

Juntos Newsletter May 2016

During the months when we are not in Cuernavaca the Newsletters will be based on Gerardo Jaime's reports and photographs. The Newsletters will be every two months, so please look for your next one in July.

For all of those who have been following the Amor para Compartir children, they are now housed at the DIF Center (Mexican family services) and at the Salvation Army. Both are sheltered homes for children who have been removed from their parents or abandoned by the same. This Newsletter deals mostly with the first day Juntos started computer classes at the DIF. Gerardo reports that it was a very good first day. The team hopes that their presence will be beneficial both in instructing the adolescents and keeping in touch with Chuy (María de Jesús) and Jaqueline.

The first session at the DIF, with all the teachers participating, took place April 29<sup>th</sup> from 8 to 11:30 A.M. We had about thirty students. Some of the children, about four or five, recognized Lilia, Oscar and Iris and greeted them with hugs. Tables and chairs were set up in a covered basketball court but they hope to be transferred to real classrooms with air conditioning.



The Juntos team at work. At the far table Lilia and Iris in the red shirts; in the foreground Oscar in green and at the end of the table, Emanuel in red.



Because of DIF policies, there are no pictures that show the childrens' faces.

The day began with twenty minutes of Gerardo's group dynamics and games. Then the children turned to the computers. The great majority started with the very first exercise which is to write a short autobiography; later they made a birthday card for one of the children whose birthday was that day. Most were focused and happy. Those who already had some computer skills helped the others. More importantly, the team identified a girl who was illiterate, very much the exception in today's Mexico. Since she knew some of her letters, they had her type her name multiple times. This situation has arisen before at another location and our lead teacher, Lilia, was able to help that child learn how to read and write. We hope this will be the case here as well.

As reported in the April Newsletter, the two girls we had sponsored to attend high school are among them, with Chuy (María de Jesús) housed at the DIF and Jacqueline at the Salvation Army. They both know that we will continue to support them and because Juntos now is giving computer classes at the DIF, we will have a chance to follow them more closely and make sure that they can continue their studies.

On the day we gave the first class Chuy was present but Jaqueline had stayed at the Salvation Army for a Children's Day celebration. Chuy was much better than the previous time, relaxed and easy going. Gerardo sent our regards and reminded her that we cared about her and want to pay for her schooling. Gerardo asked how she felt about the classes at the school on the premises and said they were fine. He also told her about the secondary school she could attend next August and showed her the brochures. This is a technical school in Temixco where she could study computing. Three or four other teen-agers from the DIF are attending at present and she could join them. When asked if she would like to go back to the school in Huitzilac she had attended before she was moved to the DIF, she said no, when asked why, she couldn't say and didn't elaborate. She did say that a career

related to computers would be of interest. Finally she sent regards to the supporters of Juntos and to the Canadian girls in charge of the soccer project.

We are delighted to report that at the end of the first day the director, Marisol García, was very happy with the results. She suggested that instead of just coming once a month as she had previously indicated, the Juntos team could come once a week Wednesday mornings plus the last Friday of the month.

On this day Children's Day celebrations took place all over Mexico and of course the Juntos team participated. There were sodas, cake and snacks, and some group games. The first picture is from the DIF where the children all wore yellow shirts, the other from another location, Tres de Mayo.





In the background, the table with the computers is still set up. Two students are working.