

Report No. 7 from Alto Cayma - 15 Apr 18

Time to Panic?

I'm now just 2 weeks away from leaving Alto Cayma for a 3-month stay in the States (May-July). I always panic at this point, wondering how I'm ever going to tie up all the loose ends I still have in just two weeks. With experience, I've learned that I'm not going to get them all tied up, no matter what I do, so the best thing is to just concentrate on finishing a few of the more important projects I have going, and let the rest slide. The sun will still come up the next day, I've found.

The ASAC Team

On Monday, we held a teambuilding session with all the members of the Association Serving Alto Cayma Team to review Principles of Operation which have been drafted to govern how we work, and how we relate to one another and to those we serve. We have a good team and a good organization in place now. We just need to refine our operation to be able to get the most out of it, for ourselves as well as for those we serve.

Youth Library

In last week's report, I talked about the Library reopening under "new management". It did open this week, and Mondays and Tuesdays, Danilo is



the person in charge. Here he is, enthusiastically reading a book to the kids and engaging them in a discussion as they go along.

Letters

I didn't get much response to last week's invitation for sponsors to still write to their sponsorees, so we're proceeding with what we've got, although anyone who still wants to write can do so at any time. With the current restrictions on our system for translating letters, we're saying for now that only those sponsorees who have received a letter from their sponsor are obligated to write one in return.

Entrance Exam for the National University

The results of the latest entrance exam were that 3 of our students got in, and 20 did not. The 20 were split evenly between kids who just got out of high school and were taking the exam more for practice than for anything else, and those who have been out for a year or more but are still having problems passing the exam. Lidia and Sabina are meeting with each student individually to discuss how best to proceed from here, case by case.

The three who got in (all of whom had more than a year to prepare) were:

- Samuel Sulca Huahuacondori (Sponsors: Jon & Sandy Michel). Samuel will study Mining Engineering. Samuel occupied 12th place among the 12 who were admitted in this very competitive career field.

- Maria Gozme Huite (Sponsors: Marv & Joyce Ross). Maria will study Sociology, and entered in 17th place among the 33 who were admitted in this career field

- Luis Benique Sarayasi (Sponsor: Carol Gibson). Luis will study Physics, and entered in 5th place among the 22 successful applicants in this career field.

There is one other student to whom I've got to give an Honorable Mention:

- Jessica Salazar Melo (Sponsor: Sev Huselid) barely missed gaining admission to study Industrial Relations. The score of the last person to get in in that career field was 50.013276. Jessica, the next person on the list, scored 50.008052, or just .005224 short. Just one more correct answer, and she would have been in.

Family Center

Father Alex has been operating a Family Center in the Aldea for over a year, offering every category of service which a family could need. We've been referring people to the Center, especially for psychological counseling and treatment. On Tuesday, we went to visit Raquel Salinas, the Social Worker



who administers the Center for Father Alex. We talked about ways in which we can work more closely together, and as we gain more experience, we plan to enter into a formal agreement between the Family Center and our Association.

Caritas

Another possible future strategic partner for our Association is Caritas, the charitable arm of the Catholic Church here in Peru. On Thursday, Javier Delgado (in the white hat), the Administrator of Caritas in



Arequipa, took us to visit their vocational training center in an underdeveloped section of Arequipa called Ciudad de Dios (City of God). Caritas was given 40 acres of land on which to develop their campus, so



they've got plenty of room to grow.

At this point in time, the Center offers, at subsidized rates, training in a number of careers:

There are 3-year certificate programs in Administration and in Gastronomy



where the students enjoy access to a completely-equipped industrial kitchen



as a laboratory.

There are shorter courses in welding and metalworking



as well as in Cosmetology,



where the students can learn marketable skills in a matter of even a few months.

New classes planned for the near future include Graphic Design



and a Language Center.



To make this training opportunity accessible to all, the center even has a built-in nursery, where mothers can leave their children while they take



their classes.

We already have one student in our Salir Adelante program who is studying with Caritas, and we will suggest that future students interested in the careers offered also consider Caritas among their options.

Aldea Birthday Party

On Saturday morning we had a birthday party for 3 boys in the Aldea



(Orphanage). One boy received a miniature radio as a present, and the rest



of the boys got very excited, thinking that they may get one too, someday. Then there were some glum faces in the room, as those who just celebrated their birthdays suddenly realized that they'll have to wait another whole year for theirs. Maybe we need an Aldea Kids' Radio Fund. :-)

This year there are 3 German girls working as volunteers in the Aldea



- the most, I believe, they've ever had. The day we were there, the girls were making the kids a German lunch, with plenty of meat and potatoes, and an



apple cake. We were sorry we couldn't stick around!

Acercádonos Elderly Meeting

On Saturday afternoon, we had the monthly meeting of the elderly of the Acercádonos program. The main event this time was an extended session of Tai Chi, led by Giuliana, our elderly specialist. Regular practice



of Tai Chi by the elderly can improve flexibility and reduce stress, both of which are badly needed.

New Horizons Youth Group

On Saturday afternoon, we also had a meeting of our New Horizons Youth Group, this time up in Mujeres con Esperanza. John gave a talk on



Christian values. Then Victor concluded a topic he had started at the



previous meeting, on how the kids could improve their relationship with their parents by being considerate, and helping them when they're tired, or doing the things for which they (the kids) are responsible without having to be told. And finally, the meeting ended with some fun, dynamic activities for the kids.

Neighborhood Progress

Last week I talked about a new high school going up in the lower part of Alto Cayma. At the same time, there's a new market being built, across from the new high school (see at the right in this photo), with each stall



owned by an individual vendor. Seen from the other end, the market isn't



even open yet, and already they're expanding it.

Another new feature is this beautiful park that was just opened near



our house, with recreation space for all ages. Today was the inauguration day



for this park, and 3 other neighborhood parks, here in ENACE Alto Cayma.



Why this sudden flurry of civic activity? Could it be due to the upcoming municipal elections? It's funny how nothing happens the first several years *after* an election, but in the last year *before* the next election, projects just leap out of the ground all over the place!

My Motorcycle

I recently received the permanent license plate for my new bike, and



this just 2 months after I bought it. (Long-time readers of these reports will remember that it took me 20 months to get the plate to my last bike.)

However, this week I had a little misadventure with said bike. On Wednesday morning, I was riding it down to our office when I made a left-hand turn into a side street and boom! - the bike slid right out from under me, leaving me doing a 3-point slide over the pavement on one bike, one hand and one knee and saying to myself, as the pavement was eating me, "Hmm, this isn't good!". When I came to a halt, the bike was on its side and my left foot was trapped underneath. From a sitting position, I couldn't lift the bike up, but I managed to pull my foot out of my shoe and free it. Then I could

stand up, lift the bike up, and free my formerly-trapped shoe. Looking around to see what happened, I noticed that there was some loose sand on the pavement, so I initially attributed the cause to that. But then I got to thinking that in 12 years of riding bikes all over Alto Cayma, surely I must have encountered such conditions before, but never had a problem. That led me to identify a contributing factor. This was my first ride after I had contracted with a neighbor to wash my bike. What she did was detail it, and she left it looking better than new. However, I found out later that one reason it looked so good was that she had *waxed* everything, even the tires, *tread and all*. No wonder the bike wanted to slide right out from under me! Oh, well, at least now I have a good excuse for going to visit the nurses in the Policlínico every day.

Something New is Coming

This week Glenda and Carol were working on rehabbing the little orange house (the "Pumpkin House") we own just up the street from our



house. Something new is coming to the Association Serving Alto Cayma. Perhaps I can tell you what it is next week.

And that's this week's news from Alto Cayma, where if it hasn't happened yet, it's probably just about to.

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

Jim