



Programa Velasco

Annual Report 2014

Dear Friends,

We are excited to share with you that 2014 has been by far our most successful year! Our accomplishments are a direct result of your continued and growing support. On behalf of all the children, families, and entrepreneurial women involved in Programa Velasco's programs, our staff, and our board of directors, *thank you!*

We invite you to look inside and discover the ways in which your gifts are making a difference in people's lives. Three highlights that we are particularly proud of include:

- Launching the Women's Empowerment Project (WEP).
- Strengthening our leadership, including the addition of 5 new board members.
- Increasing enrollment in Program Velasco's programs that help children and families overcome the violence and poverty that is causing so many people to flee Central America.

While we are proud of our accomplishments and growth, the increased media attention to the ongoing child migration crisis has brought worldwide awareness to the dire and harsh realities facing the children we serve. Throughout the year, we reflected on these children and their experiences and have learned more about the pervasive violence and poverty in the San Ramon community. As a result, we are stronger and more committed to our mission, which has helped us achieve the significant results that we share with you in the subsequent pages.

As you read through this annual report, we invite you to reflect on how you help play a role in ensuring a child has an education, and how help empower the women of San Ramon. Please consider making a gift so we can continue and expand this valuable work.

We graciously appreciate your generosity and belief in our mission.

A joyous holiday season to you,

Annie Boyd & Juan Velasco

Mission

Our mission is to educate and empower children and families to create social change in El Salvador.

Main Projects

- Children's scholarships
- Family Empowerment Services
- Women's Empowerment Project

Our Board Members

Juan Velasco	President
Cynthia Mertens	Secretary
Andy Mark	Treasurer
Luis Calero, SJ	
Chantal deAlcuaz	
Pat Kennelly	
Patty Rauch-Neustadter	
Tony Tanke	

Our Staff

Annie Boyd	Executive Director
Erica Olson	In-Country Coordinator

Our Partner Organization

Asociacion Nuevo Amanecer de El Salvador (ANADES)

Children's Scholarships

Thanks to your Generosity, 36 children received a scholarship for early education.

Jenifer is 4 years old and is a recent scholarship recipient. At birth, she was abandoned by her mother and was left to the care of her grandparents. Her grandmother is the sole breadwinner through her work washing and ironing clothes in several homes in San Ramon, earning about \$100.00 a month. They live in a small home with a dirt floor and in an area controlled by one of the major gangs. Jenifer's scholarship has allowed her access to a safe place to study, make friends, play, and to eat balanced meals, all of which contributes to a healthier childhood.



Family Empowerment Services

Thanks to your Dedication, 104 families received social services and 60 families received psychological attention.



Daniela is 3 years old and early this year, she demonstrated aggressive behaviors - biting and scratching her classmates and even herself. Our psychologist, Fatima, included her mother in a bi-monthly parents' group to learn techniques to improve their children's behavior. Fatima referred Daniela in March to a psychologist and psychiatrist at the children's hospital for further assistance. In June, after little advancement in her behavior, Fatima began weekly counseling sessions with Daniela and twice a month with her parents. Fatima helped the parents to identify and address the root causes of Daniela's behavior. Fatima observed that her behaviors were a result of anxiety, possibly from being breast-fed for too long, playing often with a dog that would bite frequently, and the absence of her father who holds two jobs, which caused rifts in the marital relationship.

Fatima continued working with the parents and was able to include the father in the second round of the parents' group. The social worker, Veronica, along with the accompaniment of the mother, began taking Daniela to the doctor at ANADES twice a month to receive natural medicine to reduce her anxiety. Her teachers also began employing techniques including giving her a happy or sad face sticker in a booklet each day based on her behavior and reinforcing the usage of magic words, like *please*, *thank you*, and *sorry*. Veronica, Fatima, and the parents also began to incentivize Daniela by allowing her to leave early once a week if her conduct improved, which also gives her mother more time to dedicate to her. Daniela has been behaving much better and often earns her right to leave early once a week! The improvement in Daniela's behavior is a result of the creative efforts of her family and the support team.

Women's Empowerment Project

Thanks to your Support, 27 women have participated all year in workshops to prepare them to be successful entrepreneurs.

One of them is Brenda Lopez, who is a single mother of 4 who has been unemployed for the past year. She has been living off the minimum salary of one of her sons and the minimal amount sent by her children's father in the United States. Through Brenda's participation in the Women's Empowerment Project, she learned how to manage a business and received a scholarship to enroll in a massage therapy vocational training course. She gives massages to neighbors and friends in her home and now has 7 loyal clients (and the number is growing by word of mouth). Brenda has also saved \$20.00 to open a bank account - she is gaining economic independence and can now, on her own, cover the costs of food for her family!



2014 by the Numbers

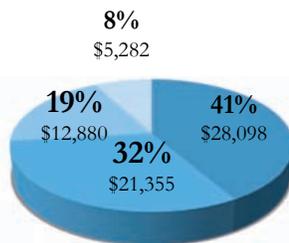
Your donations provided:

- 104 children the opportunity to attend three field trips
- 102 families educational resources during 10 monthly parent meetings
- 46 children and 37 adults individual and regular counseling
- 38 families with access to support groups and workshops
- 5 children with crisis intervention services
- 5 children with speech evaluation services

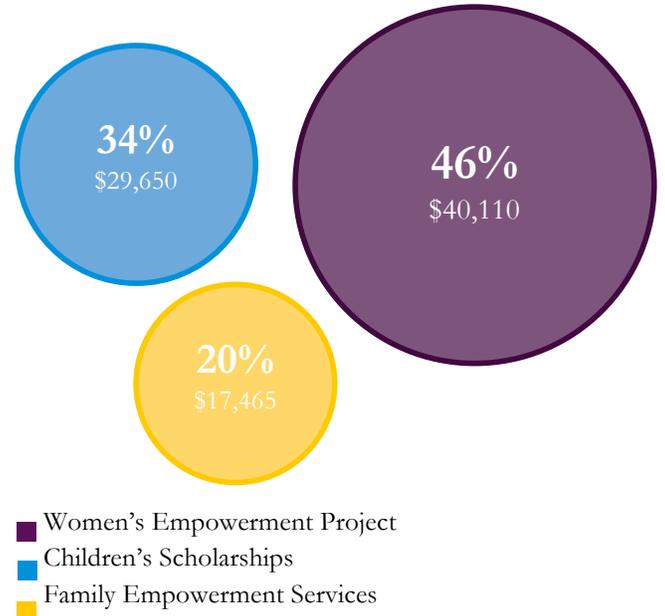


Revenue

- Contributions
- Grants
- Children Scholarships
- Betty Jane Boyd Scholarship Fund

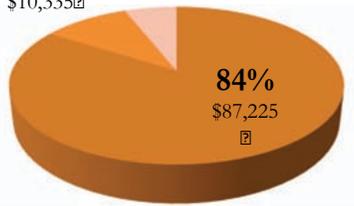


Program Expenses



Operating & Support Expenses

- 10% \$10,335
- 6% \$5,590



- Programming
- Operations
- Administration

- Women's Empowerment Project
- Children's Scholarships
- Family Empowerment Services

Women's Empowerment Project

Our Women's Empowerment Project has made great strides in its first year. Of the 25 entrepreneurs, 23 completed the 11-month project and 22 participated in vocational training programs. The 23 entrepreneurs also acquired new skills that will strengthen their businesses, improve their economic independence, and enable them to sustainably provide for their families.

We have realized that interrupting the cycles of violence and poverty to provide entrepreneurs with concrete support is far more challenging than expected. Many women declined assistance to formally establish their business with signs or marketing materials because they fear that any kind of promotion will bring unwanted attention and prompt regular extortions by gangs. We became caught in between trying to support an entrepreneur but not jeopardizing her safety. Because of this barrier to economic growth, our definition of success needs to be more inclusive of this difficult reality. For Programa Velasco, success is to prioritize safety and the human rights of the children and their families and to ensure access to services and opportunities so that people are able to use education and empowerment tools to reach their goals.



WEP entrepreneurs who...	Before WEP	After WEP
Have an operational business	19	21
Use a business plan	0	24
Develop marketing and/or commercialization strategies	0	21
Maintain financial records	4	18

Within the first 3 months of next year's WEP, we foresee participant improvement in these areas because they will have more refined financial literacy skills and more experience integrating them into their daily work.

Alumni Surveys

As part of our strategic plan, we wanted to evaluate how the Center's holistic education impacted alumni. We spoke with these children, teenagers, and their parents. Here are some important outcomes of their educational experience at the Center:

- 86% of alumni reported that they continue to participate in activities at ANADES
- 100% said their time there very much influenced their 'self-awareness'
- 43% have a sibling who had also attended the Center

Percentage of alums who remember learning about various topics:

- 100% learned about children and adolescents' rights
- 85% learned about values
- 75% learned about self-esteem
- 70% learned about family integration and violence prevention

"Since we were in the Center we began receiving a different education from what other schools provide. The difference is its focus on community; how to help, how to participate, including people from all parts of society. As I grew up, all of these values had a big influence on me. Being part of ANADES and participating in their programs and the youth group has helped shaped this character that can grow and succeed without forgetting that there are others in need."

"When my son started here, his dad had just died and I had no economic aid and the Center supported me. I also think having my son at the Center opened gave me the opportunity to find a steady job and afford to pay the rent. But without the Center taking care of my son and without a scholarship, it would have been almost impossible to move forward."



Special Thanks To...

Talented Collaborators

- Fredy Granillo, Mural Artist
- Geoffrey Hinnes, Lowthian Design Works
- Edwin Lopez, Artist
- Rosie Ramsey, Program Evaluation Consultant
- Luis Vasquez, Videographer & Photographer

Dedicated Volunteers

- Carolyn Cyrana & Lauren T. Flores, Chicago, IL
- Beth Mark & Carissa Molina, Milwaukee, WI
- Carrie Todd, Houston, TX

Grant Funders

- Congregation of St. Joseph Generous Promise Grant Fund
- Racine Dominicans Mission Fund
- University of Sevilla, Spain

Guests in El Salvador

- 24 delegates from 3 Santa Clara University delegations Faculty, Law School, 25th Anniversary of the UCA Martyrs
- 14 delegates from Ferris State University, Big Rapids, MI
- 4 delegates from Grand Valley State University, Grand Rapids, MI
- Carole Poth, Marquette University Center for Peacemaking, Milwaukee, WI
- Bob Ortega & Michael Chow, *USA Today*, reporting on the child migration crisis
- Jocelyn Sideco, CA
- Kelly Sarrels & Pat Owens, IL
- Agnieszka Winkler & Nick Ritcheson, CA

Fundraiser Hosts

- Downtown Downers Grove Management Corporation, Downers Grove, IL
- Avec Panache Ballydoyle Irish Pub Evelyn Jane Boutique
- Greentree Massage Jeans & a Cute Top Shop Kelsey Resale Boutique
- Smile Downers Grove The Olive Tap 221 Creations
- Pat Kennelly, Emmey Malloy, Beth & Andy Mark, Milwaukee, WI
- Cynthia Mertens, Jim Rowan, & Juan Velasco, Santa Clara, CA