



A young computer geek, a mother with two children and an entire family.

Guillermo is an old hand at computers. This eleven year old sixth grader has been coming to the JUNTOS computer classes for over three years and he's a pro. You name it, he knows it. Wix, Moviemaker, Photoshop and of course Word, Power Point, Excel are all programs he masters. He was the first one to learn the coding program Scratch. Right now he is fascinated by the robots we have just introduced and keen to learn more.

His mother works in a factory that makes lighters. Because the factory works around the clock, she has a different shift every week. When she is absent, Guillermo's father takes care of him and his younger brother. Little Rafa is only five but Guillermo plans to have him come to JUNTOS as soon as he can.

Guillermo's father drives a milk truck for Alpura. His aunt and cousin, the people who originally brought him to JUNTOS, are no longer able to attend. His aunt is working full time and his cousin, now in high school, attends the afternoon school shift. In Mexico many schools have two shifts, a morning shift and an afternoon shift. The schools not only have a different staff and a different student body, in most cases they are considered two separate schools with different names. In the last few years there has been a push to increase the number of school hours which necessarily means there can only be one school per building. Nevertheless this change has been slow and the great majority of schools still run two shifts.

When Lorena gave me her full name, I looked up from my notes in surprise because she has a very typical Japanese surname. And the woman who was facing me was most certainly Mexican. In Mexico women do not use their husbands' names so I knew this was her family. I asked and she explained that her Japanese grandfather had come



to Mexico, had lived in San Luis Potosí and had married a local woman there. Sadly Lorena was born after his death so the stories she knows all come from her father who was not that interested in Japan or things Japanese. Lorena knows that her grandfather had a lot of trouble learning Spanish and that he worked as a driver first in San Luis and then in Mexico City. Lorena feels that having a Japanese surname has been a great advantage to her family. Her father, a locksmith, got a lot of work from members of the Mexican-Japanese community; she worked as an administrator for the official Japanese language school for over five years; and one of her brothers, who really wanted to learn Japanese, was able to study at the institute and learn the language.

Lorena's two children, Fernanda, eleven, and Emiliano, ten, have both learned more computer programs than their mother. Lorena laughed when she

remembered that at the Japanese language school she worked on a typewriter and said she has made a lot of progress and plans to keep coming in order to learn more.

It is very unusual to have an entire family attending together, mother, father and three children. But in this case, the dad, Alfonso, works Sundays at a regular job and otherwise is a handyman who does plumbing, electrical work, bricklaying and more. Since his time is his own, he comes as often as possible while the rest of the family are very regular attendees.



His wife, Elvia, is quite a bit younger than her husband and very talkative. She smiled and said that she really liked coming to the computer classes because she could get the children to do all their chores much more easily by threatening they would not go if their tasks were not completed. Elvia is from Veracruz but likes living in Cuernavaca. Her computer skills were non-existent a year ago. Although she had never touched a keyboard before, she is now able to help her children with homework and feels a lot more confident. She emphasized that schoolwork was essential and the many computer programs were of great benefit to her family.

The three children, in grades 5, 3 and 1, all proudly said they were the best students in their classes at school. The oldest, named Alfonso like his father, has the same glasses as his father and acts much older than his years. He wants to be a doctor when he grows up. In the picture that follows the two younger children are fascinated by the robots.



And here is the computer geek Guillermo working with the robots. Emmanuel, one of the JUNTOS teachers is standing behind him.



The pictures that follow were taken by Michelle Green Echenberg who spent a couple of weeks with us in Cuernavaca. As a professional photographer she was able to capture the joy, excitement and cooperative learning that we are so proud of. You will see more of her pictures in the subsequent Newsletters.



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