

Early Childhood Stimulation Global Grant Update

Posted by Ed Kolybaba on Jun 09, 2015



The Rotary Club of Kelowna Sunrise served as the lead International Club in the funding and development of the Early Childhood Stimulation Global Grant (ECS-GG) in Tegucigalpa, Honduras. The first year of the project will come to an end in August 2015. The project will be sustained in the second year by 20 'women leaders' who will expand the knowledge and benefits of the project to the remaining families enrolled in the Alternativos y Oportunidades (AyO) program. In addition, the educational benefits of the project will live on in the AyO curriculum for future families enrolled in the scholarship program.

AyO's Mission Statement is as follows: "To help reduce social risk children, youth and their families who work in the markets, streets and neighbourhoods of Tegucigalpa and Comayagua. We do this by providing alternative health services and education through programs and activities that respond to their current needs with emphasis on prevention for social integration and recovery of their rights, encouraging their participation and outreach."



The goal of our ECS-GG was to provide a service that we take for granted in the developed world. By providing medical services, psychological counseling, food preparation and nutritional classes, access to social interaction and motor skills assessment we significantly improve the chances of these children reaching their potential once they enter the scholarship program. A program we have supported since 1992 when Fred Lindsay initiated our involvement with AyO.

During my recent visit to Honduras, I had an opportunity, with Dr. Don Kaminski, as my host, to observe ECS-GG activities. This particular week the focus was on families with children 3-5 years old. The classes were held in a space provided free of charge by the National Library in Tegucigalpa. There were numerous activities that measured individual minor and major motor skills, cognitive response to problem

solving, recognition of warning signs for specific development issues and socialization with other children of the same age.

Afterwards, Don and I were able to interview each family regarding the impact of the project on their families. There were common themes. Many mothers commented on the positive changes their children were experiencing as a result of the opportunities to socialize with other children their own age in a safe environment. We were struck by one child named Jofren. His mother commented how secluded he was at home and how 'wide eyed' and energetic he would become when attending ECS activities. The joy in many of the children's faces was tangible. Many children were undersized for their age and presented with symptoms of malnutrition. Physical examinations revealed 24% of those in the program suffer from malnutrition. Each child's deficiencies are noted and receive individual attention.

The project also focuses on the mother's needs. They receive educational presentations on nutritional food prep, sexual education and are obligated to take part in ECS activities or other adult education and vocational training opportunities.



In a world where the waste of the human resource abounds due to the regretful and unnecessary lack of basic resources, it is uplifting to know that in a small way we are enhancing individual opportunity for others to reach their potential and be a benefit to their communities.

Reported by Greig McPhee

Editor's Note: Check out the [International/Foundation Site](#) for more photos from Honduras