



## Summer 2013 Newsletter

### GLOBAL INITIATIVES, YMCA CANADA EAST

**In this newsletter, we will showcase current programming at the YMCA of Honduras, who just celebrated their 23<sup>rd</sup> year of working for and with youth!**



#### **The YMCA of Honduras in Marcala**

In the past five months, the YMCA of Honduras in Marcala has continued the process of Citizenship training in at least five secondary schools in the Departments (provinces) of Comayagua, Copan and La Paz and has succeeded in uniting established youth groups in the process. They have had 10 meetings with youth organizations in Marcala, including: the AIDS forum, a Biblical Union, the Red Cross, and a risk prevention and social reintegration program, to establish a partnership (a coordinating committee) on

youth advocacy, and to create youth-focused agendas in the areas where the YMCA works.

In addition, they offered five educational sessions on sexuality and biological, social and psychological changes to youth in Florida, Marcala, and classes on identity and self-esteem, sexuality, leadership, and volunteerism at the *Instituto 21 de Febrero* school. They also hosted a radio show on the theme of identity and self-esteem. So far this year, they have reached a total of about 500 male and 600 female youth in Marcala through direct programming, as well as another 8960 youth and 5970+ adults through indirect impacts!

The YMCA in Marcala also participates in an ongoing Work Group on Children, Youth and Women, which aims to analyze and reflect on the problems of children and youth, and they have upcoming plans to enter new schools as well. Please read on for some of their participant testimonials...



Caption: "Citizen Participation is when every citizen has the right to participate in all social, cultural and political activities in our country..."



**Karen Yishel Sanchez Bautista.**

I am from Marcala, La Paz. I am currently in grade 9, and I participate in the YMCA's Citizenship Formation program for youth. What motivated me to participate in this program is that I saw how it helped other young people improve in school, express themselves in public, lead a group, boost their self-esteem, meet and interact with people their age. I am very grateful to the YMCA of Honduras in Marcala for giving me this opportunity and to the funders for their continuous support. Thank you very much.

**Francis Arely Mendoza.**

I am 18 years old and I am from the community of Santa Ana, La Paz. I am in my third year of the Social Awareness program at the *Juan Ramon Molina* Technical Institute. I am currently doing a field placement with the YMCA through the Citizenship Formation and Sexual Health program, where I have had the opportunity to work with other youth by presenting a variety of topics. This has allowed me to visualize the problems that are currently affecting young people in their communities. My goal is to become a volunteer of the YMCA.





## The Ludoteca Colonia San Francisco, near Tegucigalpa



The *Ludoteca* (officially translated as Toy Library) is actually a recreational centre and training facility for children, youth and parents. The idea is to contribute to a real, institutional commitment to tackle the problems that threaten the quality of life and development of children and adolescents.

By teaching youth to take ownership and responsibility within their own neighbourhood of San Francisco and surrounding areas, they will be able to have an impact on different aspects of community life. The Citizenship training offered at the *Ludoteca* includes socio-political training, technical training, and sessions on Human Development – pretty thorough training for a Toy Library! The computer classes include courses on Windows, Office, and preventative maintenance of PCs. This training is all certified by the National Commission for the Development of Alternative Education, a governmental agency.

Some of you may notice they repainted the Ludoteca when they were able to get back up and running this spring, with fresh new colours representing the Honduran flag! Here are some of their participants' impact stories...



### **Ana Lideny Cardona Duarte**

Participating in the programs offered at the Ludoteca has been a very nice experience because we have met a lot of people such as our good friends and instructors Jorge Orellana and Martin Duarte, and all the individuals who support the YMCA – all very calm and cheerful people.



The YMCA helps us make a positive change as we share ideas and problems; we air our concerns to our classmates and support each other; we get along really well.

Here at the YMCA, we learn a lot. For example, we talk about family structures, and we are taught about the reality of many things. It is really good to talk to other people about our feelings, otherwise you feel alone and empty and this can cause anxiety and disappointment.

The day we participated in the “Walk for Peace” was very nice because it helped us become more aware of how important it is to get along with everyone around us and to promote peace in our countries.



### **Yerian Fernando Palma**

My classmates and I have had a great time in both the computer classes and the Citizenship Formation classes. We get along really well with the instructor and overall I feel really good. I considered myself as not being very enthusiastic when it came to meeting new people; but I have learned many new things about life and now I get along with a lot of people from the Ludoteca; people I didn’t even think I could become friends with. I am

thankful for being here because we are more than just a group of people; we are a team.

I am now more sociable and understanding. I try harder to interact with people and I am not as anti-social as I used to be prior to joining this group, which has helped me change the things I needed to in life. I realized I was straying in life and I have since changed my way of thinking: we have to live for others but without forgetting about oneself.

I have overcome the fear of speaking in public through my participation in the Citizenship Formation program. I have learned a lot about myself through the exchange of communication with my team; and I feel great. Thank you very much for your support!



Caption: “Youth Justice in Action for a Culture of Peace at the Y  
Let’s remove the disguise of violence!”



### The YMCA of Honduras in Taulabé, Comayagua

The YMCA in Taulabé has been busy this year! Between January and April they have promoted their programming in four high schools, where they also began with the training of 30 young people in each school – a total of 120 youth trained in the Citizenship Formation program. In addition, six organized groups did volunteer activities in HIV/AIDS Prevention, with a membership of 100 volunteers in these six communities. Not only have they contributed to HIV/AIDS Committees in these communities, but also to a greater access to spaces for advocacy in the municipality of Taulabé.

They also initiated a program focusing on protecting the environment called “Ecological Drop” in which they planted 100 orchids in the neighbourhood of CEB Las Americas del Carrizal, with the aim to bring in revenue to sustain their programming. They developed 13 radio programs based on themes from the Citizenship Training and HIV/AIDS curriculum, and they organized a Cultural Evening in collaboration with local school teachers!

Needless to say, their community outreach impacts all these communities through the “multiplier effect” of their knowledge being shared (“train the trainer”)... Here is one example of how it impacted a volunteer and former participant.

#### Keyla Martinez

I am a volunteer with the YMCA and since 2008, I have benefited from all the different programs: Radio Education, Citizenship Formation, HIV/AIDS Awareness, Youth Violence and Addictions Prevention. As a volunteer for the community of El Carrizal, Taulabé, I participate in cultural afternoons at the community library, dance folk music and perform at theatre plays; I love acting because it allows me to convey important messages to the community. The past 5 years as an active member of the team of



volunteers with the YMCA of Honduras in Taulabé have been very productive, unforgettable and a lot of fun!

The YMCA has been fundamental to my personal development; it has influenced my ability to better present myself in front of people and to be a better human being, to show more compassion and solidarity, be more aware of the problems and difficulties that are currently affecting our country and the whole world, and I now realize that I can do something to make things better.



The most important thing is what I have shared with other volunteers, those friendship ties that we have formed through working and spending time together. Some of the big activities and events made us anxious as the date got closer but thanks to everyone's efforts and our unity, we made it happen and in the end, we were all satisfied with the work done, joking, singing and dancing around.

One of the nicest things about the YMCA is that its members are very diverse in race, skin colour, religion, musical preferences, gender, etc. But we all get along really well and we are like a family; the family that you get to choose in life. Here at the YMCA of Honduras in Taulabé, you find yourself; you can be yourself without inhibitions of any kind because we are the YMCA in Taulabé – we are the YMCA for the world!

There is a phrase that I like very much and I would like to share it with you: *“There is a motion force stronger than vapour, electricity and atomic electricity: it is will (Albert Einstein).”*



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Building healthy communities