

Report No. 11 from Alto Cayma - 14 Oct 18

An Educational Milestone

José Zuñiga is the husband of Tula, one of the Case Workers in our Acercándonos program office. You have been hearing about José for years, as he has tutored many of the kids in our program to help them improve their schoolwork, and in some cases even avoid flunking a class or the entire school year. José completed all the classwork for a degree in Education many years ago, but at that time he lacked the money to go on and do the thesis project required to get his full teaching credentials. At the same time, he was starting a family, and he never got back to finishing what he had started. He is, however, a very talented teacher, and his talents were not being fully utilized. Therefore, our Association undertook to sponsor him to finish getting his credentials, and on Tuesday he came to show me his diploma. With this



document in hand, he will be applying for jobs in the state school system for the next school year as a teacher of Physics and Math.

Against All Odds

While we're on the subject of education, also on Tuesday a young man came to see us whose story illustrates how formidable the challenges are which some of the young people here in southern Peru have to overcome in order to get an education and get ahead.

Dilbert Torres Huarca is just 17 years old, but even at this young age, his life has been a constant struggle. He was born in Coporaque, near the



Colca Canyon. His father is a farm worker who only makes 600 soles (approximately \$180) a month. Dilbert's mother has health problems, and is unable to even walk, much less work outside the home. There are also 2 younger children in the family.

Dilbert finished grade school in Coporaque. Even at that age, he used to work during his summer vacations in Majes, an agricultural valley where an aunt of his lives. The woman he worked for there offered to put him through high school, so he spent 5 years studying in the town of Pedregal, separated from his family.

When he finished high school, Dilbert had lofty goals. For practical reasons, he wanted to study a trade in order to be able to help his family. He moved to Arequipa all by himself, and enrolled in a technical institute called SENATI to learn to be an Industrial Electrician. He's currently in the 2nd semester of his 1st (of 3) years. Once he finishes this technical course, his

dream is to continue his studies in a university to become an Electrical Engineer, but first he'll have to go to work. His life goals are to become a professional, help his family, be a good example for his younger siblings, and see that they get an education as well.

Dilbert and his family face formidable economic challenges. Even at the age of 17, Dilbert is his own sole support. He lives in Alto Cayma alone, in a rented room. He works in a shop in the industrial part of Arequipa, carting merchandise around the premises. His work schedule is from 6 a.m. until 7 p.m., 6 days a week, with 4 hours off in the morning so he can attend his classes. For these long hours, they pay him 300 soles (approximately \$90) a month, and that's all he has to live on.

SENATI is the best technical institute in Arequipa. It is also the most expensive, but graduates are virtually guaranteed to get a good job once they finish. On Dilbert's father's low income, with a wife who can't work and with 2 other children to feed and educate, Dilbert's father can't afford to pay for Dilbert's post-secondary education. Dilbert needs a sponsorship of \$115 a month for the next 27 months in order to complete his studies in SENATI. Otherwise, I don't see any way he can make it through. Would anyone out there care to help? If so, please contact me and let's talk.

A Dinner Date

Lilia and Maris are the two ladies who run the Policlínico for the Missionary Society of Saint Paul, the Maltese congregation of which Father Alex is a member. On every one of my stays in Alto Cayma, I make a point of taking them out to dinner one time. Lilia (in the foreground of this photo) is



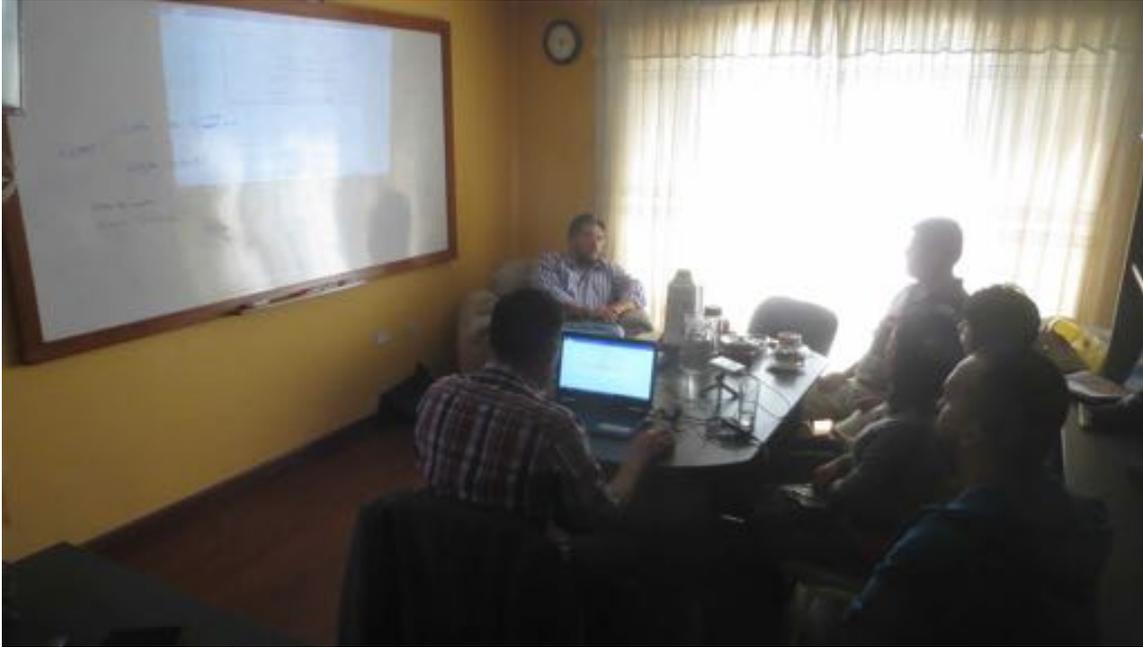
from Arequipa, and Maris (in the background) is from Malta. I've known them for 15 years, ever since we started working intensively in Alto Cayma, and we have a long, collaborative working relationship. For example, we send our "ahijados" (sponsees) who need medical attention to their clinic. Also, they have a group of elderly whom we combine with ours whenever we're going to do an elderly outing, and we and they co-manage these events, such



as the one shown in this photo, which happened to catch Maris in the act of feeding her face.

Kaizen

On Wednesday morning, Briza, Victor, Lidia, John and I went to Kaizen to review the results of the analysis they had done of each of the



positions in our Association's organizational chart. As a professional management consulting group, Kaizen also gave us many thought-provoking ideas about how we can improve our organizational structure and the distribution of duties among our staff members. The next step in the process (tune in next week) will be an evaluation of each of the people who are occupying those positions, from myself on down, to see how adequately we're performing. This should get interesting.....

Roxana Joins "The Club"

Roxana is our accountant, who keeps us out of trouble with the Peruvian tax authorities (meaning she helps us keep our reputation as a charity pristine, so the tax authorities won't pull our tax-exempt status). On Wednesday, she joined John and Victor in Club 50 (soon to be Club 50+, as John leads the pack in turning 51 on Monday). We got back from the Kaizen offices just in time to join her for a celebration. Sabina had a cake for her, and



I got this photo at just the moment that Sabina was "helping" Roxana find



the first bite of the cake.

I find myself wondering what I'm going to do with all these "old people" on my staff, and then I remember that I've got over a quarter of a century on all of them, so I guess they've got a few good years left in them. :-)

Acercádonos Elderly Monthly Meeting

At the monthly meeting on Saturday, we inducted the husband of Sra. Isabel, the "ahijada" who had died a few weeks ago, into the program as her replacement. He was unable to attend in person, due to health problems of his own, but he was represented by his daughter who takes care of him. It



was a very tearful day for her.

We made an announcement during the meeting that on Tuesday the 23rd we'll be taking the elderly on another outing, this one to the banks of



the beautiful Chili River. This will be a new location for us, but it should be very pleasant.

The program for this month's meeting was a knitting project, for which we supplied all the yarn and the knitting needles. The elderly here all love to



knit, and even most of the men know how to do it, which surprised me when I first learned of it.

At the end of the meeting, we read the list of names of people who will be celebrating their birthdays in our monthly party on Saturday the 20th. I asked this lady to stay behind and have her picture taken with me because I



noticed that she is 3 days younger than I am.

New Horizons Youth Group

The New Horizons Youth Group meets twice a month up in Mujeres con Esperanza. John and Briza run these meetings, assisted by the ladies from our Acercádonos office, but now John has also been joined by a young



local pastor, Roger Puma, with whom he is partnering in a number of areas. (I'm sorry, but I can't help asking this question - would you entrust your flock to a pastor named Puma? I know, I know.....I already said I was sorry. :-)

You can't keep kids this age sitting for very long, so there are always



dynamic activities to keep them entertained as well. This time they also did



something new for a snack, learning a new skill by frying up chickenburgers.



Vocational Orientation

Twelve (12) of our students in their last year of high school have undergone Vocational Orientation testing with Angélica, our volunteer psychologist. On Saturday evening, she delivered the results, including



recommendations on which careers each student should consider, to the students and to their parents. But first, Angélica's husband, Raul, led the students in some dynamic activities to illustrate how parents need to



encourage their students, not hold them back, and also how to realize our



expectations of our students. Lidia and Sabina will now work on getting these students started on the road to whatever their chosen career may be.

Visitors

We've been without visitors for over a month now, but Dan & Kathy Dunn from the Charlotte area will be arriving this Friday. The Dunns are among our biggest supporters, and we'll have lots of things to show them. So until next week, remember to

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

Jim