

Juntos Newsletter – January 2017

Happy 2017! May this be a good year for all.

First some updates on Chuy, Jacqueline and Ernesto.

Chuy and Jacqueline are two girls from Amor para Compartir who were transferred, along with the other children, to alternate facilities. Now the first lives at a state institution just south of Cuernavaca proper and the second lives at a Salvation Army home in a suburb of Cuernavaca.



Chuy lives in this brand new state institution, the DIF "Casa".



A second image of the facilities where Chuy lives, the DIF “Casa”.



Jacqueline lives at this Salvation Army shelter. The day this picture was taken, a university group was setting up to present a Christmas play. As you can see, some of the smaller children were waiting for the play to begin.

Both girls completed one semester of high school (fall 2016) and had begun the second semester when they were moved. Chuy now attends a technical high school where she is studying to be a beautician. Although the transfer from Amor para Compartir took place February 25, she only began school in September. Along with several others from the facility, she goes to school daily from about 8 to 1. Upon her return to the DIF, she has her main meal in the early afternoon, then hangs out for the afternoon. Chuy has expressed her unhappiness about the beautician course. In addition, she is registered at the on-line high school, a system that is offered all over Mexico so students can complete their degrees. There are 22 modules and after each module students take a test and if they pass, move on to the next. To give all these students some help, there are classes every Saturday morning where a tutor answers specific questions and Chuy has been attending these classes. Her progress has been slow and we believe that with some extra tutoring she could move forward. Arrangements have now been made for Gerardo, one of the Juntos tutors, to work with Chuy, providing not only academic help but also encouragement with the on line courses. We are confident that with his help she can move in the right direction and start completing the modules.



Juntos provides computer classes for the students at the DIF “Casa”. Chuy did not participate on the day we visited but certainly has done so in the past.

Jaqueline lives at a shelter run by the Salvation Army under the direction of an energetic woman, Mayora Guadalupe Hernández de Centeno and her husband. With only a staff of four, they attend the needs of 42 children. All the children go to local schools and the one Jaqueline attends is only two blocks away. She is doing very well, getting good grades and looks happy and confident. The day we visited, the Mayora talked to us about her own goals for the shelter, education and love. Because of her age, maybe 60, she and her husband only wanted to have around 20 children, but life being what it is, they have 42, including around 15 that they received from Amor para Compartir last February.

Where do we go from here? We will visit both girls in early January and hope that with the tutoring and support Chuy will be more motivated. At the Salvation Army shelter they have specific requests, underwear, sanitary napkins, sheets. We should be able to help.

We will keep you posted!

Ernesto is the graduate who went on to cooking school. We had the great pleasure of having one of his wonderful meals. We started with Spanish tapa, followed by a salad, then a pasta and shrimp dish in a delicate tomato sauce. For dessert he made a layered cake and cream concoction. Delicious! We hope he will be able to find a permanent job!

Finally, JUNTOS is thinking about the future

With computers and software programs becoming a reality in many Mexican schools, JUNTOS has to rethink its mandate. Although many children are still coming to our computer classes, many also tell us that they are learning Word, Excel and other programs in school. They tell the JUNTOS teachers that they learn more with them, but we must think ahead.

To that end the JUNTOS teachers are learning Scratch, a free programming language and online community to create interactive stories, games, and animations. This is our first venture into programming and we hope to report on the progress shortly. Scratch is meant for children eight years old and up. If this is of interest, you can discover much more on their website: <https://scratch.mit.edu/about/>

We also call upon the readers of this Newsletter to give us suggestions and ideas to go forward into the 21st century.

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