We are gearing up for Spring Break trips from Manna chapters and other schools. A total of 111 students will visit our 3 sites in March!

- Mar 4: The first of 10 Spring Break groups arrive.
- Mar 8: International Women’s Day.
- Mar 26: Summer Intern application deadline.

33% of children in Ecuador do not finish elementary school - 90% in rural areas do not finish high school. 70% of children in Ecuador live in poverty.

- $25 to run the teen center for one month.
- $57 to run health programs for one month.
- $750 to run El Centro for one month.

“I sorry” is the first thing out of Steven’s mouth as he walks into the library and gives me a hug. After spraying me in the face with shaving cream, he was smart enough to take a day off from the library before storming in with one of his newly learned English phrases. Spraying shaving cream and throwing water balloons are two all too common occurrences during the celebration of Carnival in Ecuador.

Steven is a scrawny 12 year-old who first heard about Manna through his nutrition classes with Taylor and Emily at a nearby high school and has been a regular in the Centro ever since. He is a trouble child who was sent to live with his grandparents here in the valley because his parents couldn’t handle him in Quito. Although we have had some problems with his desperate acts for attention, he has a strong desire to learn English, constantly asking us to translate songs and to teach him new vocabulary.

Desperate to be a part of the Manna library, Steven paid his five-dollar joining fee bit by bit over the course of several weeks. When he finally received the laminated library card with his picture on it he made sure everyone saw it… several times. He convinced his friends to join the reading club and they read seven books each in order to win their own soccer balls. With an adult literacy rate hovering around 10%, he is already breaking the mold! When we got back from winter break after the Centro being closed for three weeks, Steven was the first kid to walk through the doors. Although sometimes he drives us crazy, El Centro de Manna was built for kids like Steven. With the prevalence of gangs, and drug and alcohol use in youth his age here, we are happy to give him productive outlets and a safe place. And he is changing for the better.

Heather, Ecuador Program Director

Will you help empower more children like Steven through education?