

“Necessity is the mother of invention.”

About three weeks ago JUNTOS suddenly had three teachers instead of five. Iris had left in January and Lilia went on maternity leave on February 15<sup>th</sup>. What to do? We found a creative solution. Five of our excellent students, chosen by the team, have been promoted from students to assistants. Under the guidance of the teachers, they in turn help their fellow students. Therefore, on afternoons where there are concurrent programs, one teacher works with one assistant. In some places where attendance is high, there are two teachers and an assistant.

So far we have been delighted with the results. The assistants are proud to have been chosen and delighted with the small stipend they receive for their work. The assistants vary greatly, so here are some biographies and pictures so you can meet them virtually.

Brenda is a fourteen year old middle school student who has been with JUNTOS for almost seven years. She lives very close to the site where the classes take place, so dropping in after school is easy. Since she began learning computer programs when she was seven, she is quite the pro. She feels very comfortable, knows everyone and in the last few years she has come to use the computer to complete her homework. Obviously her work has paid off since she boasts a 9.8 average this year.



Brenda helping a student.



The dark haired woman seated at the computer comes to the JUNTOS classes with her three children. Brenda is helping her oldest boy.

This is Brenda's last year in middle school and she her plans for the immediate future are clear. This spring she is planning to apply for high school (prepa) and wishes to attend a specialized high school, one where she can continue her computer training. To that end she has to take a placement exam in the late spring and she hopes that she will be admitted. The money she earns will help defray the cost of the entrance exam and maybe something else for herself.

Fabiola is a thirty seven year old mother of three who cleans houses in the mornings. Her eldest son is already seventeen and the two other children are fourteen and seven. Computers have always fascinated her so she had already taken a paid course before JUNTOS. She has been coming for about two years now and once she mastered the programmes she thought she would be able to get a better job. Nevertheless, she has been unsuccessful in finding anything because she only has a middle school certification. Without completing her high school, she does not have a chance to move away from cleaning. With the support of her husband, she is planning to start taking classes to get her high school degree. Like in Canada, there is an on-line programme where students can complete their high school diploma virtually. The government also funds Saturday morning classes where those studying on their own can come for tutorial help.



The girl Fabiola is helping is her own daughter, Yadira.



In this picture Yadira is getting some help from Emmanuel, one of the teachers.



Fabiola, one of the new assistants, supervising a young student.

A very sharp twelve year old, Cristóbal, is the assistant at Colonia Lomas de Juitepec. He started coming to the JUNTOS computer classes when he was eight or nine and today he radiates intelligence and self-confidence. He is only in the first year of middle school, but he acts and looks older than his years. His mother cleans houses but they have sufficient funds to own a computer and have Internet access at home.



Cristóbal helping a young student.





Cristóbal helping another student.



The entire group at Colonia Lomas de Juitepec. Cristóbal is on the far right, his back to the camera.