Angelica’s Dreams Are Coming True

At eight years old, young Angelica Bedon’s family came to Quito from Ibarra, a town in the north of Ecuador, in search of job opportunities and a better life for their children. The only problem was all of the Quito schools had taken enrollment for the year.

Thank God for the Bedon’s new neighbors who showed them the way to the WBC. At the Center, the entire Bedon family was able to enter just a few days before the school year started. The family realized they were in a distinctly different environment- people here ate meals together, played together, went to class and celebrated Mass together, and spent time with each other all day long. This was new to Angelica. She was used to keeping to herself in class and dashing home to voraciously dig into a book, do chores, or watch tv. The Center was different- here, she spent more time with her peers and other families- at Mass, extracurricular classes, meals, and meetings. In having this time, Angelica slowly but surely came out of her cocoon. She tells us, “to this day, my best friends are from the Working Boys’ Center.”

Since graduating first in her class from the WBC in cosmetology, Angelica graduated high school, and with a college scholarship from David’s Educational Opportunity Fund (founded by Mike Byrd and Maggie Felker, two former Year Long Volunteers), is now pursuing a degree in Childhood Clinical Psychology at the Central University in Quito.

Angelica shares, “The Center did so much to help me achieve my dreams, and I want to pass along that help to families who may not have access to professional psychological services for their children.” She would like to open up her own practice and pay forward the generosity she received during her time as a Center member.

Angelica’s dreams are coming true, and with your support, we are creating a new generation of dreamers who, with the tools to empower themselves, can accomplish anything they set their minds and hearts to accomplish!

Please mail contributions to
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WBC NEWS
NEWS FROM THE WORKING BOYS’ CENTER • QUITO, ECUADOR • SUMMER 2018

Time to Share and Give Thanks

Summer has arrived! It is a time to take advantage of the sun, and the warmth of God’s embrace. It is in these longer days that we enjoy time with family and make plans to see others that we may not throughout the year. It is a time to recognize the efforts made, recover strength and look towards the horizon. Summer is family time! It is time to be grateful.

In a world in such a hurry, which is constantly demanding us to reach goals to show successful results, where competition at times seems to stifle ordinary life, the Lord’s message invites us to know how to press the pause button on life. The greatest thing the human being has is to appreciate the life of the other, to be with that other person, to listen to them, to get in tune with their life experience, their longings, hopes and pains. The gospel of Jesus invites us to rest and know how to recognize the great value in one another. It is the encounter with others that we want to put above all. Summer is a good time for it- take the time to enjoy it.

At the Working Boys’ Center, we also give thanks for the road we have traveled during these months- many good things have happened and we feel that we are strengthening our future. We are grateful to all those who accompany our students to share and experience this time with us.

God’s Gift of Sacraments

There are few ways that God enters our life more profoundly than through the blessing of holy sacraments. Our students at the WBC have the opportunity to complete four sacraments while here: Baptism, Reconciliation, Communion, and Confirmation. We had the immense joy to celebrate three of those sacraments this summer- Baptism, Communion, and Confirmation.

After months of thoughtful preparation from our Pastoral team, filled with activities, reflections, prayers, and research, those who felt ready to take the next step in their faith journey came forth to become closer to our Lord.

As our students complete their sacraments with family, friends, teachers, and peers present, we hope they remember God is in and with us always. We pray that God’s guidance will compel them to become advocates for what is right and good in this world- to stand up for a classmate in need, to help a neighbor, to go forth and, as Jesuit founder St. Ignatius Loyola said, “set the world on fire.”

It is this fire of faith that helps our kids live their lives with Christ at their side. Through the sacraments, our walk and who support our programs. Our students closed the school year with a beautiful open house in which they presented their parents, families and many visitors with various themes they had learned throughout the year. We are proud of their work and congratulate their teachers for their dedication to providing a quality education. In recent weeks, volunteers from various universities and high schools have visited us. The joy in service and cultural exchange highlights our mission and who we are.

We have big plans next year and we we would greatly value your collaboration to achieve our goals. A technical high school degree for those who turn 16 is a very important and unprecedented goal. We want to offer education for life and for work. We plan to continue to involve our families in new opportunities that strengthen the 10 core values of the Center. We also plan to fortify our pastoral program, which places Jesus at the foundation of our relationships.

Let’s celebrate life! Let’s celebrate the fraternity of meeting others! Summer is a great opportunity to do so.

Gustavo Calderón Schmidt, S.J.
Provincial

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The Gospel during our visit was from Saint Mark – the parable of the mustard seed: a small seed that grows to provide food and shelter for those in need. Father Gustavo Calderón, from the Bronx, with no money but with great determination to help the poor transform their lives, opened the hemisphere, a similar story began when a young Jesuit priest from the Bronx, with no money but with great determination to help the poor transform their lives, opened the Hispanic Apostolate at St. Gabriel’s Parish in McKinney, Texas to teach Christ’s teachings and love with St. Gabriel’s Parish. For almost 20 years, St. Gabriel’s has supported the WBC and our Family of Families – it through Little Angels Daycare Center holding art fundraisers to the Working Boys’ Ministry leading Spiritual Journey groups to visit in Quito.

In mid-June, I had the pleasure of joining Fr. Gustavo Calderón in McKinney, Texas to celebrate Christ’s teaching and love with St. Gabriel’s Parish. For almost 20 years, St. Gabriel’s has supported the WBC and our Family of Families – it through Little Angels Daycare Center holding art fundraisers to the Working Boys’ Ministry leading Spiritual Journey groups to visit in Quito.

Each community began as a small seed of faith and hope, which was able to flourish because of the love and support of those around it. For me, it was such a beautiful experience to be a witness to and participate in each of these tight-knit communities. As a year long volunteer at the Center, my life was forever changed because of the unconditional love gifted to me by the families, they welcomed me into their homes and into their hearts.

During my time in Quito, I also met two different groups from St. Gabriel’s and heard such incredible stories about their parish. Little did I know that I would have the honor of reconnecting and celebrating his words with them statewide.

The hospitality and generosity shown to me, at the Center and at St. Gabriel’s, were truly a blessing and it is all thanks to the well-tended mustard seeds that these communities nurtured with their care and love.

As the WBC families sing at Mass, “If you had faith like a mustard seed / God says / I would tell the mountains to move / and they would move!” Let us all have faith and rejoice for being part of the Working Boys’ Center – A Family of Families, and may we continue to nurture the mustard seeds that serve the working poor in Quito!

- Olivia Young, C4WF Development Director

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A Despedida Never Means Goodbye

After soccer games, a special program for the volunteers from various departments in the Center brought everyone inside to the dining room. A frog dance from our little ones, ‘a bomba’ dance from the Accompaniment Program, salsa chore from extracurricular and an acapella song from our chorus group rounded out the day. Arguably, the favorite part for all watching was when the volunteers were brought up to the stage for participation. The seventh grade ‘reporters’ asked the volunteers about their experiences in Ecuador, showed their dance moves, and spoke some final words to our families. After the program, we shared in our last mass together. Nathan’s guitar playing will be sincerely missed in our daily masses.

In sharing one last meal together, through the hugs, kisses and tears, we are reminded that God’s love brings us together and holds us in each other’s hearts forever. His love transforms us and makes us better men and women for others. Thank you Amberly, Colin, and Nathan, for being a part of this family of families.

Just Like a Little Mustard Seed

Each community began as a small seed of faith and hope, which was able to flourish because of the love and support of those around it. For me, it was such a beautiful experience to be a witness to and participate in each of these tight-knit communities. As a year long volunteer at the Center, my life was forever changed because of the unconditional love gifted to me by the families, they welcomed me into their homes and into their hearts.

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Our students excitedly presented their end of year projects with confidence and poise with topics ranging from mitosis and meiosis to local foods from various provinces. Using the Multiple Intelligences Model, an essential component of the Jesuit Horizon 20/20 curriculum, each classroom made their presentation unique and engaging through linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, bodily-kinaesthetic, musical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and naturalist intelligences. A shadow play demonstrating unhealthy cultural norms, student-recorded and edited video footage about the traditions of Otavalo, and a puppet play with audience participation about climate change captured important issues of today that our society confronts.

With tours through our technical education school, on house visitors “tired their hand” at sewing, carpentry, and beauty. Metal figurines adorned the metal mechanics shop, and the Center proudly presented our plans for our technical education high school degree next year!