

Report No. 9 from Alto Cayma - 3 Sep 17

A Milestone

Tuesday, August 29, marked the 9th anniversary of the founding (in 2008) of our Association Serving Alto Cayma. We had operated informally for almost 4 years prior to that date, but by 2008 our activities had grown to a point where we thought it would be best to formalize our operation. August 29, 2008, is the date that the Peruvian government registered our Constitution as an official document, and we became a nonprofit organization under Peruvian law, exempt from taxes and eligible to receive charitable donations. Since that time, we've had to submit a monthly report to the Peruvian tax authorities, who would love to find us spending money for non-charitable purposes so they could yank our tax exemption, but despite the fact that they have audited us twice so far, they haven't been able to lay a glove on us, so to speak.

Special Deliveries

On Tuesday afternoon, we went out to deliver some extra items that sponsors and others had bought for people in our Acercándonos sponsorship program. Our first delivery was a special cart for making "salchipapas", a



snack of french fries and fried balogna that's very popular here in Peru. This cart went to a family in which the father is suffering from diabetes and can't

work. The mother had been making and selling salchipapas from a borrowed cart in order to support the family, but the owner of the cart needed it returned. Thanks to the generosity of a donor from Charlotte, now the mother has a shiny new cart of her own with which to continue her small business.

The next delivery was of a two-burner cookstove and a tank of propane gas to the family of Ana Ruth, a girl with Down Syndrome who is sponsored



by Chris Connelly. The family lives in Mujeres con Esperanza, and someone had broken into their house and stolen the gas tank they had been using for cooking. (Their cookstove was in such bad shape that even the thieves didn't bother taking it.) During his recent visit, Chris promised to buy them a new rig, and this was the culmination of that promise. (Hopefully Ana Ruth's little sister won't make a habit of gnawing on the gasline, as she's doing in the photo. :-)

The final delivery was of a set of bunkbeds for Shayla, a girl newly sponsored in our program by Gary and Kathy Burt from Michigan. Shayla



and her family were sleeping in inadequate beds, and the Burts committed to buying them these bunkbeds. Now Shayla will sleep comfortably in the top



bunk, while her mother and little brother sleep in the bottom bunk.

Acercádonos Program Waiting List

We continue making final visits to the homes of prospective candidates to go our waiting list for sponsorships under the Acercádonos program.



Most, but not all, of these cases will get on our waiting list, but even if we judge that they don't need the ongoing support that a sponsorship provides, we may still generate a Social Work Plan under which we can provide them with short-term relief of some of their more pressing problems. (Generating such formal plans to govern our work in each case is an improvement in our effectiveness and efficiency that Briza, our professional Social Worker, has brought to us.)

Getting into the Acercándonos program opens doors for people to other resources we can bring to bear to help them, and some of the people we're encountering really need that. Take the case of Señora Nieves. Sra. Nieves is



a 30-year old mother of two who became a widow last year. Her husband had been a taxi driver. He was found dead in his taxi, shot in the head (essentially assassinated) by perpetrators whose identity and motives remain unknown to this day. This traumatic event has had a devastating effect on the family in all aspects of their lives.

- First of all, there's the economic impact of losing their primary breadwinner. The family is now trying to live on what Sra. Nieves can make by going out into the fields and working as a day laborer. Leaving home at 6:00 in the morning and returning at 7:00 at night, she still only earns about 600 soles (approximately \$185) a month, 200 soles of which has to go to pay off a debt which her husband had incurred before his untimely death. Fortunately, a woman in Mujeres con Esperanza has let the family live in her



house rent-free. Even so, however, Sra. Nieves' meager income is not enough to feed the family, pay the utility bills and educate her two children.

- Then there's the psychological impact. The husband had been a good father, always playing with the kids down at their level, on the floor, and taking the family on outings whenever he had free time, and now, suddenly, he's gone. Sra. Nieves is under tremendous stress with the loss of her husband and all that she now has to cope with, fulfilling both parental roles, and the children are too young to be able to assimilate what has happened to their family. Antonella (age 8), the older of the two, is very



depressed. Karlos Daniel (age 5), the younger child, has become very troubled



and disobedient, gets into fights at school, and drives his mother to distraction at home. This entire family needs a thorough course of psychotherapy, which can easily cost them over 300 soles a month.

Our Association has been able to provide some forms of temporary relief for this family, but they desperately need a sponsor who can help them on an ongoing basis. If any of you feel so moved, please get in contact with me. I'm sure you'll have further questions which I'll be glad to answer, but time is of the essence.

English Classes

John's English classes, especially those in Mujeres con Esperanza, continue to be very well attended. In fact, they may be *too* well attended.



Many children are coming who are too young to follow the instruction John is aiming at the older ones, and as a result, they become restless and noisy. Starting next week, Briza has volunteered to take the younger children into another room for activities lightly involving English on a more basic level.

Letters

The "ahijados" (sponsees') letters from last Spring have finally come out of translation at the Cultural Center. I plan to scan and e-mail these

letters to the sponsors soon. Right on the heels of these letters, we have the ones written by the ahijados for the current cycle. We'll get these translated and I'll mail them to the sponsors when I get back to the States in early October. Remember, in this cycle, only sponsors who have written to their ahijados are going to receive a letter in return. The other sponsors will receive a brief report on their ahijados written by the staff of the Acercándonos office.

Monthly Meeting of the Children of Acercándonos

On Saturday afternoon we welcomed 2 new children into the Acercándonos program. The photo shows me welcoming Mariluz, whose



family story was featured 3 weeks ago in Report No. 6 (father has lung cancer and can't work, 11 people living in a single room, etc.) Fortunately, a generous and compassionate couple in Charlotte stepped up and offered to sponsor the entire family, with Mariluz as their representative member in Acercándonos. After the meeting, Briza scheduled an appointment to visit the



family and develop a complete Social Work Plan to address all their needs on an integrated basis.

A team of psychologists from Saint Mary's Catholic University gave a very thorough presentation on the subject of "Stress in Children and



Adolescents", a topic which is certainly germane to the population of Alto Cayma. After the presentation, Dr. Javier Valero, a dentist who lives and



practices in Alto Cayma, but also teaches on the faculty at the university, extended an offer of free dentures for up to 5 needy patients whom he invited us to identify.

Mother Teresa

Today was a special day in our local church parish, which is named in honor of Mother Teresa, who was a model of service to the poor whom Father



Alex and the rest of us strive to emulate. Today we celebrated the one-year anniversary of her canonization as a Saint in the Catholic Church.

Victor Temporarily Out of Commission

Victor has long suffered from chronic sinus problems. Lately, a large number of polyps had appeared throughout his sinus cavities, a condition which made surgery imperative. He had the surgery on Thursday morning, and I'm pleased to report that the operation went well. The doctor said he was able to remove all the polyps that had accumulated. After the surgery was over, Victor was clamoring to go home even before the anesthesia had completely worn off. I visited him at home that afternoon, and his spirits seemed pretty high for someone who just went through what he did, but now he faces a long recovery. He's got plugs in his nose which make breathing



uncomfortable. Those will get removed on Monday, and then he'll have 10 days where he's supposed to avoid all forms of risk, including being around other people who could infect him with any kind of disease. Please keep Victor and his family in your prayers.

"Love God, Serve Neighbor/Serving Alto Cayma",

Jim