

Report No. 7 from Alto Cayma - 21 Apr 19

Visitors

David & Donna Hodgkins left early Monday morning. From here they



went to Cusco and hiked the last day of the Inca Trail to Machu Picchu, an experience they described as exhausting but exhilarating.

Paul's Home Visits

This was Paul Schmidt's first visit to Alto Cayma, but he was already sponsoring 17 people here, plus the one he added when he first arrived, so we had many home visits to make, in order that he could get to know his people, see how they live, and see what their current needs are. We made all those visits over the course of just 2 days, Monday and Tuesday, which was challenging, but Paul was a good soldier.

One advantage of the home visits we do when "padrinos" (sponsors) come to visit is that both Victor and Briza go along on the visits, and between the two of them, they're very expert at getting down to the heart of the matter of a family's situation and what, if anything, may be holding them back.

I'll now give a line or two, plus photos, on all 18 visits, just to give you an overview of the variety of cases which are typical here in Alto Cayma. As you'll see in some of the photos, Paul left a big bag of groceries with each family that he visited.

Sr. Tiburcio is 85 years old. He is no longer capable of taking proper care of himself, but his 37-year old daughter, Adela, lives with him



and takes care of him before and after her own long workday. We were so impressed with Adela's concern for her father that we decided to pay for a



dental exam and treatment for her as a reward.

Sr. Leoncio also lives alone, in a one-room house which is too



small for him. Victor entered into a "contract" with him as to how they could



work together to add a 2nd room to Leoncio's house.

Sr. Belizario is a cheerful old fellow who dedicates his time to taking care of his wife, who has been wheelchair-bound since she had to have



a leg amputated.

Sra. Profeta is relatively young, but she suffers from



rheumatoid arthritis so bad that she can't leave her house, except in a case of true necessity.

Jhoselyn is a 15-year old girl. Paul bought a prefab house for



her family a few years ago, and it's still in beautiful shape.

Diana is a young girl who is mature and responsible beyond her



years.

Juan Elias is a "Renaissance Man" in miniature. He's won so many



awards for so many different things that he scarcely has room to store them.

Gabriela lives with just her mother and her sister, because her father



committed suicide 4 years ago. They gave Paul a wooden teabox in the shape of a teapot, which they had made themselves.

Jessibel is a severely retarded little girl who needs expensive



medications, which her mother struggles to pay for. Jessibel's older sister, Jennifer, narrowly missed gaining admission to study Law in the National University, and we're going to evaluate her as a candidate for sponsorship in our Bridge to Opportunity program.

Roberto is a 14-year old boy with one little brother. The boys and



their mother need help of many kinds, since the father abandoned the family and is not complying with the support he had promised to send.

Sra. Lucia is a 74-year old lady who is a real character, a wisecracker.



Unfortunately, she speaks only Quechua, so I wouldn't have understood a thing she said even if her mouth were not full of the coca leaves that she chews constantly. :-)

Mariluz is the nominal "ahijada" (sponsors), but Paul is



actually sponsoring her whole family, because her father is in treatment for cancer and can't work, and he has a large family with many needs.

Sra. Petrona is the woman I reported on last week, whom



Carmen had brought to the office and Paul had agreed to sponsor on the spot. She works as a recycler, and her house looks like it. :-)

Kenyo, Paul's only student sponsoree, is studying Civil



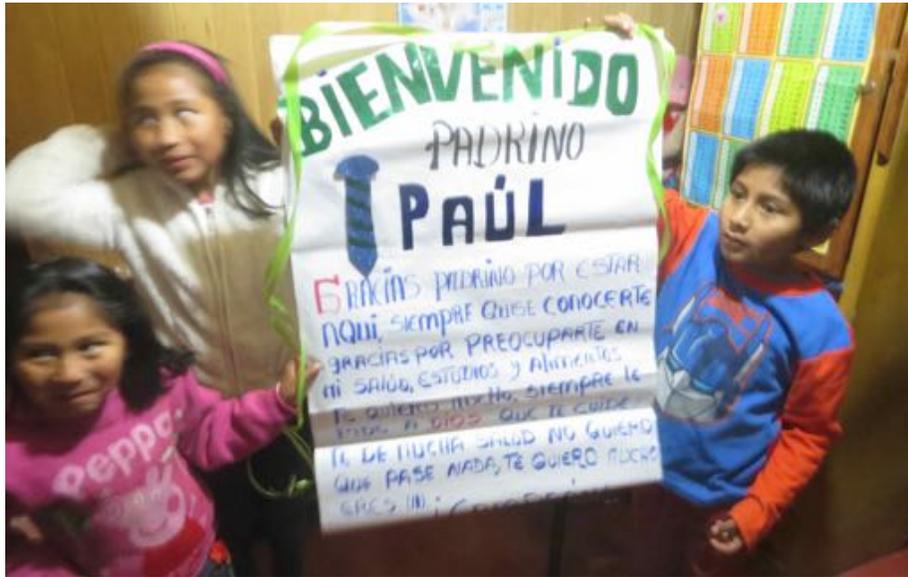
Engineering, but he is learning that getting through the university can be challenging in more ways that just the classwork and exams.

Briseht and her brother largely take care of themselves while



their mother works long hours. Victor offered to take them to the movies as a reward for their responsible behavior.

Shantal and her family were moved to tears by Paul's



generosity, and were very appreciative. This family always lends a hand when there's something that needs to be done.

Franz and Nieves are grandson and grandmother. Last year,



Victor allowed Franz to come on a camping trip while he was still "too young", but he behaved very responsibly. Nieves lives with Franz and his parents, and occupies a room constructed at the back of the family's lot.

Carmen & Javier

Our home visits with Paul in Mujeres con Esperanza on Monday morning were interrupted when Carmen, a woman who lost her oldest son to leukemia a year ago, came out and asked Victor and I to talk to her husband, who was home for Holy Week from working in the mines. She said he was threatening to take their other 2 children away from her. We talked to him,



man to man, and found out that, as always, there were two sides to the story, and that the main problem was that the couple didn't communicate well. Instead, each was assuming motives and actions on the part of the other which were erroneous. We asked them both to commit to come to our office and meet with Gregorio, our part-time psychologist. They did both come on Tuesday morning, as promised. We will continue to follow this case closely.

Jimmy Aquise

On Tuesday morning, Victor and I met with Jimmy Aquise, who has always been one of our favorite kids in the Acercándonos program, and now



in Salir Adelante. We learned that after he took the exam to study Accounting in the National University and failed to get in (by a narrow margin), he became concerned that he was "losing time", so he set out on a self-designed 3-pronged strategy - work in the mornings, study Accounting in a technical institute in the afternoons, and study for the next university entrance exam on his own in the evenings. We talked it over with him, and convinced him to improve his chances for the university exam by studying in an academy in the mornings, with support from our Bridge to Opportunity program, instead of working.

On the one hand, I admire the initiative some of these kids show, but on the other hand, I wish they'd come and consult with us before they launch off on a new plan, because multiple heads are often better than one.

Paul's Departure

The last day Paul was here, we captured his handprint on our Wall of



Fame. The ladies in our office had enjoyed working with Paul, and asked him



to come back soon, bringing his wife with him next time. He left Arequipa,



bound for Lima, on Wednesday evening.

Jueves Santo (Holy Thursday, or Maundy Thursday)

Father Alex held a beautiful service on Holy Thursday, including



washing the feet of people from the community who were dressed to



represent the Disciples. Not only was the service very beautiful, but his message concerning servant leadership was very powerful.

Visitor for a Day

Julia King came up to spend all day Saturday with us. She's a physical therapist from Charlotte who is finishing an 8-month stay in Arequipa where she's been learning Spanish (and very well, I might add) in preparation for moving on to Cusco to work in a mission clinic there.

Since this was the 3rd Saturday of the month, she got to participate in our Salir Adelante meeting in the morning. She heard Gina give a



presentation on a topic from her field of Industrial Engineering. She also got



a chance to meet and chat with some of the students individually.

This meeting gave me the opportunity to introduce Alejandrina to her



"brother", Gabriel, and her "sister", Liliana, the other two students her padrinos were already sponsoring. Now they're a "family" of three.

Since this was to be my last meeting with the students before heading back to the States again, all 40-some of those present said goodbye to me all



at once with a group hug - what fun! After that, we took a slightly more



formal group picture.

On Saturday afternoon, Julia also got to participate in our monthly



Acercádonos Birthday Party.

Easter Sunday

Father Alex rounded out Holy Week with another beautiful service on Easter Sunday, again with a message filled with comfort and hope. After the



week he's had, he should take a week off, but I'm sure that's out of the question. He works awfully hard, but that's why they pay him the "big bucks". (Ha!)

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

Jim