

THE SHOESHINE SPECIAL

NEWS FROM THE WORKING BOYS' CENTER
QUITO, ECUADOR



Summer 2009



DEAR FOLKS,

God's peace be with you.

It's still Easter time. We keep celebrating victory over death and new life from Christ in us in all we are up to until it's our turn to rise too. Many years ago, Jesuit General Peter Arrupe, reflecting on the bad times we go through, said something like: "Jesus must be living with special intensity in us because we can feel how abandoned He felt before He rose again."

We're not rich but the golden brilliance of our fame is competing with the stars. Mrs. Patricia Lefevere is a correspondent for the National Catholic Reporter who came to visit and wrote a glowing report on us in the March 27th, 2009 issue of that newspaper. Also, here in Quito we have been getting praise and pictures of our activities in the local papers and on TV. Even from Germany reporters have arrived to inform the world about us. I hope my mother is reading and watching all this stuff from Heaven. She used to examine my report cards and predict I would never amount to a "roll of pins". I guessed that was an expression from her wild gambling days before she met me.

We have to cheer up. So let's interview some of our folks who have learned to laugh through poverty since forever. But, first, below on this page, a rumor from the students in automechanics.

Very humbly,

John Halligan, S.J



THE RUMOR ABOUT REDTRUCK



Renewing Redtruck

You can't have forgotten Redtruck. It died on the highway going to a retreat the driver was giving outside town. After 30 years of exceptional service, it deserved a hero's sendoff which we couldn't afford at the time. Very sad.

All of our graduating class in automechanics, seventeen honest young men, have informed me, anonymously for fear of reprisal, that Marco Polo, our director of education, has made them a serious proposal. He has offered to flunk every single one of them if Redtruck is not back rolling on the highway before the school year ends. Very motivational.

The kids obtained a junkyard motor and Marco contributed the cost of small parts. The project has involved many extra-curricular hours of discussion and decision about the best repair and rebuild procedures. Hooray for seventeen exceptional mechanics about to graduate.

APOLOGY AND CORRECTION

A Thousand apologies to Millie Schoos. In the last issue of the Shoeshine Special, I garbled the information about the great opportunity she created by giving us the donut making machine, which is revolutionizing our bakery teaching business. But it's important to us that the donut machine and Millie Schoos get the deep appreciation we wanted and still want to express.

Tax deductible donations can be sent to:

Family Unity International, Inc.

Mrs. Patricia Parks, President

12750 Stephen Place

Elm Grove, WI 53122

Visit us on the Web @

<http://www.workingboyscenter.org>

ENJOYING THE GIFT OF FRIENDSHIP

This centerfold is dedicated to the confidence our folks in the Center have achieved because you keep them in the programs that make them all they can be. This kind of sharing is only as good as it is simple and sincere. So the question posed by our inquiring photographer was: "What would you like to tell our benefactors?" I can't wait till God reads this first contribution from Giovanni's brother Johnny.



JOHNNY PAYS HOMAGE TO GOD

The brothers, Giovanni Cruz, 13 years old, and Johnny, 11, were all smiles at the chance to communicate. Giovanni says he has no words to use but that he would love to send you a big bag of special toys. We got to laughing about Giovanni having to deliver them in person so that he could translate the game instructions printed in Spanish. Johnny interrupted us very seriously: "Tell them to pray for God because God always has to be taking care of everybody." That should make God happy.

David Chorlango is one of our special kids who has been in training with us for a lot of years. He now works in our bakery in cleaning maintenance. He took a lot of time to think about what he wants to tell you and finally decided to tell you about Hilda, 18 years old, another of our special members in process of formation. Hilda most probably won't achieve employability because there's not much she can do out of her wheelchair. But, David says she's as important as any member because she's the best friend anyone could have. The Center was lucky to have discovered her on a visit to her house where she was being left



DAVID AND HIS BEST FRIEND HILDA

alone all day because the family had an idea that she wouldn't fit into our daily activities.

Anita Davila, a young mother, hopes you all get the same chances she has to finish grammar school and then learn a trade. She has one more year before earning her grammar school diploma, time enough in which to decide which trade: baking? sewing? beauty care? food service? But she says it'll be a trade she can practice in the house they are building because she'll be



ANITA AND TEACHER, MIKE BYRD

staying home with the kids for a lot more years.

NOTE ASIDE. - We have been suggesting to our folks the possibility of achieving some financing for more small business loans for adults who learn a trade and want to start a money making operation at home. That has started Anita dreaming.



JESSICA INSTRUCTS THE NEW FAMILY

Jessica Tadeo, 15 years old in her first year of vocational training is all fired up for this communication with you. A passenger with her on the bus this morning asked her why she and so many other people of all ages come to the Center every day; so she had a chance to do a solid half hour of outreach and conquest. By the time the bus reached the Center, the lady got off with Jessica to come in and talk with our directors. It turns out the lady and her husband and son work hard as street sellers but are not prospering and are getting more than very discouraged. Poor people in general are the last to recognize an existing great opportunity like the Center is. They're used to nobody telling them anything. So often they don't see or hear the good news. They need the kind of blitzkrieg propaganda that big companies use to sell pencils that talk the message with a musical background. The Center doesn't have a budget for that yet. But we have Jessica!

§

Collahuaso Brothers Incorporated specializes in house calls. Jonathan, 10, and Cristian, 8 years old, sincerely want you to know that with your help they are making life a lot better for their mother who has had a very hard road since the father of the family ran off years ago. Jonathan and Cristian explain why you don't see them on the streets shining shoes. They have developed a system of wandering forlornly on the



COLLAHUASO BROTHERS INC.

street in well-to-do neighborhoods. No heavy human traffic or street business. But people peek out the windows and call them in to shine the family's shoes. Twenty five cents a pair. Guaranteed no bully is going to walk off without paying. Often enough they get a contract for next week at the same house. They make at least six dollars a day between them. The money all goes to their mother except for their cuotas in their savings accounts and an occasional donut purchased in our bakery. They both plan to get rich and help poor people.



FR. HALLIGAN DECLARED “GLOBAL CITIZEN”

Although it has been relegated to the back page, we think it is front page news! Cotopaxi Academy here in Quito recently conferred the honor of “Global Citizen” on Father Halligan, SJ, for his impact on the world through his work with the families of working children. The honor has brought much local notoriety to the Center, with interviews on radio, television and in the press.

But we at the Center think that the more important aspect of the honor is the recognition of this person who has been convinced, from the beginning of his mission, that the future of any society lies with the family, especially the family that is teaching its children, from young ages, that work is a value, not a punishment. He has taught them that if they work, budget and save, with God’s help, they can change their lives and leave poverty behind forever.

Because he believes so strongly in this, Father Halligan has been able to impact the lives of more than 25,000 persons in the city of Quito, as was proven by an external impact study of the Center done just a couple of years ago.

So its “hats off” to Father Halligan, and may this honor not go to his head - may he continue to be the humble and dedicated jesuit he has always been. Congratulations, Padre!



THE GLOBAL CITIZEN AND HIS COURT OF HONOR

Family Unity International, Inc.

Mrs. Patricia Parks, President
12750 Stephen Place
Elm Grove, WI 53122