

THE SHOESHINE SPECIAL

NEWS FROM THE WORKING BOYS CENTER • QUITO, ECUADOR • FALL 2011

Padre's Message



DEAR FOLKS,

The charming idea to co-author this letter with one of the school kids has dropped my jaw permanently. But, from before that, eight year old Efrain Cordova, who's starting third grade, and I, both wish you God's love. After that, I'm just a scribe as Efrain dictates his answer to the question **HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT GOING BACK TO SCHOOL?**

"Summer vacations are good for making more money to take home every day. But schooltime is much better. The most fun is adding and subtracting. I love it when the teacher starts playing around with the numbers. The stories we read are a lot more fun than hanging with the bad kids playing the slots at the electronic game parlors. My mother says I can buy candy at recess. I tell my mother that making only two dollars each of three half days a week but with school time everyday is far better than making three dollars every day, all day, without going to school. She says it's good too but wants me to work some Saturdays and Sundays to make up the money.

So we really want school to start."

Love, Efrain and JH

P.S. An aside from JH - Obviously, Efrain thinks my white hair is on a punk'n head that doesn't have a clue that he almost got left back in second grade for playing hookey too much and spending his days putting coins in the slots at the electric games parlor.

AN ON SITE INTERVIEW WITH CHAMPION WORKER GIOVANI CRUZ DAVILA

We put his name up in the title on the hunch he'll become famous in the future and drag this issue of Shoeshine Special out of the archives up onto the world stage. Our history with Giovanni so far has been all successes one after another because he's a leader type, strong kid, energetic at his work shining shoes, good student just graduated from grammar school, well liked by his classmates, has a liking for automechanics and is always proud to be making money for his family. The challenge of a technical education in automechanics is one solid option for Giovanni. But he'll have to sacrifice a lot of money-earning time. Giovanni is first generation in town from out in the countryside. He has another option of going back there, as his relatives are encouraging him to do and keep making money forever as a harvester on the big fruit farms and never have to worry about getting a trade. A third option, if he stays with us and learns automechanics, is to join the young leaders' group in the Center, guys and gals who want to commit to serving others promoting the values in the Center and using spare time to recruit new families of working kids into the Center. This latter activity requires a lot of personal sacrifice.

This is where our hunch rests: on Giovanni's generosity toward others. This tricky world fogs the vision of a good fellow like Giovanni with the need to make money but no clarity about why, how, how much now, how much later on and for what. We have to help him figure out what God is offering him here in Quito.



Your support helps meet the needs of the WBC's most special students

Article by Kevin Scully

Kevin and his wife, Amie, were volunteers at the Working Boys' Center this past year. Kevin is a school psychologist from San Diego and has worked closely with the WBC special education department this past year.

At the Working Boys' Center (WBC,) the special education department is quite special. As a visitor to Ecuador, I have been learning more about the education system within the country. While teaching and consulting at the Center for the past year, I have been able to see first-hand how students with physical and educational challenges are supported and educated. Since my arrival to Ecuador last summer, I have visited several schools in various areas of the country. To my dismay, specialized services to students with various learning challenges were not provided at any of these school sites (public or private), unless the school was private and served only students in need of specialized services.



Lunch with the bunch.

According to several Ecuadorians within the education system, educational services are provided to students with special needs only at separate sites or private schools, and are not part of the general education system. However, at the WBC, students with special needs are an integral part of the general education population. They share the same school site as the other students and are woven into the school's cultural fabric: a novel educational environment for this South American country.

In the United States, there is a strong movement that is sweeping across the country within the public education system. It is referred to as "inclusion." In simplistic terms, inclusion or inclusive school sites refer to schools integrating students with special needs into general education classrooms and environment. With that said, the great question remains: could the WBC be the first integrated school site in Ecuador, possibly in all of South America? The special education department at the WBC is quite impressive. In the capital of Quito, there are three main WBC school sites

that provide education services to about 2,000 students yearly. Two of those school sites provide specialized education services to students who have never received a formal education before enrolling into the WBC, along with one site that provides services to students with moderate to severe disabilities. Having multiple school sites that include all three levels of education is a systematic challenge, but the WBC really seems to have a grasp of it, is always looking to improve and is definitely moving forward with success.

At the WBC, there are five students with severe physical and cognitive challenges who receive specialized education services. These students range in age, from nine to 27 years old, and are at various stages of learning, whether inside the classroom or at work.

So as you can see from the student profiles, the special education department is truly special and blessed with a dedicated and talented staff of specialists, teachers and an incredible group of students. And one of the greatest aspects of the department is the fact that students and family are integrated into the school community. I truly believe that this sense of community helps the students develop socially and spiritually, a right that each one of them certainly deserves.

Support Special Education



Contribute to the Harry Pence Extra Special Education Fund Today.

The fund supporting the special education program is named after long-time WBC supporter Jack Pence's brother

Harry. In 1938, the world was blessed with Harry Pence, a special person with Down's Syndrome. Born at a time when it was routine to institutionalize children like Harry, his mother steadfastly refused to separate him from the loving support of his family. The goal of this fund is to share lessons learned from Harry's life with special children in Quito, Ecuador whose most hopeful loving support is the Family of Families at the Working Boys' Center. Your support will directly provide educational support to the WBC's most special members. Consider a gift today.

MEET THE STUDENTS

Two of the students, Darling (17 years old) and Hilda (27 years old), have Cerebral Palsy, a neurological disorder that impairs body movement and muscle coordination due to damage to the developing brain. They both use a wheelchair as their main mode of transportation and light up any room with their bubbly and sociable personalities. Darling is usually instigating laughter with other students while Hilda, a sweet and gentle spirit, mostly reacts with big smiles and soft comments. Both Darling and Hilda are working on



Hilda



Darling

higher level math such as multiplication and division and are constantly improving their reading skills. Darling is also embarking upon his first job at the WBC in the carpentry toy shop, where he sands and finishes wooden

toy products. He is very proud of his hard work and determination, as is the special education team.

Then there is Bryan, a 14 year old boy with a contagious smile, who has slowed cognitive functioning, some difficulty with physical movement and cannot verbally communicate. Bryan is able to walk and run on his own, given many years of physical therapy, but is considered to be nonverbal due to his cognitive inability to speak. He is able to say some single words and understand what others say, but is unable to express or effectively communicate with others through verbal means. The special education team is currently working on using a system, commonly referred to as PECS in the United States, which stands for Picture Exchange Communication System. This system utilizes small pictures of objects, actions, emotions and needs that are commonly used in everyday life and provide a way of communication by picture arrangement. Brian is a quick learner and is getting the hang of the system, but sometimes goes through stubborn streaks. At times he would rather attempt a tickle fight or show off his drawing skills to peers and teachers.



Bryan

Next in the classroom line-up is David, a 16-year old boy who currently holds a daily job at the bakery on

WBC's campus. Humility and kindness pour from this student with a level of sincerity that cannot be challenged by any other. David's gentle and kind-hearted disposition can be noticed every day, whether in the classroom or at work. When it comes to his job, David puts forth 110% and holds a position in the kitchen of the bakery. He attends class everyday in the morning and then promptly begins work after class. David has several learning disabilities, specifically in the area of memory and expressive language. The special education team is currently working with David on understanding daily and weekly calendars, telling time, following multi-step directions and basic literacy and math skills. When not focusing on his lessons or working diligently in the bakery, you can find David playing a practical joke on fellow students or staff (such as hiding one's keys, but always returning them in a timely manner), greeting those he knows with a smile and handshake or running errands around campus for his colleagues at the bakery.



David

Last but surely not least is one of the most popular students, Armando, a nine year old boy with a heart the size of Ecuador. Armando also experiences learning difficulties due to lower cognitive functioning and slight physical coordination challenges. Armando is known for his extremely loveable character, never ending hugs, infectious laugh and love for Sponge Bob. In fact, he and Bryan will undoubtedly engage in a showdown whenever a Sponge Bob puzzle is in sight. At this moment, Armando is beginning to grasp the building blocks of reading and writing, and is also learning how to understand letters and the relationship between single letter and compound



Armando

letter sounds. One of his favorite outside activities is shooting hoops and pushing his friend Darling around in his wheelchair. Sometimes Darling will even let Armando take a spin in his wheelchair, which always provides for pure entertainment. Armando is also working as a laundry assistant at the WBC laundry center. Every day after class, one can find Armando at the laundry center greeting customers with a big "¡Buenas Tardes!" and folding clean clothes.

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Your regular gifts can make an even greater impact when you sign up for our electronic donation program. By making a recurring gift to the Working Boys' Center, you can save checks and postage by setting up an automatic monthly gift through a recurring donation on your credit or debit card.

Get started with monthly giving today

To get started visit us on-line at www.workingboyscenter.org/make-a-donation. When filling out the on-line form, remember to set your donation frequency to monthly.

For further information on recurring gifts, contact Jane Pruhs at 414-248-6171 or info@workingboyscenter.org.

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