



COLEGIO ANEXO SAN FRANCISCO DE ASÍS

Bogotá, Colombia — Summer 2015

Dear Friends and Collaborators of CASFA,

Happy SUMMER to you! At CASFA, we have recently completed the final details of our 2014-2015 school year and are in the midst of planning for another exciting year ahead, which begins on August 3rd! But before launching anew, we want to take this opportunity to fill you in on some of the meaningful highlights of this past semester, since you and your faithfulness are so important to us!

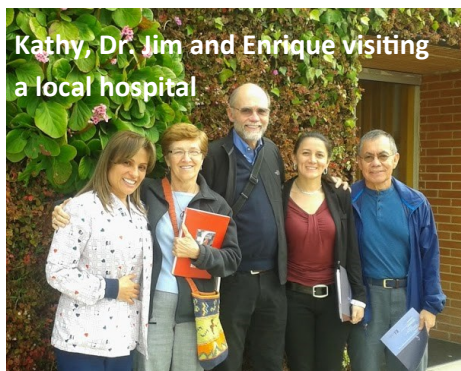
Guests galore!

From January to June, 12+ visitors came to see our mission. We were thrilled to share life with them and what we are about! From St. Patrick Parish in Tacoma, Washington, one of our great supporters in Plan Madrina, we welcomed Dr. Jim Rooks, MD, Jim O'Neill, Deacon Bill Eckert and Enrique



Llanas. They were with us for a week, visiting their twin parish San Wenceslao and CASFA, where they spent time with the 15 students they sponsor. Saturday afternoon, we gathered at school for a party for the children and families they support. It was very much enjoyed! Jim Rooks, MD, commented after his visit: "Thank you so much for all you did for us this past week. It was a mountain-top experience, and I have fallen in love with the wonderful country of Colombia."

Kathy Johnson, a Cojourner (lay associate) with our Congregation, came to visit and share ministry with us for three



months. She shared some reflections after her visit: "What a privilege to spend January to March with Sisters Marg, Val, Carolina, and Clara Inés in Bogotá. I am left with an overwhelming wish that the entire Rochester Franciscan Community could really get to know what the Sisters, past and present, mean to the people in Bogotá. From the youngest child in the school, to the cooks and gardeners, everyone knows the Franciscan values. I was invited to live right with the Sisters, and it became very clear that they are deeply loved. They work hard, but they are

also faithful to prayer and Community. I made many home visits with Sister Marg, worked alongside a caring, competent young woman doctor in the Dispensary, studied Spanish with the help of Constanza, attended the English Mass with a local community, visited the farm (Willkapampa) and took lots of pictures of the beautiful flowers, people and graffiti. A number of visitors came while I was there, and each one left profoundly affected by this Community."

Creative forms of Leadership Formation

Leadership is a very important value promoted by CASFA. It appears in our mission statement, in our vision, and in the profile of each CASFA student: to be leaders of service, who transform their surroundings, and, most of all, become leaders of their own lives.



This past semester, we offered two interesting extracurricular activities for the students. The first was Crissol, a week-long experiential leadership workshop for freshmen through junior students. Five girls from Colegio Anexo San Francisco de Asís, plus 25 girls from the Colegio Santa Francisca Romana, participated in the six-day course. The goal of Crissol was to form leadership skills based upon the role models of Jesus and Saint Francis, with a focus on service and love. Each day's activities were based on abilities that a leader must have, depending on each person's context (family, friends, school, one's country, one's reality and most importantly, one's self). Additionally, the participants learned skills such as the importance of good communication and problem-solving. These activities help students grow, mature and realize that, in order to be a leader, one has to know oneself and lead one's own life. As a result, the five participants from CASFA will continue to serve as leadership role models. We hope to continue this unique work between the two schools.



The second extracurricular program offered was the School for Heroism, in which participating youth gathered two afternoons a week for four months. Through cooperative games, art, ritual and reflection, the students focused on self-reflection, relationships of love, creativity and heroism.

A Touching Farewell to an Amazing Woman

After spending the last 15 years as a Very Important Person in our CASFA Family, and many more years before that in various parts of Latin America, Sister Margaret Kiefer, one of our Rochester Franciscans and our much-loved resident nonagenarian, made the decision to move to our Congregational Center in Rochester, Minnesota, at the end of March. This precipitated two grand celebrations for us, one with the students and another with our entire staff. Sister Margarita, as she has been known, has offered an incredible pastoral presence to our students and their families, including their elders and other home-bound individuals. She has spent all these years trudging up and down the mountainside visiting families in their homes, sharing a prayer here, a grocery basket there, and sizing up the concrete needs faced by each family in order to be a "bridge" in finding appropriate resources. In addition, several times a week she would offer to tutor students who needed a bit of extra help with their studies.

The staff celebration focused on her love of the role of a “clown.” With much merriment, costumes and decorations, Sister Marg was well feted with happy song and dance, clown makeup, gifts of a variety of plants to be “grounded” in her honor, and moving testimonials of the many virtues she has demonstrated for us on a daily basis.

The students organized their own event for her with an Entrance Procession through a bower of daisies (known as “margaritas” in Spanish!), a variety of presentations and home-made cards



and gifts offered by each grade level. The Sophomore Class had a wonderful presentation, acting as mimes (another cherished activity of Sister Marg). They dramatized real-life anecdotes and memories of Sister Marg, once again celebrating the huge influence this slight, but strong, woman had on hundreds of students and their families. The celebration ended with the dedication of the

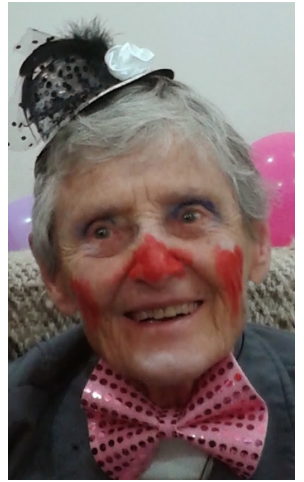
Audio-Visual Room being named in her honor, complete with a plaque and picture of her “in conversation” with the school’s signature statue of St. Francis of Assisi.

Dear Sister Marg, you have offered SO MUCH during these many years among us! We praise and thank God for your multiple gifts and your great influence among us. We will miss you greatly!

The Magic Circus

As you may recall from earlier years, each Spring the entire school is involved in producing and participating in an Artistic Festival, a lively show of music, dancing and dramatization with an original script that carries an important message. This year’s production had its special challenges, with significant staffing changes needed mid-stream. As the date drew near, we were shocked to learn of the sudden death of our music teacher, Camilo Franco, who was killed in a motorcycle accident a few weeks before the scheduled event. Needless to say, the entire school community was steeped in mourning and solidarity with Camilo’s family, especially his young wife and his 7-month-old son. There was even consideration of whether we simply needed to cancel the Festival for this year. Yet the students themselves rose to the fore and insisted that they could carry it off in Camilo’s honor. And so, on with the show!

It was truly a remarkable and very moving event! Camilo’s choir and instrumentalists sang and



played their hearts out. Each grade level played, acted and danced their part in “the Magic Circus” — from the Pre-School “lions, elephants and bears,” to the acrobats, magicians and the Ringmaster himself, who mastered feats on a trapeze!

According to the script crafted by the school’s Spanish teacher and her class, the Circus began as a ragtag crew who were locked in a colorless, incompetent range of performances because they had failed to seize on the magic ingredient of JOY and collaboration. However, when a young girl encouraged them to work together and be HAPPY together, wondrous things were possible, and EVERYONE improved! The circus concluded with Color, Joy and a moving tribute to the influence and the legacy left by Camilo on his young charges. It was a magical evening indeed!

Looking Ahead...

This October marks the **30th Anniversary** of the founding of CASFA. We will be involved in special celebratory events as we give thanks to God and to YOU, our faithful benefactors, who have made all of this possible, and who continue to help us BELIEVE IN our future!

CASFA will be participating in a special Student Exchange with a group of 17 students from Cristo Rey High School in Minneapolis, Minnesota, who will be coming to Bogotá in late November through the Pathways to Children Foundation. It is a cultural and service-oriented experience in which they will be paired with 17 of our own CASFA students who will share the week with them in a great variety of ways, all geared to helping both groups more deeply understand their own part in a global community that needs to be mutually respectful and ready to “roll up their sleeves” to make a difference! It should be a fascinating experience for everyone involved!

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As a request from our Plan Madrina staff, we remind our contributors who send checks to address the envelope to: **Sisters of St. Francis/CASFA — 1001 14th St. NW—Rochester, MN 55901**. This helps with the correct routing of your contribution!

In anticipation of another lively year at CASFA, we continue to count on your remarkable fidelity and generosity in serving these children and their families. God bless you!

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