

Message from the Co-Presidents

The educational stories of the children and adolescents in this issue of our newsletter are so inspiring. First and foremost, learning is fun! Classes at the Center bring children together into a colorful, cheerful place with lots of smiles. Kids can get help with tough subjects being taught at school while expanding their horizons with art and dancing and crafts, subjects usually not offered in their normal school curriculum.

For so many of the kids who visit the Center, learning is also transformational. Many of the children come from homes where parents might have very little education and don't know what good study habits look like. Some might even come from homes where education is not valued. Despite the challenges of the pandemic, hundreds of students come each week to hone

computer techniques, learn presentation skills, practice good interactions and have fun while learning.

Our mission at Friends of Batahola is to provide not only financial assistance, but also prayer and solidarity, so the amazing teachers and administrators can keep their energy focused on educating these kids to be the best they can be. Your support of the Center remains so important, and we are humbled by the generosity of this community.

Tony Perazzo & Mary O'Toole



Good Habits and Study Techniques



The "Good Habits and Study Techniques" sessions began in 2012 through the Education program. In the beginning, the sessions were focused on afterschool support in subjects such as math and Spanish; however, over the years other educational needs have arisen.

Currently, the Good Habits sessions are intended to help children achieve academic independence starting in elementary school, so they can become the protagonists of their own learning.

Gretchen Martínez, Scholarship program officer, shared:

"Each year, the Center addresses three study techniques and three good habits, so that in 6 years the child can recognize a significant advancement, for example: improve writing posture or have clear oral and written expression."

Thirty-five children between the ages of 6 and 12 come to the center once a week for three hours to participate in the "Good Habits and Study techniques" sessions. At the same time, they always receive nutritional snacks to strengthen their immune system and be able to focus on their school assignments.



Auxiliadora López, mother of a scholarship student, expressed:

"Because of the Good Habits sessions, my kid has learned to have respectful interactions with his peers. People here have taught him to share and also to know his rights and responsibilities."

Success Story: Mariam Solórzano



Mariam Solórzano Vásquez is 11 years old and she has been involved at the Center for six years now. Mariam's family learned about the Center when the organization visited her neighborhood in Acahualinca. Miriam is a scholarship student and also participates in groups that support girls in communication and networking.

"I have learned how to take pictures and use digital applications to edit photos. Also, we play, draw and relax"

The Center is an important part of Mariam's life, not only for the economic support that she receives, but

also for the spiritual and emotional accompaniment. She dreams of becoming a veterinarian, doctor or psychologist, and affirms that the Center has provided her the safety and the confidence that she needs to accomplish her goals.

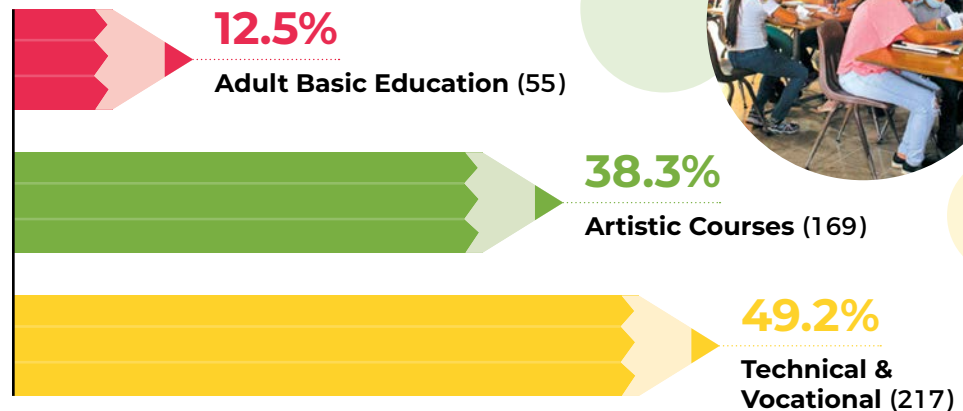
"...initially, I was afraid to speak up because I am a pretty introverted girl. Here [at the Center] they have taught me to be more confident in myself".

At the Center, she has faced her biggest fear of speaking in public; now she has stood out as presenter, radio commentator and a digital content creator.

"I would like that more boys and girls visit the Center because here, they will be able to learn and have many opportunities in life."

Student Enrollment 2022

So far in 2022, there have been 441 students who have enrolled in classes offered at the Center which is 52 more students enrolled at this time last year. There are also 74 students who currently have external scholarships to support their studies at the elementary, high school and college level.



Friend of Batahola: Erika Coe

I first got to know the Center when I studied abroad in 2012. After that, I was able to return as a full time volunteer from 2013-2015. In my first month, I lived with the sewing teacher Daysi



Alvares, whose love, humor, and delicious gallo pinto made me feel like a member of her family. I taught

English, accompanied many other Center activities, and made lifelong friendships with the staff and community. One of my favorite projects was coordinating a youth exchange with musicians from the Center to spend some time with a Capoeira group in the Bosawas nature reserve. Because of my time in Batahola, I decided to attend graduate school and study civic engagement movements.

I am so honored to be part of this compassionate and justice-oriented

community once again through the Friends of Batahola Board. I participate on the Communications Committee as well as help with the online fundraising efforts. The highlight of my time so far has been getting together with the other board members in person last fall and having an online retreat with the Center's staff. I am looking forward to getting back to Batahola to catch up and share some hugs and cafecito with my dear friends!