

El Hogar Receives Accolades!



Earlier this year, a Honduran governmental organization, Instituto Hondureño de la Niñez y la Familia (The Honduran Institute for Children and the Family) paid an unannounced visit to El Hogar. They wanted to see if El Hogar was within the governmental guidelines for an organization working with children in Honduras. They wrote a detailed report in which they praised El Hogar and suggested that it be considered as a model and example for the ways the staff is working with love and enthusiasm, using excellent practices, and is elevating the

lives of children. A separate visit was made by the Department of Education of one of the Universities in Honduras. They were similarly impressed with the level and quality of education at El Hogar, also suggesting that El Hogar be a model for all schools in Honduras to follow, both public and private. Many North American volunteers and educators who visit our classrooms comment that the level and quality of the teaching at El Hogar is as strong as the educational system in North America. Kudos to the teaching staff at El Hogar!



El Hogar

El Hogar's 30th Anniversary

This 30th year of El Hogar Projects has been quite tough, but for the children and staff, I think has proven to be one of the best. The challenges presented to us by a global recession, local inflation, and political unrest have helped us to sharpen our focus and look more closely at each aspect of what we do.

The continuing vitality of El Hogar was evident in our three graduations and in the reunion we had of former graduates. These events were a moving celebration of our 30 years of love and hope. Despite all of the political unrest in Honduras, El Hogar was able to keep its doors open and classes held. Our students lost no school time, unlike the public schools, which missed about a third of the school year. This is due completely to the extraordinary commitment of our devoted teachers and staff. At the Agricultural School graduation, large families arrived in pickup trucks, wearing their best clothes, sometimes borrowed from neighbors or relatives. For most, this graduation represents the highest achievement anyone in their family has ever reached. Afterward, a lunch was served. For some, it will be the only time all year they will "eat out". Many of these graduates have announced their desire to continue their studies, and someday go to university.

On November 7th we held our third annual reunion of former El Hogar graduates. The auditorium at the Institute was full of ex-alums, current students, staff, and visitors. About 26 men came from all over Honduras to share their life stories. Lazaro decided not to leave anyone out or cut anyone short. These men spoke of the difference El Hogar has made in their lives. They talked about the dark times in the beginning when they were lonely and sad, and how slowly over time, El Hogar filled their hearts with love. They

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Recent graduate with his proud mother

El Hogar Projects
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Tegucigalpa, DC, Honduras

Executive Director
The Rev. Richard Kunz

Director,
St. Mary's Technical Institute
Sub-Executive Director
Lazaro Juarez

Director Agricultural
School and Farm
Balbino Andino

Director El Hogar de
Amor y Esperanza
Claudia de Castro

Capital Projects Manager &
Work Team Host
Raul Castro

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North America
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Margo Mingay

Christmas Giving

Have you ever considered participating in alternative giving for Christmas?

Rather than purchasing an item that someone may or may not really want or need, you could give a donation to El Hogar in the name of a friend or family member. Your gift is 100% tax deductible and we will send a card to the recipient telling them you made a donation in their honor. It is a way to both simplify the holiday season and to give the gift of life and transformation to those who have so little.

Photos by Genevieve Seguinot and others.



El Hogar Ministries, Inc.
70 Church Street
Winchester, MA 01890

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El Hogar's Mission

The mission of El Hogar Projects is to provide a loving home and education in a Christian environment for abandoned, orphaned and hopelessly poor children, enabling them to fulfill their ultimate potential as productive and caring citizens of Honduras.

30th Anniversary

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spoke of the positive values that El Hogar taught, the abiding guidance of the teachers and Directors, and how they emerged with confidence in themselves. One recent graduate talked about the jobs he had held as he finished the next phases of his education, and how hard it was to work and go to school, but how happy he was now with his good job. Two of our graduates are TV personalities! Another is the mayor of his small town, and showed pictures of his house. Several brought their wives and children to introduce them to El Hogar. They encouraged the current students to work hard and persevere, so they may know the same transformation and one day stand on the same stage and share their stories. These men were inspiring and each Director said how it makes their hard work and sometimes despairing moments all worthwhile.

During the Technical Institute graduation we surprised Lazaro by honoring him for his years of service, since he has worked with El Hogar for 30 years. We had a Powerpoint presentation with pictures of him from his past (including pictures of the orphanage where he spent much of his childhood). Then we presented him with his gift. Our new chapel



Farm graduate and his mother



El Hogar alum with his young family

at the Institute has a bell tower, but has not had a bell. We presented a bell, with an inscription in Lazaro's honor. Every time it rings, it will remind those who hear it of his years of faithful and inspired service to hundreds of young people.

The El Hogar graduation was the next day. The staff of El Hogar honored Claudia during the ceremony for her leadership and care. This year the students, under the supervision of two of our teachers, have been tutoring some of the parents. Two of the mom's graduated from 6th grade along with their children. They were also dressed in caps and gowns, and it was a wonderful moment. Little Iris, who at 10 was abandoned and left with the care of her little brother, was one of the participants in our folkloric dancing group,

looking radiant. She is the girl who says she loves El Hogar because she gets to go to school, and after class gets to play "just like a child." Two of the local television stations were there to record the events.

We do not get to bask in the glow very long. All of us are working hard on budgets, trying to figure out how to address more need with fewer resources. 2010 promises to be another very challenging year, but we are very hopeful it will be as full of blessings as this past year has been.

— Rev. Richard Kunz

Walkathons Raise Over \$30,000

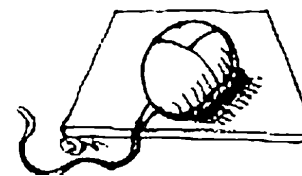
The annual El Hogar Walkathon is designed to take place all around the country. This being our pilot year, we had two areas participate, one in Colorado in June and one in Massachusetts in October. These two walks together raised over \$30,000! Imagine if each year five additional sites host a walk; the contribution to El Hogar could be huge! Walkathons are ideal fundraisers because they have very few expenses and almost all the



Our Winchester, MA walk attracted many enthusiastic participants.

would like form a walk in 2010: info@elhogar.org.

Going Electronic



In order to reduce expenses, we want to take advantage of electronic communication with our supporters. To be sure you stay up to date on news from El Hogar, please send us your email address so we can better keep in touch. You can send it via our website, or send an email to: info@elhogar.org with your name and contact information.

Financial Update

As we mentioned in our recent letter, 2009 has proven to be a very difficult year for El Hogar, and 2010 promises to be even more challenging. Due to some generous giving, and good results from some fundraising such as the Walkathon, we will end the year close to meeting our budget, but we have no reserves left to face 2010. Thank you to everyone who has supported us this year; we cannot keep El Hogar running without your loving and generous help. Please keep us in your hearts and prayers as we face this next year, potentially making some difficult decisions.

New Work Team Coordinator

As of January 2010, the scheduling and support of all work teams to El Hogar is shifting from our Massachusetts office to Margo Mingay, in Toronto Canada. Margo, a former Co-Executive Director of El Hogar Projects, can be reached at 416-696-7682. All funds and required paperwork should still be sent to the Massachusetts office, but other correspondence, such as scheduling and general support will be handled by Margo. Raul Castro will still be the work team host in Honduras.

Are You 70 1/2 or Older?

If so, you may be able to make your donation to El Hogar by taking a nontaxable distribution directly from your Individual Retirement Account. This distribution will also count towards the annual minimum required distribution. For more information, see IRS Publication 590 on IRAs or consult your tax advisor.

Extra Airline Miles?

Did you know you can donate your airline miles?

Contact Liz Kinchen at 781-729-7600 to learn how you can make this very helpful donation to El Hogar Ministries.