

INTEGRACION JUVENIL, INC.

New roads, New Hopes

Integración Juvenil, working for the past 28 years in favor of at-risk youth, was born out of the spirit of service. Doña Ana viuda Leroux and its founders were very clear that the future of a country is its children and over time they have spared no efforts to extend a hand to help children in their development.

At the present moment, lamentably, the needs of at-risk youth have changed little. With the intention of updating and improving the Institution's work, the Board of Directors has completed a study of the situation, which has caused it to reformulate its programs and bring about new programs to benefit at-risk youth.

New Social Program

Integración Juvenil has created a Referral and Education Center in Aguas Negras, where their work also extends to Playa Oeste and Los Coquitos. This social program is already bearing fruits, hundreds of children already have free birth certificates, thanks to the program and 180 at-risk youth are enrolled in and being educated at the Educational Center. An association of parents has been formed and they are working daily to solve the special problems of the neighborhood. This pilot project can be replicated in other neighborhoods with similar characteristics.

New Program of Attention to Children/Young People Who Live Outside their Home

In the next few months a Temporary Home will begin 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 the road to returning home, or to a relative or substitute family. We expect to have our first group before the end of the year, and we hope to provide them the necessary tools to achieve a dignified, risk-free life.

Because this is a delicate and high risk area, a technical team will assume responsibility of achieving our objectives.

The first phase intends to heal the wounds caused by the trauma of living outside the home, by creating a family atmosphere for them and offering orientation towards their reintegration into the family.

The Temporary Home has employed people willing to create a true family atmosphere, where human values are lived and personalized attention is given to each individual case.

In order for the program to reach its desired results, we are well aware of the Code of the Minor, Law 136-03, as well as the protocol of the National Council of Children and Adolescents (CONANI).

From the beginning Integración Juvenil has had two fundamental worries with respect to at-risk youth: children without schooling and those living on the streets or who are working. At the present moment we are fulfilling and improving our objectives. Children without schooling are the ones who early on enter into work on the streets and are at risk of living outside the home. By offering schooling to these children we are protecting them from this risk.

The first component of our actions is clearly preventive. Without a doubt the goal, which corresponds to a basic right of every human being, is to receive schooling. Without education we will be slaves all our lives. Education, but it must be of high quality, should be carried out under the principles of respect, humanism, democracy and freedom.

The second component has to do with training for employment. Youth who have reached, by their own and their families' efforts, the 8th course of basic studies, need help to begin employment training. This is a stage where the institution facilitates for them the means to achieve employment qualification and helps integrate them into the job market, which is the only road to development.

All of these programs fortify the institution and the desire of its founders, who, without forgetting all the efforts already put in on behalf of at-risk youth, realize that because of their age and situation the youth continue to experience irreparable damage in their formation and attention. For them we are creating a technical team and adequate spaces in order to set them on the road towards achieving reachable goals for their own development.

The experience we have gained working with at-risk youth allows us to analyze the problems and design new programs to facilitate the youth in their social inclusion.