

## ColombiaCare Progress Report - #15– April 2009

ColombiaCare supporters,

The following is the fourteenth 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/>

### Girls-Sport Project

This project responds to our concern that girls are the weakest link in the cycle of poverty that exists in the area we work with. Girls are the most affected by the family's displacement and precarious financial situation. They are given a great deal of responsibilities in their household with little support or supervision. In addition, they are exposed to many dangers in and out of their own homes. This project trains girls to play soccer. The training is three days a week. This project seeks to give girls self-esteem, discipline, drive, rewards and sense of setting objectives for themselves, through sports. The project started in January 2009.

The ages of the girls recruited are between 10 and 16 years old. The objective was to have 35 girls. Through the recruiting process we signed up 25 girls. However, after the first week of training, the enthusiasm of the participants was such that many more wanted to join in. There was no problem then to register the other 10. In fact, we had to turn girls away. We ordered the uniforms from the women who have been trained in sewing in the Vocational project, which made it a win-win for everybody.

The girls were split in two groups based on their ages. Initially, as expected there were difficulties among the girls from different sectors of the community. However, throughout the training and playing, little by little those barriers are being eliminated. Now they all have fun and support each other. Just four weeks into the training, there was an opportunity to play against a team from another location. The girls were very excited, even though they lost 2-1, they were very happy that they could play as a team, see other facilities and learn that they could have fun even if they lose some times. Since that first game, there have been others sometimes losing very badly, 5-1, and others not as bad. However, the spirit and enthusiasm continues to be very high. A measure to know how much the girls like this project is their almost perfect attendance. This is remarkable since some of them have to come from far in the hills, some have to walk long distances to arrive on time.



Last week there was the opportunity to travel to another city, a port, Buenaventura. This was the high light of the project until now. Buenaventura is two hours away from Cali. They played in a real stadium and as a bonus were able to see the Pacific Ocean!. For most of the girls this was the first time they have ever traveled away from Cali. For all of them this was the first time they have seen the ocean. For all of them this was the first time to see a real stadium, let along play in it. They were very nervous but they did very well. You



have to see the pictures and a short video of the girls. The joy you can see in their faces makes any effort to help them more than worthwhile. See more pictures and detail <http://colombiacare.org/Sport-Girls.html>

### Some very Special People

ColombiaCare wouldn't have been able to do what it has done if it wasn't for many generous people like you. There are some very special people that I would like to mention.

The first one is **Marsha Vaughan** who very sadly lost her battle to cancer in January of this year. Marsha, a great friend of ColombiaCare since its beginnings, was always very concerned in ensuring that the children have books that were interesting and readily available to them. Every year, she gave us a special donation to buy books for the libraries we have in the two community centers we work with. At the end of last November, the day before going into a hospice, she called to inform me that she had sent her 2009 donation since she wasn't sure she will be here or able to write the check in 2009. In honor of Marsha's amazing generosity we created, in one of the libraries, "Marsha's Corner" with all the books that were bought with Marsha's donations and others from friends of Marsha for that purpose. Marsha will always be in our memories and her "corner" will always be present in ColombiaCare's efforts.



Other very special people are the brothers **Matt** and **Eric** and their mother. Last year when Matt was eight years old, he gave ColombiaCare a donation from his own savings. Matt was very specific in how we should use his money. It was to buy books for the children. I had mentioned him in a previous report. At the end of last year he was joined in his generosity by his younger brother Eric. This time, they wanted to bring the books themselves, books that they have enjoyed and therefore, knew other children will enjoy them. They bought several books of the series "Magic Tree House". These to children and their mother are an example

of generosity.

### Looking back with pride

As mentioned in our last report, our corporate grants came to an end. On the one hand we are saddened by the loss of that fantastic resource, on the other hand looking back at the impact we had with those resources gives us a great sense of accomplishment. In the three years we had the grants, more than 400 young people were trained, and many of them found jobs or started their own business. More than 1000 children participated in our Homework Clinics, giving them the opportunity to improve their academic skills, have fun in a safe environment, and learn other extra-curricular skills. Also, it is rewarding to see that even though we don't have the funds to continue to grow those projects, the investment in infrastructure and equipment is being used to continue to provide services to the community. The training facilities continue to be used by other organizations to train young people and the community centers that we fixed as part of those projects, continue to be used by the community, including the children.

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