

ColombiaCare Progress Report - #13– February 2008

ColombiaCare supporters,

The following is the thirteenth ColombiaCare report to its donors and other interested parties. Again, we want to thank you all for your support. With this report and future ones, we want to assure you that your generosity is making a difference!

If you missed a report and/or would like to see the previous reports, you can find them on our home page <http://www.colombiacare.org/>

A Difficult Time for Our Children

The community we work with is located in the outskirts of Cali, in the hills surrounding the city. We work with the local schools in that community for the [Communication](#) and [Homework Clinics](#) projects. For more than three weeks during the month of February, these projects were on hold because of bad weather conditions. Since the end of last year and the beginning of this one, an unusually long and strong rainy season (due to the “Niña” phenomenon) has caused innumerable problems. The fact that most of the streets aren’t paved makes the access hazardous at best and impossible in many cases. Typically, strong rains often make the area very muddy,



and the teachers and children can’t make it to school. However, in February the situation became catastrophic. With the accumulated impact of the continuous rain, some of the houses have literally fallen down. As a result, some of the children don’t even have a place they can call home. A mud slide covered the kitchen and bathrooms of one of the Community Centers that we use for the “Homework Clinics” project.

This Community Center had to be cleaned and fixed very quickly so that it could be used as shelter for the families that lost their homes. The organization we work with is currently working with the municipal government to address the most urgent needs of the community. This situation is most unfortunate for this population, one that already has so many problems and difficulties. Only last week things started going back to normal, and classes and other regular activities began again.

An Ecological Theme

On a brighter note: there is a very touching story to share with you. As you may remember from previous reports, ColombiaCare had paid for the construction of a retention wall for one of the schools we work with. By the way, if that wall hadn’t been built, it is possible the school would not have survived the strong rains, fortunately, it did. The school developed an ecological theme, taking advantage of the location of the school and the retention wall and as part of the



[Communication](#) project. This ecological theme is carried through all of the subjects taught. In addition, there are special days in which all the children have outdoor activities to help the environment and apply the knowledge acquired in the various subjects. For instance, they have planted native-plants and a garden, picked up garbage; built games that are ecologically friendly, etc. The program has been very successful. It has facilitated the integration of our Communication project with the teachers and their regular program. But most importantly, it has provided for an increased interest on the part of the



teachers for their classes, and an increased motivation in the children. The pictures say it all. Those smiles are the ones that keep us going. We suggest to visit [our page](#) to see some more pictures, they are beautiful.

Another special person

It is also rewarding when children in the US are the ones who make their contribution. Last time we mentioned Mat, who gave some of his savings to buy books, now we would like to highlight [Gabby](#), a 13 year old from New York. Gaby collected school supplies for the children. In addition, she sent a lovely letter to them, personalizing her great effort. The children obviously loved and appreciated the supplies, as you can appreciate in the pictures, and were particularly touched by the interest of a girl in the US for them. The children kept asking what grade was she in, is she coming to visit us, how did she get all of those things. Thanks, Gaby, for your example!

Grants

We obtained two continuation grants for the Vocational project and for the Homework Clinics (after-school) project. The former will continue to train young people in Carpentry, Construction, Welding and Sewing and the latter will continue with the after-school programs. Before we start, however, we have to wait until the emergency situation this community is living right now improves. We are selecting candidates for the vocational program at this point and expect to start the program in mid to late March.

We have been lucky for the past few years to have a donor willing to provide us with large grants to achieve our objectives. Now we must seek grants from other large donors, so that we can continue as a publicly-funded charitable organization. . As in the previous report, we are asking you to help us to identify companies or foundations that provide grants that would fit our objectives. If you have good contacts and can help us by opening doors, we would appreciate the help.. Your donations are welcome any time. You can make a donation directly from our page. Don't forget that you can also give donations as a gift for others. See our home page for more information <http://www.colombiacare.org/>

We want to remind you that if you need a proof of donations for your tax returns, please let us know by responding to this e-mail with an address indicating where you would like the certificate to be sent. The IRS only requires a certificate for donations of more than \$250. However, if you prefer to have one for your records, let us know. You can also use, as appropriate, our Employer Identification Number (EIN): 20-0076096 for your tax documents.

As we said in the previous report, it is your generosity that re-energizes us and maintains our dream to improve the chances for a better future for some Colombian children. We have seen concrete results and we all should share the pride of our positive impact.

If you don't want to continue to receive our reports, please respond to this e-mail.

ColombiaCare Board of Directors