

## **Report No. 8 from Alto Cayma - 22 Apr 18**

### **Acercádonos Waiting List**

The waiting list for our Acercádonos ("Coming Together") sponsorship program for children and elderly is growing. Our case workers are always encountering new candidates as they circulate around the community taking care of the "ahijados" (sponsees) we already have. They bring initial data on new cases back to the office, and then they and Briza, our Social Worker, make a visit to the home to evaluate more closely the situation and the needs of the family. If the case appears to merit consideration for a sponsorship, a second visit is made by John, Briza and Victor together, to probe every aspect of the case, especially what resources may already be available to the family which are not readily apparent. When these 3 are satisfied that this would be a good candidate for a sponsorship, they're put on our waiting list. So, as you can see, the process for getting on our waiting list is a rigorous one, with us making our best effort to insure that the need is valid and that the sponsorship will successfully help both the candidate and their family. Then it falls to me to find a sponsor, and that's why I am constantly appealing to you readers, who know what we do here, to spread the word to folks you know who might like to join the Acercádonos family as sponsors. (Picture a recruiting poster that says, "Uncle Jim needs YOU!")

### **Students in Salir Adelante/Bridge to Opportunity**

We now have 99 students receiving support for post-secondary studies through these two programs, and at this time of the year, most of them are in some type of transition which Lidia, Sabina and I try to help them with. Each case requires individualized and personal attention, resulting in many face-



to-face meetings. The various situations the students find themselves in include the following:

- Most of the members of last year's high school graduating class coming out of Acercándonos want to study for some kind of professional career in the National University, and need to prepare for the competitive entrance exam. They enroll in one of the academies that exist in Arequipa for this purpose, with sponsorship under our Bridge to Opportunity program.

- Some graduates from earlier classes are still struggling to pass the entrance exam and, depending on the merits of their case, may be given the opportunity to continue a little longer in the Bridge to Opportunity program.

- Some students enter our program laterally, rather than passing through the Acercándonos program. We include these students in the Bridge to Opportunity program, which is a central fund, but when they gain entrance to the university, they need their own personal sponsor to continue their studies with sponsorship in our Salir Adelante ("Getting Ahead") program. It falls to me to find them one.

- Once in the university, some of our students need our guidance in decisions concerning changes of major.

- A few students lose their sponsors, or their families have suffered setbacks making it difficult for the family to pay the portion of the student's educational expenses to which they had committed. In either case, I need to seek either new or additional sponsorship support on their behalf.

- Some students have completed their years of class work, and are doing internships, thesis projects, and other requirements to become fully credentialed professionals.

As you can see, opportunities are always cropping up where someone you know could help a deserving student complete their education and break out of the cycle of poverty that their parents and grandparents were locked into for generations.

### **Salir Adelante Meeting**

At Saturday's monthly meeting of the students in the Salir Adelante educational sponsorship program, Lucho and Javier gave a presentation on



their chosen career field, Chemistry/Chemical Engineering.

Lidia had to leave the meeting early, to attend to an emergency at home, but Sabina stepped right in to take over, and we didn't miss a beat.



Sabina, under Lidia's coaching, has become very confident and capable in her job. It's fun to watch her managing this group of students, many of whom are older and more extensively educated than she is. She doesn't let that phase her a bit.

One feature which Lidia has instituted in the student programs is that if a student arrives late for a meeting, she gives them a "prize". She "lets" them sign up for a day to support our staff in the operation of the Library, or our special activities up in Mujeres con Esperanza. As you can see from this



crowd huddled around Sabina, there are many takers for these "opportunities"

At this particular meeting, however, Lucho was highly "ticked" at our clock. (Sorry, I couldn't resist that one. :-). We go by the clock on our office wall, which is 2 minutes fast. That's exactly how "late" Lucho was for this meeting, although by his watch he had arrived exactly on time. Here he is,



then, after the meeting, taking it upon him self to "calibrate" our clock.

### **Acercádonos Birthday Party**

This month's Acercádonos sponsorship program monthly birthday party was lightly attended, compared to most, but the participants whaled



away at Mr. Piñata with enough extra energy to compensate.



A feature of these parties which I may not have mentioned before is that after we give the celebrants their presents, we stand them up against the wall and shoot them - shoot their photos, that is. We then print



these photos, mount them in a handmade decorative frame, and return them to the celebrants as a souvenir of the occasion.

### **English Classes**

I looked in on Nikole's English class on Saturday afternoon, and was pleased to see that it was well attended. Nikole does an excellent job in both



preparing and presenting her lessons in such a way that they are fun and interesting. Thus she is able to attract an attendance of approximately 15 kids for each class.

### **A New Program**

Last week I hinted that something new is about to burst forth from the humble Pumpkin House. I had hoped I might tell you this week what it is,



but we're not quite ready. So, patience, dear readers. It will definitely be revealed in next week's report.

### **Goals for 2018**

On Friday, the Board of Directors of the Association Serving Alto Cayma met to formalize our Goals for 2018. These are:

- Publicity - Expand our presence on, and our utilization of, the internet as a tool to inform the public as to our programs, and to facilitate people's participation in these programs
- Training - Increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the staff we have now assembled, through training in areas such as computer skills and techniques for effective social work
- Facilities - Improve the area surrounding our new building in Mujeres con Esperanza, and improve the utility services for that building to make it more user-friendly
- Programs - Expand our programs in Mujeres con Esperanza in depth (level of participation), as well as possibly in breadth (variety of programs offered)
- Involvement - Increase the involvement of our students in our service programs, to capture what they can contribute and at the same time to build their service ethic
- \*\*\*Classified\*\*\* - the new program hinted at above.

And with that, I've practically got one foot on the steps to the plane and the other on a banana peel, in that I'll be leaving Alto Cayma in just 6 days for a

3-month stint back in the States. It's been great fun, and I hate to leave here, but I know that our Team will continue without missing a beat, and we'll all look forward to receiving periodic reports from the folks here with boots on the ground serving in Alto Cayma.

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

Jim