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Vinicio Rodas

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Solidaridad:

News from Foundation Todos Juntos and Pop Wuj

NOVEMBER 2012

Bienvenidos!

Welcome to the inaugural issue of *Solidaridad*, a newsletter from Foundation Todos Juntos and Pop Wuj Spanish School. This periodic newsletter will keep you up to date on the projects supported by the Foundation as well as other news from the Western Highlands of Guatemala.

The first edition of our newsletter focuses primarily on the Family Support Center, formerly known as the Guardería, but future newsletters will delve into all of the projects supported by the Foundation. Thank you for your continued support of the community development projects. Enjoy!



Participants of the Family Support Center (formerly the Guardería)

History of the Family Support Center

The Family Support Center was originally a [Nuevos Horizontes](#) (NH) daycare center. Nuevos Horizontes—the only domestic violence program in Xela—previously ran several rural daycare centers for the children of single, working mothers.

The Pop Wuj Spanish School had collaborated with the NH daycare center in Llanos del Pinal for years. In 2004, when NH lost funding for their daycare programs, they approached Pop Wuj to assume responsibility for the project.

In cooperation with Pop Wuj and several indispensable donors, Foundation Todos Juntos has been able to cover the operating budget of the Guardería for nine years.

Many children who first entered the daycare at a young age are now in primary, middle, and high school. Today, young children continue to enter the Guardería, resulting in a participant population with an age range of 2-18 years.

Because the project now serves children and youth, the name

“Guardería” (which translates to daycare) is no longer appropriate. Therefore Pop Wuj re-named the project “El Centro de Apoyo Familiar” (The Family Support Center) to better reflect the scope of the services provided.

The project offers a broad range of services, including educational support, nutrition, extra-curricular activities, group and individual support, and education for the families.

Becas: The Scholarship Program



Evelyn shows her work

The Pop Wuj scholarship program provides more than just financial support to the recipient families.

Carmen de Alvarado, the Social Projects Director, holds monthly meetings with family members and students when they are available, to share and interpret the educational experience in Guatemala.

Many of the parents never attended school as children, so the monthly meetings often

serve as "parents' school."

This environment encourages parents to share their children's educational successes as well as their challenges and obstacles.

Additionally, the monthly meetings allow Carmen to assist, advise, and even resolve individual issues.

A scholarship is just \$160 per year. Donate today to support a child's education!

Top 5 Expenses of Our Scholarship Recipients

1. Transportation from rural areas to the schools in Xela
2. Textbooks, as schools do not provide books
3. School supplies (in-kind donation of school supplies are a huge help to our families)
4. Shoes, including school/dress shoes and sneakers for gym class
5. School activity fees

Meet Yolanda Lopez

(Interview by Natalia Ledford)

Yolanda Lopez (17) is enrolled in the Bilingual Secretary-ship at Escuela Nacional de Ciencias Comerciales. Recently she discussed what her scholarship and her participation at the Family Support Center mean to her.

N: What do you do in a normal day at the Family Support Center?

Y: Mostly homework and sometimes reading.

N: What is your favorite activity?

Y: My favorite activity here is reading interesting stories. I also love playing games with my friends here, like basketball and cards.

N: Do you have a favorite story, or a favorite book?

Y: Harry Potter!

N: What do you want to be when you grow up?

Y: I want to be an English teacher. Also, I would like to work in a charity that promotes rights, like human rights.

N: How has your Pop Wuj scholarship benefited you?

Y: The scholarship allows me to buy books and other supplies for school, like notebooks. It also helps me with costs for transportation to and from school. It helps me a lot.

N: In terms of continuing your education in the future, what is your vision?

Y: To help people.... There are many ways to help people. It's not important to me to make a lot of money. I feel that it's important that when I finish



Yolanda works on her assignments

studying in the university, to give help right back to my community.

N: Do you have anything you would like to say to the people who support the Family Support Center?

Y: My message is, thanks for your trust in us. I think that you are very good people for trusting in us. I would like to give my sincere thanks to those who donate to the Family Support Center. Your help is truly valued, thanks so much.



Yolanda relaxes on the playground

"I want to be an English teacher. Also, I would like to work in a charity that promotes rights, like human rights."

Funding Crisis at the Family Support Center

The FSC (formerly the Guarderia) in Llanos del Pinal is facing a funding crisis. In order to provide all the services to our children and youth, the FSC is heavily dependent on the kindness and generosity of donors.

This year the FSC has served 36 children and youth, ages 2-18 years old. However, due to the rise in food and fuel prices, the cost of running the Center has increased beyond the available funding.

Pop Wuj has been holding small, but regular, benefits in Xela to help cover some of these rising costs.

In addition to the financial crunch of 2012, there is currently very little funding for the Family Support Center for 2013.

Both Pop Wuj and the Foundation are investigating new funding streams; however, it is uncertain whether the Family Support Center will be open next year and/or in

what capacity.

The Family Support Center has a yearly budget of \$25,000.

Donate today to keep the Family Support Center a strong resource for children and youth in Llanos del Pinal.



“The Family Support Center provides homework help and resources for the students to successfully complete their schoolwork.”

Educational Support

The majority of the children who attend the Family Support Center also receive scholarships via the Pop Wuj Scholarship Program.

The children either attend the public primary school in Llanos del Pinal or travel to Xela for private school, public junior high or senior high school.

There are no high schools in Llanos del Pinal so the teenagers must travel to Xela to complete their basic education.

The Pop Wuj Scholarship allows students to purchase textbooks and school supplies, afford transportation to and from school, buy uniforms and contributes toward additional school-related costs and fees.



Additionally, the Family Support Center provides homework help and resources for the students to successfully complete their schoolwork.

The mothers of the students also participate in monthly group meetings that address concerns such as violence in schools, nutrition, and social/familial issues such as family disintegration, alcoholism and domestic violence.

Nutrition Program at the FSC

As part of the Family Support Center's nutrition program, 36 children and youth receive a hot, nutritious lunch, Monday-Friday in Llanos del Pinal. Snacks and atol (a thick, hot drink often made of corn) are also provided in the morning and the afternoon.

Unfortunately many of the children do not receive a balanced diet, both in quantity and nutritional value. As such,

many children and youth at the Center fall below the third percentile on international growth charts.

To assist, our project also provides vitamins and regular health screenings.

Additionally, we continue to work with these children and their families in an educational capacity to improve their health.





Foundation Todos Juntos

3142 NE 45th Avenue
Portland, OR 97213
USA

Claudia Hindo, Secretary
(917) 454-8744
info@todos-juntos.org

Foundation Todos Juntos, a 501 (c) 3 non profit, was founded in 2001 by former students of the Pop Wuj Spanish School to facilitate ongoing collaboration with various development projects in and around Quetzaltenango (Xela), Guatemala.

Today the Foundation supports educational, medical, social, and public health projects in the Western Highlands of Guatemala. Please visit the following pages for additional information on the projects:

www.foundationtodosjuntos.blogspot.com/

<http://www.vocesdecambio.org>

Projects Supported by Foundation Todos Juntos



In this issue we highlighted the Family Support Center and Scholarship Program. Foundation Todos Juntos also supports the Safe Stove Project, the Medical Clinic, the Environmental Projects, and Voces de Cambio. To learn more about all our projects, please visit:

www.todos-juntos.org

www.foundationtodosjuntos.blogspot.com/

Tax-deductible donations may be sent via check to:

Foundation Todos Juntos
3142 NE 45th Avenue
Portland, OR 97213

Online donations are accepted via PayPal at
www.todos-juntos.org/donate.html.

Please specify which project(s) you wish your donation to benefit.