

INTEGRACION BULLETIN

November, 2005

Our Future.....The Children and Young People of Puerto Plata
Our Hope.....A Better Future for Them

Introduction

We often say that children are a country's future, but we must be saying that sentence unconsciously, because the implications of those words, without a doubt, should motivate us towards action. One look at the real situation of the children in our popular neighborhoods tells us that they have no future or that their future is full of limitations for the following reasons:

- Numerous families living in conditions of poverty and extreme poverty.
- Undernourished children with a future plagued by insufficiency, due to malnutrition.
- Children without birth certificates, without schooling or with poor schooling.

This alarming reality involves many complex situations, difficult to tackle, like an interminable rosary of responsible individuals who hide their faces: irresponsible families, adolescent mothers and fathers, governments blind and deaf to the clamor of the at-risk youth, second-rate professionals, etc. etc. But even with this alarming reality and the countless limitations, there is still a light in the road, which gives us hope and permits us to face this problematic situation.

Institutions like Integración Juvenil and others, in the face of this situation, don't just cross their arms [and give up], just the contrary. They unite forces to face this reality and offer solutions to underprivileged children.

NEW ROADS, NEW HOPES

For 28 years Integración Juvenil has worked on behalf of at-risk youth. The spirit of service was born with Doña Ana viuda Leroux and other founders. They have been very clear in recognizing that the future of a country is its children and over time they have spared no efforts to extend a hand and help children in their development.

At the present time, unfortunately, the needs of at-risk youth have changed little. With the intention of improving the institution's work, the Board of Directors has carried out a study of the current situation. This study has caused the Board to reformulate programs and bring about new ones for the benefit of at-risk youth.

New Social Program

Integración Juvenil has created a Referral and Education Center in Aguas Negras, and from this location their work can extend to Playa Oeste and Los Coquitos.

This social program is already yielding fruit, with hundreds of children now having their birth certificates, thanks to this program and 180 at-risk youth are registered and being educated in the Educational Center of the Institution. A Parents Association has been created and they work together daily to solve neighborhood problems. This pilot project can be replicated in other neighborhoods with similar characteristics.

New Program of Attention to Children and Young People Who Live Outside the Home

Very soon a Temporary Home will be functioning which will give food, shelter and attention to at-risk youth who live on the streets. The objective of this program is to facilitate their return home, either to their own family or a substitute family. We hope to have the first group before the end of the year and to help them acquire the necessary tools to live a dignified, risk-free life.

Since this problem is both delicate and high risk, a technical team assumes responsibility to achieve this objective.

In the first phase we hope to heal the wounds caused by the trauma of living outside the home and create a family-like atmosphere for them, offering orientation for re-insertion home.

The Temporary Home relies on people willing to create a true family atmosphere, where human values reign and personal attention is given to each case.

For this program to obtain the desired results, they rely on the Code of the Minor, Law 136-03, as well as the National Council on Children and Adolescents (CONANT).

Educational Center Doña Ana viuda Leroux

The Center's educational programs have been subjected to a profound analysis, the fruits of which led us to take the following steps to make it more efficient:

- The prioritized objective is quality in the educational programs.
- The courses have a maximum of 20 students.
- Improve the registration process, with social and psychological evaluations.
- Formalize and strengthen parent participation.
- Assist and give complementary training to the educators.

Employment Training

This program is in the reformulation phase, but it is already defined that the beneficiaries of this program will be the young people of Puerto Plata who have completed the 8th course of basic education. The intention is to teach them an occupation which permits them to enter the employment world, create an employment office for them and give them training in managing a small business. The Center is fortunate enough to have adequate space, which at this moment is being air conditioned in order to better serve its purpose.

Programs for At-Risk Youth Working on the Streets

This program has been carried out with many limitations, but we hope to have it ready to take off by next year, 2006, with a new format, in light of the work being done on its behalf.

**WE THANK OUR PARTNERS AND COLLABORATORS
FOR THEIR PARTICIPATION IN THIS ACHIEVEMENT,
WHICH BELONGS TO EVERYONE**