

THE SHOESHINE SPECIAL

NEWS FROM THE WORKING BOYS CENTER • QUITO, ECUADOR • SUMMER 2010



DEAR FOLKS,

The Lord's peace be with you.

Our school year at the Working Boys' Center will go all the way into the second half of July. But during June, things are winding down, and in sight is a very successful finish to cheer us all up. You also can be proud and happy that you have paid for another year of the best education available for all the kids in our 400 families. There'll be a lot of individual personal satisfactions in the graduation ceremonies at the various levels; kinder, grammar school, technical trade qualification, adult education and special student advancement. But our whole family of families, in a very patriotic way, will rejoice and increase in hope for a much better future. One has to live in a country like this where not everybody has the privilege of basic education, to appreciate what a great prize and victory over poverty our "education for employment" represents. Getting good jobs is the aim of our whole formal education system from pre-school on up. Work is a great value for our folks. Preparing for well paid work is a privilege. All the rest of any day's activity in the Center is about formation in the other values.

Once classes are done, all of us patriots will concentrate on wiping each other off the map in indoor and outdoor competitions. We want you totally proud of us. We don't want to give a false impression that we are against the glory of wounds and scars in fair combat. We want the world to take respectful notice when our names come up on job applications.

Thanks for all the support!

John Halligan, S.J.

ABOVE AND BEYOND THE COMMITMENT MADE

The title indicates where and what our volunteers are. We have been lavishly blessed with the presence all this year of 19 of them; and each one contributes a book's worth of difficult and most valuable work for our folks. They made and are keeping that commitment.; but they also add a special light in the darkness by sharing their volunteer house with our many guests who come wanting to know the operations of our unique mission to the entire families of working kids. Nineteen books would bury this treasure under words instead of letting it shine. So we'll use this picture instead. One look and you'll recognize the calibre of world class missionaries. What we mean is: "Thanks, pals."



Front : (L -R) Katelyn Knight, Audrey Raemisch, Carl Edwards, Laura Bradley, Jenny Murray. Middle: Lauren DeVeau, Adam Afflalo, Joe Dempsey, Mark Jackson, Sarah Dietman, Taylor Barrett. Back: Mike Byrd, Maggie Felker, Andrew Pelikan, Jessica Cochol, Nicolas Hartel, Cinthya Saenz, Florestan Kohl, Saul Gaona

SO MANY GOOD THINGS TO REMEMBER

AN UNBEATABLE PARTNERSHIP

They came at night to the Working Boys' Center, the three of them from Jersey City, and left two nights later with their mission accomplished. Father Robert Reiser, S.J., President of St. Peter's Prep, and two seniors, Vincent Caldas and Timothy Mernar had business meetings with five young men and women soon to graduate from our technical education courses. They are setting up an international micro-lending bank. It's to be run by the young folks themselves. Father Bob wants it that way; no adults to blame or take the honors. The boys are dealing on their own with development foundations to get their own financial backing and they are setting their own rules; thanks; no offense; they'll take care of it themselves. The Working Boys' Center is gratefully proud that the Prep chose us as partners because, in all the world we are the best bet, most capable and unbeatable outfit next to themselves.

DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

It's almost okay that our teenagers are over-achievers in practicing independence. But we also have a grammar school squirt, a girl, who's lobbying her generation's ticket at City Hall all on her own. Along with most of the human race, Ecuador is in the midst of a social revolution; and all citizens including the kids are invited to revolt too. All the kids in the Center sponsored sixth grader Angélica Bedón as their representative to a huge meeting of all the kids in Quito where she got herself elected as an alternate councilperson on the Municipal Council of Children and Adolescents. The other elected kids are much older. So, it's true that working kids develop special talents in human relations.

WITH A SONG IN OUR HEARTS

In the Center we are individual independent spirits. But we have always backed each other, even in the arts, especially in the vocal arts, specifically when our children's choir was competing with other hurriedly summoned choirs in a contest on local TV. The competition lasted a dozen hilarious weeks with short notice appearances to compete whenever the



Father Bob Reiser, S.J. with Bankers Tim Mernar and Vince Caldas stand behind the Quito entrepreneurs.



Angelica explains her position



They can't believe they won!

sponsors needed action for program filler. Halfway through this cultural experience, the rules changed and we found ourselves competing against adult artists. We didn't object. We had good times gathering in front of the Center's TV set to watch our choir control their giggling and fidgeting and sing their happiness at missing school to be on TV. The funniest session was watching our choir take second place in the finals,

beat out by an adult group who wore strange clothes and spooked the audience with jungle drum beats, wails and warbles reviving some endangered ancestral responsorials to ancient calls from the wild. When the kids came home from that last show, we had a party celebrating competition as it's meant to be: all fun.

PRACTICAL POLITICS

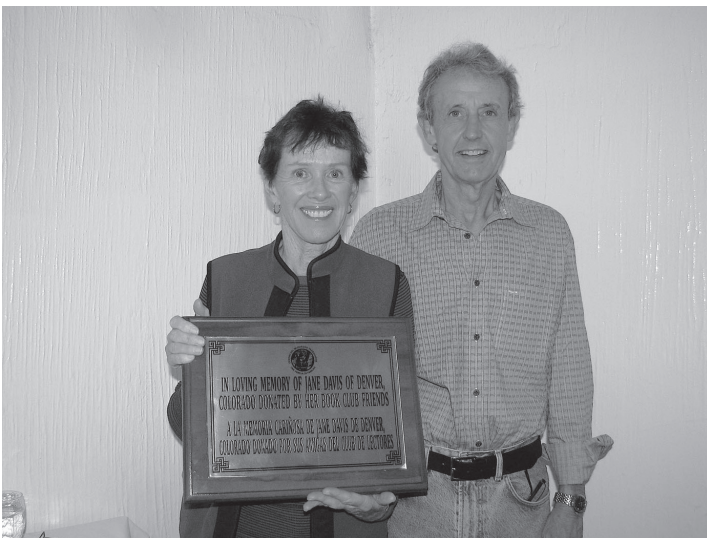
During their last three years of grammar school the boys and girls are old enough to understand the politics of student council elections. We want them to get experience at public speaking. There's not a lot of concern about in-house policies. Election day is always close to the end of the school year because the educational value is in all the months leading up to the voting. The teachers help by suggesting platforms on which the kids write and deliver speeches to and against each other. There's never any permanent damage to bodies or souls' and, on election day everybody is smug about whatever is his or her popular approval rating from zero up to thirty five possible votes. Jessica Vega is pictured here promising something she has absolutely no way of delivering, but ingratiating herself with one and all by using up class time. Is she not the consummate politician?



Jessica makes promises.

IN MEMORIAM

Jane Davis joined the ranks of our patron saints in heaven. She and her husband James and her two WBC year-long volunteers, Tom and Matt, are all special friends of the Center and also of Kathy and Ed Bernau, who are also patrons of the Center. Kathy and Ed are pictured here at a ceremony of dedicating a crucifix carved by an Ecuadorian artist to memorialize Jane's generosity to all of us sisters and brothers in Christ. The crucifix was donated by the Denver Book Club to which Jane had belonged. It has a prominent place in the Center as does Jane in our lives. We look at Jane's crucifix and think of her love and the love Jesus showers on our family of families.



Kathy and Ed Bernau

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>

COME CELEBRATE! AUGUST 13-15

Invitations for Padre Halligan's 80th birthday party are in the mail! Be sure to RSVP Patricia Parks. Send snail mail to the postal address given, or email jparks@wi.rr.com We hope to see you there!

A PERSONALITY IN THE NEWS

Father Robert Thomas headed far south from Boston almost four decades ago as a Saint James Society missionary to serve in Bolivia, Peru and Ecuador. After all those years of service, the last fourteen of which he spent building parishes in the hill country around Center Number Two in northern Quito, we caught him in our Working Boys' Center net. He has been part of our family of families these past four years.

Bob's change from running parishes to working in the Center with our folks promoting Christ's values was never a big change for him or for them. Our folks in the Center all live in those hillside parishes. So, they continue to know him as their pastor.

As a matter of dangerous- for- him fact, one of his former parishioners in the parish of St. Jude is also a member of the Center. Not only her whole family of kids, but also tens of other families that she introduced to the Center have been formed in the values. She is very persuasive about who should belong and be in the Center. She does not take lightly to being put off. Her name is Simona Troya. She wants to know when, just when, and it's high time to know when, Bob will be coming back from Boston where he's looking for an okay from the doctors. When Simona raises her voice in prayer, I would not want to be Bob trying to rest up in Boston.



Father Bob celebrates First Communion with a family.

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