



La Escuela los Algarrobos

Newsletter January 2012 2011 In Review

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James Dean Byrd Foundation

To facilitate children becoming global citizens through language and knowledge in an atmosphere of inquiry and responsible actions.

2011 was an exciting year at **La Escuela los Algarrobos**. Each year since its inception four years ago, the school has continued to transform and grow, enriching the education and well being of the children of Canoa and developing future opportunities for the community.

A bridge was constructed by volunteers from the town of Canoa, over the river to the school, in order to ensure the safe passage of the students to and from school each day.



In addition to providing bilingual education to the children of Canoa, the **James Dean Byrd Foundation** and **La Escuela los Algarrobos** are passionate about the health and well-being of not only the students, but the community at large. This year, a very large focus was placed on health and wellness education, which was very well received by the community and students alike.

2011 began by introducing a new grade in keeping with the mandate of the school. Along with that was the construction and completion of additional classrooms, additional washrooms and a new computer room.

We would like to extend our many thanks to the incredible support we have received this past year and years prior. Those who donate their hard earned money and goods, the volunteers who travel a world away to participate in a life changing experience and the teachers from the community who support a new strategy of education. It is just that that makes **La Escuela los Algarrobos** special and unique.

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Cultural Week 2011

The culture of Ecuador is as rich as it's ecology and the people of Ecuador are very passionate about celebrating their cultural diversity.



In addition to the celebrations in the school and local community, the kids also got a chance to visit the museum in Bahia de Caraquez.

In November **La Escuela los Algarrobos** participated in celebrating Ecuadorian culture in a week long event involving both the parents, children and the community.



Bahia is a participant of the **Archeology Banco Central**, part of a national network of museums demonstrating the Pre-Columbian history and culture of Ecuador.



This trip was led by two volunteer English teachers, Ryan and Garrett who took the kids on their first outing to learn about the rich history of Manabi. This was also the first time any of the kids had ever been in an elevator!

Stories, parades and contests for the best costumes were some of the highlights of this special week. Parents, relatives and the children worked for weeks on the original costumes that were to represent each region of their province of Manabi and it's unique cultural heritage.



Community Fundraising 2011

The Flea Market



Pin the Tail on the Donkey was just one of the many games for the children this week. Introducing the children to different cultures is something that is important to the school.



Although Cultural Week is focused on Ecuadorian culture, the mandate of the school is to facilitate the children becoming global citizens.

The hope is that **La Escuela los Algarrobos** will grow this traditional week long celebration to include a more global vision, while still celebrating and respecting local culture. Achieving this balance is very important to the school and the education of the children in keeping with our mandate.



A cultural tradition of Ecuador is naming a Queen or Reina to represent most every event or occasion. In keeping with the progressive nature of **La Escuela los Algarrobos** and the spirit of the local community, the school named both a King and a Queen this year, as voted by the students of the school.

Classic Cars



The Flea Market Fundraisers took place both in the spring and late fall of 2011. This was the second year for the fundraiser, which has become an event that the students and local community look forward to.



Donors of the items that were sold at the event were from all over Ecuador and just days before the event a huge truck full of goods even arrived from Quito, which left organizers scrambling.



In addition to community people being able to purchase goods for a very reasonable price, the school raised over two thousand dollars to further future endeavors.



The Classic Cars Club of Quito came by the school late this past fall with their fleet of twenty two classic cars.



The club has been a great supporter of **La Escuela los Algarrobos** with both donating goods for the flea market, school supplies, as well as facilitating cash donations. On this visit they donated twenty four new desks for the next school year.



The school and the children welcomed the **Classic Car Club of Quito** with an afternoon of celebration, dressed in typical costumes and even choreographed dancing just for them.

Sugar Education

Early this past year, a teacher approached Moya, the director of the **James Dean Byrd Foundation** about the sugar consumption of the children. Although the school provides healthy breakfasts and snacks, it seemed that the message was not getting any further than the school.



Second to that, diabetes is as much of an issue here as in the rest of the world and there is very little known here in Ecuador about the dangers of sugar consumption, not to mention in the previously isolated community of Canoa.



Moya decided to enlist the help of Sheryl Pender who is a RN in the United States and recent resident of Canoa, for her help in educating the parents and students alike about the dangers of sugar.



Health & Wellness



In July Sheryl did a presentation for the parents, which received an excellent response. Then, in October, Sheryl presented her program at the school for the children, while enlisting the help of high school students from the local public school. It was a great success and by involving other school children, it became a community endeavor.



The great news is that changes have been noticed. Some parents have converted their usage of white sugar to less refined versions such as brown at home. At the school every effort is being made to reduce sugar consumption. Although the school provides healthy snacks, in the past parents were often sending sugary snacks with the children to school.

Next year, yogurt will start being served from a local organic cooperative called **LalaLoor**, which uses fresh fruit instead of added sugar.

Hand Washing

After a Hepatitis A outbreak in Canoa in the spring of last year, it was clear that there was a real need for germ and bacteria education in the community.

Washing hands is a skill that needs to be taught here at **La Escuela Arogabaras**. In Manabi, as in much of rural Ecuador, water is often in short supply. Many homes do not have running water or plumbing and this is equally true of the town of Canoa. Also, for poorer families, soap can be considered a luxury.



Maija Stromburg, a local businesswoman and RN, came up with the idea of facilitating hand washing education to the students. She enlisted the help of Sheryl RN to spearhead this important venture.



Wayne Hill, a local of Canoa, was kind enough to develop the "black light box", so that parents and students alike could understand the presence of bacteria on hands and why hand washing is so important.

Initially Maija and Sheryl gathered up the parents in a meeting in order to present their program and to demonstrate proper hand washing while explaining the importance of the endeavor.

Health & Wellness

Germ Week



The parents were very receptive and both Maija and Sheryl knew that their participation was essential in making the program a success.



In November, Sheryl and Maija spent two days in six classes along with some of the parents, teaching the kids the proper method to wash their hands. The kids were very receptive and loved the idea of being able to see the bacteria in the black box.



In order to follow up, signs were made for the entire school and put up everywhere as a constant reminder of the importance of hand washing. As well, the kids now arrive early to wash their hands before breakfast. It is these simple things that go a long way in a community such as Canoa.

FYI: At this time in Ecuador, children are not vaccinated against Hepatitis A as a matter of course. As lack of potable water is a large factor in the transmission of Hepatitis A, the **James Dean Byrd Foundation** paid for each child and teacher at the school to be immunized against the disease this past year.



What began as a hand washing campaign in the fall, manifested to an entire week educational endeavor due to the great interest by the children in germs.

In order to take advantage of this window of opportunity, Ryan, one of the school's volunteer English teachers spearheaded **Germ Week** in order to teach more about bacteria, much to the delight of the students.



He created a booklet for each child in grades three, four and five and each day they discussed what germs are, what health problems they cause and personal hygiene to prevent illness. A large focus was placed on the newly acquired skills of hand washing, cleanliness and food preparation.



A recipe was found to make the agar for Petri dishes. The kids brainstormed locations in the classroom and school and on their person where germs could be found. We used Q-tips to swab various areas and in two to three days there was bacteria growing on the Petri dishes.



The last day of **Germ Week** was a creative venture, to have the kids imagine how to make bacteria out of unique materials and to explain how bacteria grow in food and water. Their creations were clearly demonstrative of their ingenuity and resourcefulness.

The point of this undertaking was to incite critical thinking about germs and bacteria and inspire problem solving by the children.

During this week Sheryl RN reinforced the message of combating germs and bacteria while teaching the first and second grade children the correct way to brush their teeth. Each child was given a toothbrush and paste and learned this skill while learning some English words too.