

BUENA ONDA

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF PROJECTS ABROAD ARGENTINA



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A story from Mother Teresa of Calcutta,

A woman, amazed to see Mother Teresa bathing a leper, said to her, 'I would never bathe a leper, not for a million dollars.' Maria Teresa answered, 'Neither would I, because you can only bathe a leper for love.'

Many times we think that we only show love with big actions and ones that only Saints can make happen. I believe that we can show love in each small act of our daily lives, and this is what makes us better people. We tend to think that something little doesn't amount to anything, but we don't realize that if you add up all the small things, you can make a big difference. Beaches are made by the small pieces of sand and cover great distances. "



When I was a young man, I wanted to change the world.

I found it was difficult to change the world, so I tried to change my nation.

When I found I couldn't change the nation, I began to focus on my town.

I couldn't change the town and as an older man, I tried to change my family.

Now, as an old man, I realize the only thing I can change is myself, and suddenly I realize that if long ago I had changed myself, I could have made an impact on my family.

My family and I could have made an impact on our town.

Their impact could have changed the nation and I could indeed have changed the world."

Rabbi Israel Salanter
Nineteenth Century Professor

What impact are we ready to make in our lives?

Un abrazo a todos!

Guillermo Cogorno
Country Director

PROJECT UPDATES

TWO WEEK SPECIALS IN CÓRDOBA

At the end of June we welcomed our first group of Two Week Special volunteers. There were 14 volunteers in total all in the Spanish & Care program. Their two week program held a busy schedule that included Spanish lessons, social events and a different activity every day in their respective care placements. The daily Spanish classes allowed volunteers to learn local Argentine Spanish which came in handy at their placements! They also watched the movie the Motorcycle Diaries and took to the kitchen to learn how to make the famous Argentine sweet – alfajores, a shortbread sandwich cookie filled with dulce de leche.

The afternoons were spent at various care placements where they organized different activities for the kids each day. They baked, played games and did various arts and crafts with the kids. At a local daycare center volunteers prepped and painted the entrance to the center.

In the free time and managed to squeeze in a tango class, karaoke and a night of bowling. On the weekends they visited the childhood home of Che Guevara in Alta Gracia and then had a day at an adventure park in La Cumbrecita.

Muchas gracias to all of your hard work!



IMPROVEMENTS AT THE COPA DE LECHE

In the past month the Copa de Leche care placement has received some noticeable improvements to the facility thanks to the help of the community of the Copa de Leche and our volunteers.

The first was the construction of a clay oven. For the past 3 months the Law & Human Rights program have been working in the community of the Copa de Leche with the goals of educating and empowering the neighbors in their goals to help improve their community and their quality of life. They hold weekly meetings to address issues that the neighbors deem important and work together with the Law & Human Rights volunteers to see how those issues can be addressed and/or resolved.

One of these issues was how to improve the Copa de Leche and the facility from which the center is run. As the Copa de Leche is a safe place for the neighborhood children to go for a daily snack and to play with the volunteers, neighbors were very supportive of the idea of construction of a clay oven to enable volunteers to make bread, pizza and other warm snacks for the kids. One of the neighbors, a skilled tradesman, offered to construct the oven. Projects Abroad purchased the materials and within 3 weeks the oven was completed. The volunteers are learning to make bread!

Secondly the inside of the facility received a 'face lift' with new polycarbonate windows, repairs to the walls and a new coat of paint. Neighbors worked for a week to plaster and sand the walls replace the windows. The Law & Human Rights coated the walls with a fresh coat of new paint. The July group of the Two Week Special volunteers added the finishing touch with a beautiful mural on the wall to add a bit of color and to tie it all together. Gracias to all who contributed and their hard work!



FOOD COLLECTION FOR AREA DINING HALLS

In July we held a dirty day food collection at the Projects Abroad office. Volunteers canvassed the neighborhood around the Projects Abroad office and went door-to-door asking families to donate a non-perishable food items to be donated to various dining halls and day care centers that Projects Abroad volunteers work at.

Within two hours volunteers collected a sizeable donation that will be divided up and donated to Los Pimpollos Day care, Las Estrellitas Belen Day care and the Copa de Leche.

The day was a success! The group of six volunteers met some interesting families and practiced their Spanish in the mean time. In total we collected: 2kg sugar, 2 kg corn maize, 1.5kg rice, 3kg flour, 2L milk, 1 L tomato sauce, 6kg pastas and 6 cans of various canned goods. Gracias to all who participated! Your hard work is appreciated!





ALEXANDRA KNOTT CANADA

(LAW & HUMAN RIGHTS, 1 MONTH)

From the 28th-30th June, eight Projects Abroad volunteers took part in one of four annual house-building projects run by the NGO, un Techo para mi Pais ("A roof for my country"). There were approximately 350 youths from all over Argentina (and a few from abroad) who came to participate in this weekend-long project to build houses for people living in substandard conditions in various neighbourhoods around Cordoba. While it was an intense and exhausting weekend of construction and Spanish-speaking, the volunteers (myself included) all thoroughly enjoyed the experience and appreciated the opportunity to get to know Argentines our age and the families whose homes we constructed alongside them.

The NGO, known as Techo, was set up in 1997 in Chile and has since expanded to its current capacity, operating in 19 countries around Central and South America. Techo describes itself as a youth-led non-profit organization seeking to end extreme poverty in Latin American slums, in partnership with the families they aim to support. They do this through three main avenues, the first of which is the construction of temporary houses that we took part in last week. However the construction projects are only considered their entry point into economically and politically vulnerable communities and Techo subsequently works within these communities through their political advocacy and social inclusion programs. Their self-proclaimed mission is "a fair and poverty free society, where everyone has the opportunities needed to develop their capacities and fully exercise their rights" (From Techo's website).

The houses we constructed were simple pre-fabricated wooden structures with one single room, but were a noticeable improvement from their previous homes due to the fact they were on small stilts (to reduce the risk of flooding during the summer), had glass windows, a sealed roof and insulation. The families (chosen by Techo based on need) were responsible for paying 10% of the price of the house and Techo, through their private and corporate donations, funds the rest. Each Techo team, responsible for building one family's house, consisted of around 6-9 volunteers, who worked alongside able family members from 8am-6pm on both Saturday and Sunday to build the house. Alongside the construction project, during the evenings, volunteers took part in numerous team-building, consciousness-raising and reflective exercises since volunteers spent the entire weekend together, sleeping nearby their respective commu-



nities. Volunteers were encouraged to reflect on their experiences with the families and connect these experiences to their knowledge of social issues in Cordoba: to put a face to the social issues in the news and to inspire greater participation in defending these vulnerable communities.

The house I helped to build was for a diabetic woman in her 50s, who is trying to support several of her still-young children (she has a total of 9 children, many of whom live nearby) as well as some of her grandchildren, while also trying to manage her disease in adverse circumstances. As well as digging, hauling and nailing, volunteers were encourage to get to know the families by talking with family members and playing with the children, an aspect I very much enjoyed. Our family was, as I'm sure the others were too, very hospitable, offering us mate throughout the morning and cooking us feasts for lunch on both days. The final presentation ceremony (complete with banners and balloons) on the Sunday evening was very emotional on both sides and our family was noticeably proud and grateful for their new home. During the dedication ceremony, our group wished them a happy and healthy life under their new, recently completed, roof.



VOLUNTEERS IN ACTION

For a look at all that went on in July, check out our Facebook page!

<http://on.fb.me/1aF3Wc5>

