounts.

Taxpayers will also notice changes in the areas of Social

Continued on Page 3

Dengue Season Sees Drop in Number of Cases Vigilance Remains Crucial

Dengue Fever continues to be a concern in Brazil, despite a drop in cases of 40 percent over the first two months of 2009.

Brazilian Health Ministry officials reported 42,956 cases of dengue in the first two months of 2009, as compared to 72,234 over the same period in 2008. In the state of Rio de Janeiro, which suffered a serious dengue outbreak in 2008, the fall was even more steep – 90 percent.

Despite this positive news, dengue continues to create problems in Brazil, particularly in the state of Bahia – which has recorded roughly 9,000 cases in 2009, a 200 percent increase over the first two months of last year. After Bahia, the states with the highest number of dengue cases this year have been Minas Gerais, Espirito Santo and Acre.

What Causes Dengue

Dengue fever is caused by a virus transmitted by a particular

mosquito that is dark, with white stripes on its back and legs.

These mosquitoes – which breed in clean, stagnant water – bite during the day and like warm, humid places.

After the infecting bite, dengue symptoms develop within three to 14 days (on average, four to seven days). Victims typically experience a high fever, headache, weakness, and muscle, joint and low back pain. A subtle rash appears in up to half the victims, although some have a bright red rash with scattered clear spots. Treatment is purely symptomatic.

Most people with dengue do not need to be hospitalized. But those who have previously been infected run the risk of developing hemorrhagic dengue fever (DHF) and dengue shock syndrome (DSS).

DHF and DSS begin like classic dengue but progress to abdominal pain and vomiting. If left untreated, these ailments can

progress to bleeding at sites of minimal trauma, circulatory failure, shock, and death. DHF and DSS ordinarily affect people who live in endemic areas.

Prevention Crucial

Since there is no vaccine for dengue, one must take careful measures to reduce the possibility of mosquito bites.

One such measure is to wear light clothing that covers arms and legs, and to apply an effective insect repellent, such as those containing DEET, to exposed areas of skin. Other measures include removing standing water near your home and work – such as flower pots, tires, puddles, etc. – and installing screening windows.

For more information, see the Centers for Disease Control's website: www.cdc.gov/ncidod/diseases/submenus/sub_dengue.htm.



Aedes aegypti

The mosquito that carries Dengue bites during the day and likes warm and humid places.

Tax Updates for 2008

Continued from Page 2

Security, Medicare and health care. And, if you are a first-time homebuyer, you may be eligible for a new tax credit.

Points to Remember

If you claim anyone as exempt on your individual tax return, you must list their Social Security

Number. If that person is not eligible to have a Social Security Number, an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) will suffice. If you live overseas, you may apply for a Social Security Number at your nearest U.S. consulate or embassy. To apply for an ITIN, file Form W-7 and

supporting documentation with the IRS.

All income reported must be in the equivalent of U.S. dollars. It's recommended that you use the yearly average exchange rate when possible. These rates can be found at www.irs.gov (keyword: exchange rates).

Where to Find Tax Information on the Internet

Read about the 2008 tax changes at www.irs.gov/formspubs/content/0,,id=178012,00.html

Download a brochure written for taxpayers living abroad at www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p4732.pdf

The students were very engaged and asked questions on a wide range of issues from Brazil's environmental policy to how the current financial crisis is affecting the local economy.

Pennsylvania Students Talk Economics, Politics in Rio

Consulate officials met in March with 20 students and professors from LaSalle University in Philadelphia to discuss the political and economic relationships between Brazil and the U.S.

Robert Vogel, Ed.D., Professor of Education and Director of the Leadership and Global Understanding Program at LaSalle, brings a group of university students every year to a different country to study issues of globalization and education. This year the students came to Brazil to examine how Brazil's education system is preparing its youth to be globally competitive and

responsible citizens. The travel study course, entitled "Brazil: Meeting the Global Challenge,"



Consulate officials discuss education in Brazil

involved meetings with students, faculty, business professionals, and government officials in Rio.

The students were very engaged and asked questions on a wide range of issues from Bra-

zil's environmental policy to how the current financial crisis is affecting the local economy.

Professor Vogel hopes the students would gain an understanding of Brazil's rich history and culture and how the youth are being prepared and educated for the future.

Two speakers from the U.S.-Brazil Fulbright Commission also provided an overview of the Brazilian educational system and highlighted programs available to Brazilian and American students wishing to study abroad. For more information about these opportunities, contact the Commission at fulbrightrio@fulbright.org.br.

ACS Corner: Report of Birth Abroad

What is a Consular Report of Birth, or CRBA?

Its purpose is to establish an official record of the child's claim to U.S. citizenship at birth. The CRBA is considered a basic United States citizenship document.

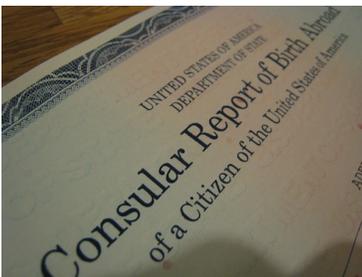
Who is eligible for a CRBA?

Children of Two U.S. Citizen Parents In Wedlock: One of the parents MUST have resided in the U.S. prior to the child's birth. No specific period of time for such prior residence is required.

Children of One Citizen and One Alien Parent In Wedlock: The citizen parent must have been physically present in the U.S. for the time period required by the law applicable at the time of the child's birth. (For birth on or after November 14, 1986, a period of five years physical presence, two after the age of fourteen is required to transmit U.S. citizenship to the child.)

Children Born Out-of-Wedlock to a U.S. Citizen Father: A child born abroad out-of-wedlock to a U.S. citizen father may acquire U.S. citizenship provided:

1. a blood relationship between the applicant and the father is established by clear and convincing evidence;
2. the father had the nationality of the United States at the time of the applicant's birth;
3. the father (unless deceased) has agreed in writing to provide financial support for the person until the applicant reaches the age of 18 years, and
4. while the person is under the age of 18 years –
 - A) applicant is legitimated under the law of their residence or domicile,
 - B) father acknowledges paternity of the person in writing under oath, or
 - C) the paternity of the applicant is established by adjudication court.



The Consular Report of Birth is considered a basic U.S. citizenship document

Continued on Page 6

Security Update: Scams

As crime in Brazil continues to rise, the incidence of “con games” are increasing as well. Brazilians and foreigners alike have fallen prey to these schemes. Check the travel.state.gov web site for the latest updates on the overall security situation. Following are some of the more common scams. Americans should protect themselves accordingly. Please report any incidents to your American Citizens Services units at Embassy Brasilia, or Consulates Sao Paulo/Rio de Janeiro/Recife.

Kidnap Scams – A person calls to say that someone you know has been kidnapped and unless you immediately pay a certain amount of money the person will be harmed. You pay – and then find out that the kidnapping never occurred.

Medical Emergency – You receive a telephone call or visit from someone who says that a staff or family member has been in an accident and needs blood or life-saving medical attention immediately. You are asked to pay for it.

Cash Only – A hurried cash transaction for merchandise often leaves the customer with shoddy/counterfeit goods or with counterfeit money.

Antiquities – Black markets in counterfeit goods flourish in countries where export of cultural antiquities is prohibited.

Charity – Street requests for donations to charity are legitimate in many countries, but it is best to refuse them.

Currency Transactions – A black market transaction is offered hastily, furtively, and at an attractive exchange rate. The currency received is often counterfeit or short changed .

Currency Examinations – Persons claiming to be street police demand to spot check for counterfeit currency. Request identification and offer to go to the police station. Do not surrender your money.

Credit Cards – The card returned to you in a credit card transaction is not your card but an expired or otherwise fraudulent one. Examine your card carefully when it is returned to you and ask for any of the carbons if used.

"Mustard Trick" – This can happen in airports, out

on the street or anywhere. Someone steps on or otherwise breaks open a mustard/ketchup or other substance and “accidentally” spills it on your clothes. While you are occupied dealing with the problem, someone steals your valuables.

Offer to buy you a drink - Do not accept drinks from strangers. Try to watch your drink being made and keep it in your line of sight. People have woken up after accepting drinks from strangers having been robbed, possibly raped and left in a strange place.



At the ATM make sure you are not being followed

Quicknappings

Police statistics show that quicknappings – a short kidnapping in which the victims are forced to withdraw funds with their ATM cards – are on the rise in Brasilia. The U.S. Embassy recommends these tips and asks that any quicknapping incident be reported to the American Citizen Services Unit.

- Avoid attracting attention. Do not wear flashy jewelry or flash money in public.
- Use well-lit parking lots that are full of people and cars.
- Vary your routes and times. Avoid the same daily routine.
- Be careful at traffic lights and keep alert to pedestrians approaching your vehicle.
- Avoid stopping too close to the vehicle ahead of you at traffic lights – leave room to maneuver.
- Keep doors locked and your windows rolled up at all times.
- Be aware of your surroundings as you depart and arrive at your residence. If you see something suspicious, drive away and call the Police (190).
- Avoid walking along poorly lit streets and parks.
- Try not to be out alone – especially at night.
- Avoid flashing bank and credit cards in public.
- When using an ATM make sure that you are not being followed and that it is in a public, well-lit place.
- Avoid carrying all your bank and credit cards. Make copies

Continued on Page 6

**For American Citizen Services
in Brazil:**

Brasilia

Pergunte-ao-consul@state.gov

Recife

USRecife@state.gov

Rio de Janeiro

ACSRio@state.gov

Sao Paulo

ACSInfoSaoPaulo@state.gov

Quicknappings *Continued from Page 5*

and leave in your office/home.

- Do not flash large amounts of money in public. Before you leave home, set some money aside, just for small expenses.

COMMON PLACES FOR A QUICKNAPPING

- When entering your vehicle – especially in dark places or coming from an ATM.
- At traffic lights – especially at night when there are no other vehicles around.
- Arriving or departing your residence – especially when getting in or out of your car.
- When you are involved in a “minor” collision. Criminals sometimes bump your car in order to get you to park and get out of your car.
- When you are walking, especially by yourself.
- When returning to your home – especially if unfamiliar people are in the area.
- When making withdrawals at ATMs – especially if you are not aware of your surroundings

The American Society of Rio de Janeiro

honored one of its members during its annual holiday party in December. Lindsay Duval was awarded the 2008 Ralph Greenberg Award for her long-time commitment to community service. The award was presented by consular officer Carla Benini and accepted by Lindsay’s husband, Paul.



ACS Corner: Report of Birth Abroad

Continued from Page 4

Children Born Out-of-Wedlock to a U.S. Citizen Mother: The mother must have been a U.S. citizen at the time of the child’s birth and had previously been physically present in the United States or one of its outlying possessions for a continuous period of one year.

What documents are required?

1. an official record of the child’s foreign birth
2. evidence of the parent(s)’ U.S. citizenship (certified birth certificate, current U.S. passport, or Certificate of Naturalization or Citizenship)
3. evidence of the parents’ marriage, if applicable; and
4. affidavits of parent(s)’ residence and physical presence in the United States.

It may be necessary to submit additional documents, including affidavits of paternity and support, divorce decrees from prior marriages, or medical reports of blood compatibility. All evidentiary documents should be certified as true copies of the originals by the registrar of the office wherein each document was issued.

How long will the process take?

To expedite your interview, applicants should arrive at the ACS Unit with applications filled out. The child must also be present. If there are no requests for additional documentation, the CRBA can be delivered within two weeks.