



## **ColombiaCare Progress Report - #7– February, 2006**

ColombiaCare supporters,

The following is the seventh 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 already 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 [www.colombiacare.org](http://www.colombiacare.org).

Part of this report is a trip report from Victoria Perez who was in Colombia the last week of January 2006 visiting the various project sites. Victoria couldn't be happier with what she found. It is clear from her observations that the impact that we all are having can be *seen*. Your contributions and support are making a difference. Please go to the various links given in this report to see the pictures. They say it all.

### **Improving Communications Skills Project**

The objective of this project is to improve the reading, writing and communications skills of the children in the Altos de la Cruz School. For this project, two University students (Education Department) are working with the children. This project is part of their practice year (internship for their University degrees). These two women, Luisa and Francia, are an inspiration. The love and dedication they have put into this effort is reflected in the already tangible results. They work with the children in groups and individually. They also work with the teachers and the parents. The significant improvement in the children can be seen in the “Wall Newspaper” and the individual notebooks that each student keeps. It is also reflected in the improved use of the verbal language and the treatment to peers and adults. The level of children's enthusiasm with the program is heart-warming. They are not used to this type of attention and innovative approaches, and it really is making a difference. The individualized attention that Luisa and Francia give the children has allowed them to identify some special family situations that needed to be addressed and some learning disabilities. In addition, they identified two serious cases of abuse. All of the situations were reported to the right organizations and professionals, and they are being addressed. The regular School teachers were reluctant at the beginning of the project. However, after seeing the positive results, they are now accepting the new approaches and trying them. This is also a very positive and hopefully lasting effect of the project. We are considering extending this program for one more year to solidify the impact on the children and the continuity of the changes with the teachers and parents. As mentioned in earlier reports, as part of the project there will be a library that will be left behind. The area where the library will be located is now ready and the bookshelves should be arriving in the next few days. There have been some book donations and we are waiting for some more. Luisa and Francia are sorting and organizing the material. Once it is ready, they will work with the children to teach them how to do library searches. Please visit the following link to see more details and pictures of this project <http://www.colombiacare.org/Communicationsimprovementprogram.html>

### **Vocational Program**

The objective of this project is to provide vocational education to older children to prepare them for their working career and to keep them off the tempting streets.



As per the previous report, the people in Colombia (from the non-profit JERA Foundation) were working to prepare all of the logistics, alliances, instructors, program design, equipment, etc. for the program. All of this took almost three months, but it was worth it.

The facilities are two big classrooms in one local school: "Juan Pablo II". The school is located in Commune 20 (the target populations are Communes 18 and 20, where most of the displaced families arrive). They had to make some modifications to adapt the class-rooms for the workshops, and these are now complete. Everything, including furniture and equipment, is brand new. The workshops started Monday February 6, 2006.

“I was extremely pleased to see the professionalism and dedication that the instructor team has put into the last three months to design and prepare the program. The effort of JERA has been excellent, in getting all of the parties together, finding and securing the facilities, finalizing all of the agreements with the various organizations, getting the instructors and making them a cohesive and coordinated team, obtaining all of the equipment and furniture and coordinating all of the logistics. I couldn't be more pleased with what I found. When I saw the faces and smiles of these young people who will benefit from this program, I could only think of one word to summarize my feelings: *hope*. Hope for a better future for these 60 young people and for the next 60.” VP

If you go to this link you'll see more details on this project and some pictures  
<http://colombiacare.org/Vocationalprogram.html>

### **In the pipeline:**

As mentioned in the previous report, we submitted two proposals, one for a computer lab and one for Homework Clinics. We are hopeful that at least one of them will be accepted. We will let you know.

### **Fundraising:**

With the group of volunteers that support us, we have defined the program for various events for 2006. We have listed them on our website, and will inform the appropriate people as they approach. 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 [www.colombiacare.org](http://www.colombiacare.org).

### **Some Special People:**

Giovanni Lomonaco, a boy from NYC, collected school supplies to send to the children to La Cruz School as part of his community activities. In the following link, you can see the childrens' reactions to Giovanni's gift. We have also posted photos of Luisa and Francia, these two very special young women who work with the children on the Communications Skills project.  
<http://colombiacare.org/SpecialPeople2.html>

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 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



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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