

conneXion

SPRING 2016

From our **LEARNING GOALS**

Our ASFG community strives to be...

Community Contributors

- Respectful, responsible, honest, and kind
- Collaborative team members with positive inter-personal skills
- Constructive and pro-active leaders
- Global citizens committed to peace, diversity, and environmental responsibility

La comunidad del ASFG se esfuerza por formar...

Ciudadanos comprometidos

- Respetuosos, responsables y honestos
- Individuos preparados para trabajar en equipo y con habilidades interpersonales positivas
- Líderes pro-activos
- Comprometidos con la paz, la diversidad y la problemática ambiental



OUR HOME IS
PROVIDENCIA

CRECIENDO Y AYUDANDO:

REVOLUCIONANDO EL SERVICIO A LA COMUNIDAD EN QUINTO GRADO

A SYSTEMIC
problem: Coding & Gender



ASFG
COMMUNITY





Y EL MUNDO DE LAS EMOCIONES

by Ximena Ibinarriaga Soltero, AtentaMente Consultores A.C.

Carla es maestra de español y no sabía muy bien cómo lidiar con Diego, un niño muy inquieto que la mayoría de los maestros catalogaban como “flojo y distraído”. Un día, Carla narró un cuento a sus alumnos y les pidió que hicieran un dibujo. Al terminar el tiempo destinado para la tarea, Carla se dio cuenta que Diego no había hecho su dibujo y se molestó.

Un segundo antes de empezar a regañarlo, Carla recordó una técnica que había aprendido en el curso Educar en Equilibrio: Mindfulness y el mundo de las emociones que estaba tomando y decidió aplicarla. La técnica se llama PARAR. Carla pausó, se tomó un momento para atender su respiración y cuando se sintió más tranquila decidió preguntarle a Diego por qué no había hecho su dibujo. Diego le explicó que había estado ayudando a sus compañeros a sacarle punta a sus colores.

Carla se conmovió y le explicó a Diego que lo que había hecho era muy amable y seguramente sus amigos se lo agradecerían mucho, pero que también era importante que él terminara sus tareas. En vez de ser presa de su enojo y prejuicios, Carla transformó esa experiencia; tuvo un momento de conexión, diálogo y aprendizaje con Diego.

¿Cómo logró Carla regular su enojo y transformar la situación? Las emociones juegan un papel fundamental en nuestra vida. Tienen influencia sobre la forma en que vemos el mundo, nos relacionamos con otras personas, nos expresamos y actuamos.

El verdadero problema no es que sintamos emociones, ya que estas son parte de nuestra naturaleza, nos dan información y nos ayudan a sobrevivir; sin embargo, hay ciertas emociones que se apoderan de nosotros, controlan nuestro mundo y nos hacen actuar de formas destructivas. A este tipo de estados mentales les llamamos emociones aflitivas.

Las emociones aflitivas perturban el equilibrio natural de nuestra mente, nos impiden pensar y ver lo que sucede con claridad, y a largo plazo merman nuestro bienestar. Estos estados emocionales tienen un alto costo en nuestra vida ya que no solo nos perturban, sino que nos llevan a hablar y a actuar de forma nociva.

Los seres humanos tenemos la capacidad de conocer y transformar los estados y hábitos emocionales. Esto se puede lograr a través del desarrollo de dos habilidades: autoconocimiento y autorregulación. Esta capacidad de conocer y transformar nuestros estados emocionales requiere tiempo y esfuerzo, como cualquier otro tipo de entrenamiento; sin embargo, es importante reconocer que esta habilidad trae grandes beneficios.

Algo muy importante que notarás al hacer este ejercicio es que, si logras ver a la emoción, ya no eres presa de la misma. Es como ser arrastrado por un río, pero por un momento pausas y decides salirte y mirar su cauce. ¡Te invitamos a intentarlo!



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OUR SCHOOL, OUR COMMUNITY

by David McGrath, Director General



This edition began with the idea of investigating the concept of community on and off our campus. We wanted to see how ASFG interacts with the community here and away. It must have been a good idea, because it became larger than the edition would allow!

It forced me to investigate this community of ours. Where are the borders? What do we do off campus and how do we welcome the community into our school? To get a very clear idea of what community means, please read Daniela Sandoval's article, From Within, page 12.

I have to admit that the content got away from me as I started to collect articles about how we interact with community. We travel to Guerrero where we meet the parents of the Ayotzinapa 43 with Scott Brennan in You Are Not Alone, page 40. We go to Peru with Julieta Hernandez in Los Q'eros (pages 26-27) and meet the people from this small and vital indigenous community through Julieta's words and photos.

We witness our very own Empty Bowls project by Chris Peterson and Jodi Page in Empty Bowls, page 22. This project has brought people into our school, helped ONI and some struggling communities, and strengthened our mission of community contribution.

This is all our community. We have page after page of what we are doing here and off campus: field trips, guest speakers, special projects, overnight trips, service learning, WWW, fundraising, conferences here, conferences there, new initiatives learned from each other and from guests. The list goes on.

We help our own community and others through collections, distributions, education, having guests on campus, and traveling to conferences. Read how the 5th grade embraced more projects and more teacher and student ownership in those projects in Growing Up and Giving Back: The Growth of Grade 5 Service Learning, page 36-37.

I had such a clear idea of this edition when I started. And yet now the borders, limits, and divisions have melted away. My head is spinning and I am not quite clear even what community really means in terms of our school and where we travel. Our community is everywhere; we are everywhere. I believe that is a sign of a great school community!

I decided to ground myself and took Michael Hogan's advice (Our Home is Providencia, page 31), by walking through Providencia. This time of year, whatever community means to you, there is nothing much better than walking over carpets of jacarandas past Dr. Atl park (I always say hello to Dr. Atl and to Malcolm MacDonald, the artist, once a teacher at ASFG, who created the bust there) and say good morning to our school at the top of the bend in the road. This is where our community starts every morning!

Enjoy this edition. Let your head spin a little while you enjoy all we do and all we are. Thank you to my copy editors (Amy Bokser, Diego Soberanes, Julie Villand, Dinah Castro, Norma Guinto), who get the work ready. Thank you to Mariana Martin who creates the beauty. Thank you to David McGrath for letting me do this. I would also like to thank Julie Villand for her collaboration, creativity, and trust.

Kristen Fry

ASFG's four learning goals, objectives toward which all learners in our school strive, are not words buried in curriculum documents or plastered on promotional posters. We live them on a daily basis, in one form or another, and hold them to such high esteem as to embed their words in our very mission statement.

Certainly, each goal has great transformative value for our learners, both as individuals seeking personal success and as members of our community in pursuit of societal progress. But are they all equally important? Do some hold deeper truths about human development, what it means to be truly educated? If we had a debate about the most transformative learning goal, which would you argue?

A silly question, perhaps, but one that is fun to consider. In my humble opinion, our fourth learning goal, "contribute to our community," is the mother of all learning goals – the one that gives purpose to the first three and to everything we teach and learn at ASFG. If the first three goals (learn with purpose, think critically and creatively, communicate effectively) describe the "how" of our mission, the skills and attitudes we need to be productive citizens; our fourth learning goal uncovers the "why," the end towards which we align our means.

To be community contributors – it's what we're wired for, innately, as

an ever-evolving species of social, collaborative, and self-aware beings. Quotations from inspirational leaders abound, and we cannot deny the drive to be part of something larger than ourselves – be it our family, our friends, or our local and global communities.

Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly. I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be. This is the interrelated structure of reality.

– Martin Luther King, Jr.

How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world.

– Anne Frank

A truly rich man is one whose children run into his arms when his hands are empty.

– Unknown

Men are beginning to realize that they are not individuals but persons in society, that man alone is weak and adrift, that he must seek strength in common action.

– Dorothy Day

But believing in the ideals inherent in our fourth learning goal is only

half the battle. In order to contribute to our community, we have to be an integral part of it. Otherwise, we engage in the soothing effects of charity rather than the enlightening lessons of true service and civic participation.

Educators worldwide struggle to make classroom learning relevant, and children see right through (and might roll their eyes at) tenuous connections we draw from theoretical concepts to theoretical applications. We fare much better at forging student engagement and motivation when students experience connections between **theoretical** concepts and **real** applications. And this is often accomplished not within the pages of our textbooks, but among the places in our community.

For example, we lead conversations with our students about the importance of voting and the high correlation between voter turnout and strength of democracy. This is an important element of **teaching** citizenship but one that ultimately falls short of deep learning. In contrast, students who visit polling places during elections, invite candidates to our school to ask issues-driven questions, and even participate in their own student government are **living** citizenship. We can only truly see the connection between what we learn and why we learn it by stepping into the "real world" whenever and wherever possible.

In many refreshing ways, learners at ASFG already demonstrate a strong culture of community participation. We naturally turn towards our service learning program to find evidence.

- Early childhood students learn about the life cycle of monarch butterflies and help design a butterfly garden whose native plants attract a multitude of pollinator species.
- Elementary children collect and organize sweaters and blankets just before the cold winter months and learn the impact organizations like ONI have on our marginalized communities.
- 5th graders align their interests with service opportunities choosing from a menu of five programs: animal shelter adoption, sustainable agriculture, forest management, a school for blind children, and a nursing home.
- High school students travel to rural communities with the service group La Querencia to build community centers and learn about sustainable living.

And this is just the tip of the iceberg. Learners at ASFG feel connected to our community both inside and outside the walls of our campus through our commitment to service learning.

Likewise, ASFG invests in community programs and events even without a service component. We host an annual Eco-Race open to the public to encourage an active and sustainable lifestyle among all Guadalajarans. Our ArtFest draws upwards of 2200 people in celebration of human creativity in the visual and performing arts. Our 2nd grade corn project draws speakers from NGOs and indigenous groups as well as field trips to farms just outside our city. We invite community members to our annual career fair, and, in turn, organize internships for students during Week Without Walls. Just before spring break, we hosted a home-game of Jalisco's semi-professional women's

basketball team, the Guadalajara Tapatias, where a member of our athletic faculty plays starting shooting guard.

Our participation in our broader community has brought tremendous value to our educational program, allowing students to see how the world works and why their studies in school matter. Nevertheless, we can and should make our participation even more robust, seamless, and part of our everyday lives, because in preparation for the "real world," our students deserve no less.

This discussion has come up many times in the planning of the new campus at Colomos 2100. The essential question is: how can we design our buildings and campus landscape to support our commitment to community contribution?

One thing is for sure: safety and security come first. We cannot jeopardize our sense of well-being on campus. Public access has to be controlled tightly and every effort to include the larger community into our academic program will be analyzed through a safety-first lens. Through careful campus design, however, we will achieve the win-win of impeccable security without fortress-like isolation, and a whole world of community participation will unfold. Perhaps we will strategically position our performing arts center so that with the locking of a few strategically placed fences and gates, professionals and semi-professionals from Guadalajara's rich theatrical and musical community can perform in our theatre without access to the rest of the campus. Our athletic complex could accommodate home games for all sports teams, even (dreaming big here) for our Juvenil C soccer games.

Following the model of our Language Institute, we could develop adult education classes, a teacher training institute, high performance athletic and arts programs, or partner with universities to offer graduate and undergraduate courses to seniors, parents, staff, and alumni.

And shouldn't ASFG be a polling place for elections? What better way to celebrate our developing democracy than to participate in the most fundamental civic right of all citizens?

We're all in this together. So let's celebrate our contributions to and participation in our community as the benefits are reaped by so many, especially our students. Let us simultaneously commit to always exploring new and innovative avenues for an ever deeper and more meaningful connection with one another through our work and our play, our teaching and our learning, and, most definitely, our shared places.



WE ARE THE WORLD NOSOTROS SOMOS EL MUNDO



by Adriana Fregoso, English as a foreign language teacher

“ We get to experience a perfect blending with the local cultures. ”

I hadn't thought about the song, "We Are the World" in years. It was popular years ago. Hearing it again recently reminded me that we are indeed all one.

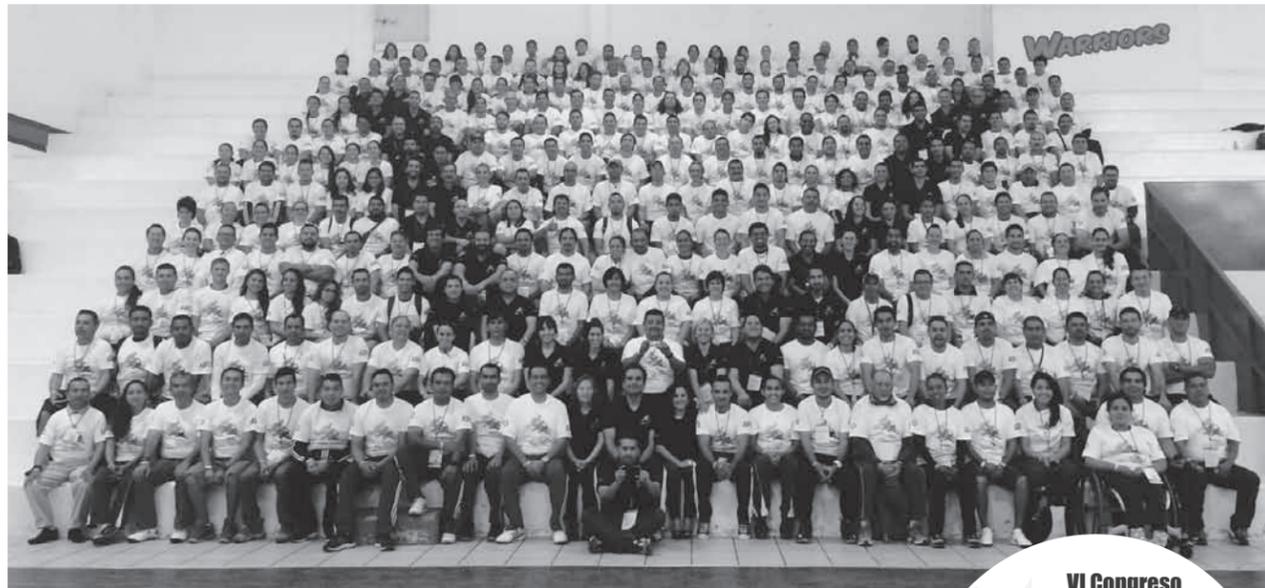
When students are enrolled in the ASAP program, they instantly become part of the ASFG community, our family. How do we ensure that they feel part of their new cultures and encourage them to be open to new experiences? We work to acknowledge where the ASAP students come from and celebrate our similarities and differences. Through the Korean, Japanese, Brazilian, and, this year, Ukrainian cultures, we start to see the commonalities with both the American and Mexican cultures.

One thing we found that our cultures have in common is that each one loves to celebrate! For instance, Koreans celebrate Thanksgiving too! The Japanese have a Children's Day, as do the Mexicans, but one month is for girls and a different month is assigned for boys. In the ASAP classroom, we work hard to provide experiences of how the Mexican and American cultures celebrate. The students learn Christmas carols, dress up for

Halloween, learn the history of US Thanksgiving, attend the Posada, eat the Rosca de Reyes, and visit the Day of the Dead altars. An interesting fact we discovered was that most Koreans and Japanese keep altars for their ancestors in their homes.

Finding out what makes us the same serves as a solid base for our ASAP students to accept the local cultures and to know that we are not really so very different. The reality is that these new students and their families are the new citizens that make up not only the ASFG community, but that of Guadalajara.

Our International Family Day at school is an authentic event that celebrates this diversity within our community and Mexico. It builds a wonderful bridge to close the gap that can exist among so many languages and cultures. We eat together and come together as a big family! We live the truth that we are the world. We get to experience a perfect blending with the local cultures. It is through this close relationship with one another that we establish from the beginning that our international environment here at ASFG-ASAP is the World! 🌍



EDUCAR CON VALORES y ESTAR A LA VANGUARDIA es un compromiso como docentes.

por Alejandro Garza, P.E. and Sports Director

Congreso Internacional Educación Física y Deporte Escolar ASFG Proyecto orientado con la visión de nuestra institución.

A partir del 2011 nace este espacio de mejora continua, el cual es organizado por el departamento de educación física y deportes del colegio, con el objetivo de crear un espacio donde nuestros docentes de educación física, administradores y entrenadores deportivos tengan la oportunidad de actualizarse en áreas afines a las ciencias aplicadas al deporte o propias de la educación física. Además, compartir este escenario con profesionistas o personas empíricas que tengan ese mismo interés de capacitarse.

Actualmente se han realizado seis ediciones donde hemos tenido la participación de más de 1500 congresistas y 50 ponentes, de ocho nacionalidades distintas, con un total de 132 horas de capacitación. Como comunidad educativa nos debemos de sentir orgullosos que este proyecto es un referente LÍDER y es catalogado como uno de los mejores congresos en ciencias aplicadas al deporte, en nuestro país. Como organizadores, hemos mantenido dos principios esenciales que han permitido el éxito del mismo: una organización de calidad y calidez.

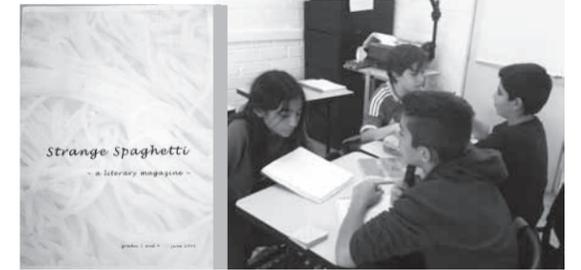
Gracias a este proyecto nuestros maestros de educación física y entrenadores deportivos han tenido la oportunidad de participar en cursos o congresos nacionales (Querétaro, Morelia, Monterey, y Veracruz) e internacionales (España, USA y Puerto Rico) como congresistas, con ello poder explorar y enriquecer nuevos métodos y estrategias educativas.

Para concluir, desde mi expectativa y mi forma de pensar siempre he creído firmemente en la capacitación y en las herramientas de desarrollo organizacional y personal. Claro, puede variar el método, el estilo, la dinámica, los recursos, pero la esencia es la misma: sensibilizar a nuestros maestros para abrirse a los cambios, brindándoles herramientas que innoven en ciertos procesos, que mejoren su desempeño y renueven sus razones para comprometerse y apasionarse por su trabajo. Sin duda este congreso ha sido muy importante para seguir creando espacios de conocimientos de áreas y campos de investigaciones propios de la educación física y deporte escolar. Para los congresistas llevar nuevas ideas o simplemente refrescar metodologías de trabajo en nuestros entornos laborales y que esto impacte de una manera directa y positiva a nuestros alumnos.

Por ultimo aprovecho este medio para agradecer el apoyo de toda nuestra comunidad educativa a nuestro departamento.

writing Community

by Amy Bokser, middle school teacher



In the fall of 2003, I had the greatest job ever – teaching creative writing to third and fourth graders. My small groups of students got excited about lie poems, wish poems, stories, and everything else. We wrote poems on crowns about when we ruled the world, we wrote stories on mobiles about flying things. We told each other what we liked about each other's poems and how we thought our stories could be improved. We suggested endings and titles and helped each other when we were stuck.

I was impressed by the community feeling in those little creative writing groups. At the same time, I felt a little isolated, teaching small groups in a corner far away from the rest of the school. In trying to integrate my little writing groups with big ASFG, I hit upon the idea of a literary magazine. And thus *Strange Spaghetti* was born.

The first issue of *Strange Spaghetti* was financed by me (I got reimbursed for most of it later. I think). We printed the text at the copy center but the cover had to be printed at Office Depot. I took the title from part of then-fourth grader Luly Godinez's poem: They made me a welcome party With clowns and strange spaghetti

My husband printed a background of some strange-looking spaghetti for the cover. We were only able to print about 50 copies – enough for the writers themselves. We worked very hard on it, but I didn't know if anyone else would be that excited. But my students and their families were delighted. "Do you have another copy so I can give my grandma one?" "Could I get one for my big sister?" Other students and teachers asked how they could be a part of it, and I very much wanted to invite everybody and their grandmother into our writing community. So I was really happy the following year when I got a grant from the Parents' Association, which meant I could print more and open up

submissions to all of elementary. I begged and cajoled teachers to find time in their busy days to send me their students' writing. Most were happy to do so, and for several years *Strange Spaghetti* was a physical representation of the elementary school writing community.

There were many awesome and odd pieces in *Strange Spaghetti*. Students played with rhythm, as in Andrea Figuerroa's *Fish*: The title is fish But there is no fish Because there is no water.

I still read Juan Pablo Lopez's *My Little Baby Sister Camila* to my 6th graders as an example of a great favorite person poem: She is the money in my pocket She is my favorite TV channel She is the ice cream of my dessert She is the 10 on my exam.

There was a recurring series of stories, Rodrigo Andrade and Julio Huato's wonderful *Ketchup Wars*: Humans began preparing their armies to go to Ketchupland to fight with mustard, onions, and pickles.

When I began working in middle school, a MS literary magazine seemed only natural. I didn't have to spend much time convincing Mr. Markman about the idea. The first *Amalgamation* came out in 2007. It contained lune poetry and something we called jagged poetry, as well as the insincere apology which has become a time-honored tradition in *Amalgamation*.

There were contributors who contributed year after year, like Sofi Benitez who wrote about toilet paper for *Strange Spaghetti* in the 4th grade, Chasing Rainbows for *Amalgamation* in the 6th grade, and went on to edit *Sin Fronteras* in high school. Juan Unda contributed every year of middle school, writing about his dog Brownie in the 5th grade, and finishing up with a poem

about Lars Ulrich of Metallica in the 8th grade.

While *Strange Spaghetti* was very much about primary school concerns, *Amalgamation* featured a very middle school point of view, like in Jose Paniagua's heartfelt "Pimple":

So ugly
So big
So red
So obvious
So hated.

Natalia Hecht's tragic "He":

Sexy
Cute
Handsome
Adorable
Nice
King
Generous
Honest
Sincere

Or then-6th grader Ana Paula Rueda's jaded lune poetry: Amazingly long day. I don't have fun anymore. I'm too old.

This year, the last of my elementary creative writing students will be graduating from high school. It doesn't seem that long ago that they were asking me hopefully what we would write about that day. It makes me happy to think of them going off into the world to write all over everything, forging their own communities while always remaining a part of this one.



SPANISH REALLY IS SPECIAL

by Annie Lopez, middle school teacher

I believe I am one of the most fortunate people in our school, because I have the opportunity to get to know most of the foreign students who come to middle school here. It is a pleasure for me to teach this class and be able to meet students from different countries, and most importantly to discover so many interesting things about their cultures and customs.

The Spanish as a Second Language class is a very important space for newcomers, not only to learn the Spanish language, but to help them adapt to their new home, Mexico. We give them the necessary tools to adjust to a new country, a new language, and a new culture, including the idiosyncrasies of the Guadalajara community. In this class, as some of my students have expressed, they feel as if they are all members of a family. Here, they meet friends and they get to know new people from different cultures.

Please read some thoughts about SSL as expressed by my students:

"Spanish as a second language is another opportunity to be more connected to my family."

"Speaking Spanish makes me think and use the potential of my mind more, and it makes me feel more open to unfamiliar things." (Hiromi González, 8th grade.)

"Spanish as a second language is a great breather. It's relaxed and I always look forward to it. We learn a lot and we work at our own pace which takes a load off my shoulders." (Annika Marigliano, 8th grade)

"I think for us international students, speaking Spanish is not just to participate in Mexican programs or understand what people are saying. It is the main key to get along with other people." (Dabin Lee, 8th grade)

"Learning about the Mexican culture is fun because now I can talk to my abuela about her culture." (Samantha Lozano, 7th grade)

"Speaking Spanish lets me be closer with my classmates and also makes me be able to actually speak Spanish in the out-world." (Sungbin Oh, 7th grade)

"Learning about the Mexican culture is important because it helps you understand things around you and widens your view." (Sofia Marigliano, 6th grade)

"Speaking Spanish is VERY hard at first, but it feels SO good when you know how to communicate with someone else." (Anthony Testa, 6th grade)

"Learning about the Mexican culture is interesting. It is definitely different and is very ... weird (in a good way)." (Josh Crandall, 7th grade)

"The Spanish as a Second Language class, speaking Spanish, and learning about the Mexican culture has helped me cope with life in Mexico." (Annie Jaquith, 6th grade)

"Learning Spanish has helped me with the Mexicans here as well as to understand the structure of my own language, Chinese. In conclusion, SSL has helped me in many ways that I just don't even know." (Ellie Chang, 5th grade)

"Learning Spanish and about the Mexican culture makes me a part of Mexico, and Mexico becomes a part of me." (Jen Doluda, 5th grade)

In addition to learning Spanish, helping newcomers adapt to Guadalajara and feel comfortable in the country is one of the main goals for the Spanish as a Second Language class. We all believe that this adaptation is really important for the students' success at ASFG. In the SSL class we help students understand the culture, become familiar with the traditions, and give them opportunities to integrate with their local classmates. We provide a space that allows them to freely express their feelings and thoughts in a safe environment as we work to assist them in their transition to a regular Spanish class. For many international students arriving to ASFG, SSL is the key to experiencing success both academically and socially.

One of my student's words sums it up best:

"This journey in the SSL class has been a wonderful experience and I believe I live in a wonderful community with many interesting people. I'm so glad I have come to the American School of Guadalajara and am part of the SSL class." (Olivia Testa, 8th grade)



Week Without Walls

by Brian Zink, High School Assistant Principal

During Week Without Walls, many students leave campus to work with the outside community and learn about one of their interests. Some students might choose to stay on campus and learn from a local magician before performing their own magic show for elementary or middle school students. Others might participate in a basketball camp led by a professional basketball player from the Tapatías de Jalisco, then share their newly learned skills with elementary PE classes. Week Without Walls is designed to provide our students with diverse opportunities to learn new skills, leave their comfort zone, and get out of the “friendly confines” of ASFG.

This year, I was fortunate enough to leave our friendly confines and participate in La Querencia 4.0, a cooperative that works with promoting sustainable agriculture. The La Querencia trip provides our students with an opportunity to live, think, and work with the greater community. The best part is seeing that the work is done in a reciprocal manner locally, nationally, and globally.

In this project, ASFG students were led by three ASFG alumni: Rafael Barragán, Francisco Cuevas (2006), and Beatriz Barragán (2003). These former students knew they could ask our students to reflect and think critically about what it takes to create a sustainable future, not only in the rural environment of Santa Maria del Oro, but also in our day-to-day urban life. They also knew the challenge of “getting your hands dirty” might be new to many students.

Students gained a deeper understanding of how we might be able to sustain a country rich in rural landscapes, agricultural diversity, and natural resources in conjunction with the rapid growth of urban centers. This was highlighted in the work students did that might be applied to urban agriculture. Students built raised bamboo planters, concrete spirals of spice plants, and agricultural art. Working the land for generations has made Mexico what it is today, and La Querencia provides our students a quick glance at that reality.

Students were subtly exposed to global topics as they dug their hands into the process. They filtered through corn kernels as they learned about Genetically Modified Organisms and Monsanto. They learned about the global impact of bees before putting on a bee suit and visiting the hives. They witnessed what it takes to bring a chicken from the farm to the plate, and how a single pig might feed a group of 40 for a whole week. These are simple things that many of us take for

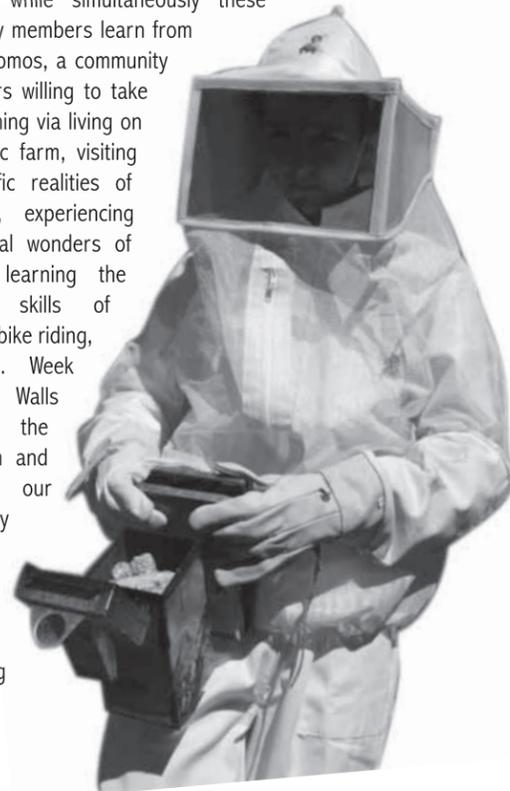


granted, but that our students experienced and reflected on daily for a week.

The work of ASFG high school students is a part of bringing people from as far as Germany to learn about Mexico’s rural landscape, agriculture, and natural beauty. Just after our group left the La Querencia 4.0 experience, the cooperative hosted two German WOOFERS (World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms) that would be living, farming, and further developing the projects our students worked on. The work of our students is helping people from around the world understand our local environment, sustainability, and organic farming via the classroom that has no walls: our community and our world!

Week Without Walls is a high school tradition that thrives on working with the community. Students and teachers learn from local community members while simultaneously these community members learn from us.

Así somos, a community of learners willing to take risks learning via living on an organic farm, visiting the horrific realities of Auschwitz, experiencing the natural wonders of Chiapas, learning the technical skills of mountain bike riding, and more. Week Without Walls brings the outside in and pushes our community out, with the common goal of learning for all!



ASFG 8th Grade Exchange Catherine Cook School

by David Markman, Middle School Principal

In February 2011, our first group of 8th graders who participated in the Catherine Cook School Exchange program returned from their visit to Chicago with stories of warm hospitality, freezing winter temperatures, Blue Man Group, deep-dish pizza, and other exciting adventures while living with Catherine Cook School families for two weeks. Last February, our sixth group of 8th graders returned from Chicago reporting similar stories and experiences that they will remember and treasure for their entire lives.

Our partnership with the Catherine Cook School began in September 2009. At that time, we had been preparing our middle school staff for the unveiling of our one-to-one laptop program that was scheduled to take place in the spring of 2010. A committee of teachers and administrators held a discussion in which we came up with the idea of visiting a school that already had a one-to-one program so that we could actually see it in action. Mr. Zink, an 8th grade teacher at the time, found a one-to-one laptop school in his hometown of Chicago, and sent them an email inviting ourselves to visit. The Catherine Cook School, who had recently launched their one-to-one program in September of 2008, graciously accepted our request, and just a few weeks later a team of three middle school teachers and myself were in Chicago visiting classrooms and speaking with students, teachers, and administrators about one-to-one lapping. Our goal was to learn everything we could about launching a one-to-one program so

that we could capitalize on what they did well, avoid the mistakes they made, and ask them what they would have done differently. The visit yielded great results and helped us figure out how to better implement our own ASFG program.

I had an additional goal in mind during the visit. I was looking for a school with which to establish an exchange program for ASFG 8th graders and was hoping that CCS would provide that opportunity for us. I figured they would be open to this idea since they had accepted our invitation to visit their school, and I knew that Chicago would be a great city for our kids to visit, especially in the winter.



I was very impressed by the Catherine Cook School and grateful for their hospitality, and I was pleased that they also seemed interested in forming a partnership with us. We had conversations about establishing an exchange program and shared other ideas as well. I invited the CCS middle school principal, Cory Stutts along with her colleague, William Merish, to visit our school and get to know our community. They visited

ASFG in March 2010 and came to agree that establishing a partnership between our two schools would provide our students with great opportunities.

Our first group of 8th grade students went to Chicago in late January of 2011, and we've sent a group each year since this initial visit. This upcoming May we will receive our third group of CCS students and continue to look forward to welcoming them to our school community. This partnership with CCS has evolved and expanded over the years. Our students have participated together in Global Issues Network (GIN) conferences in the Dominican Republic, Monterrey, and in March of this year in Medellin, Colombia. In 2011 we also participated in a teacher exchange program where one of our teachers spent two weeks in Chicago teaching at CCS while a CCS teacher took over classes at ASFG.

It's exciting to speak with our students when they return from Chicago and to hear about their experiences. Their observations and insights about the similarities and differences in lifestyle that they experience in their two weeks in Chicago never cease to amaze me. It is interesting to hear about their experiences as hosts of CCS students as well. I think our students learn as much by being hosts as by being guests. This partnership has benefited both of our school communities, and I'm grateful to the Catherine Cook School community for the hospitality they have provided our students over the years, as well as to our ASFG parents and teachers who have supported this program.

From Within

by Daniela Sandoval, high school student

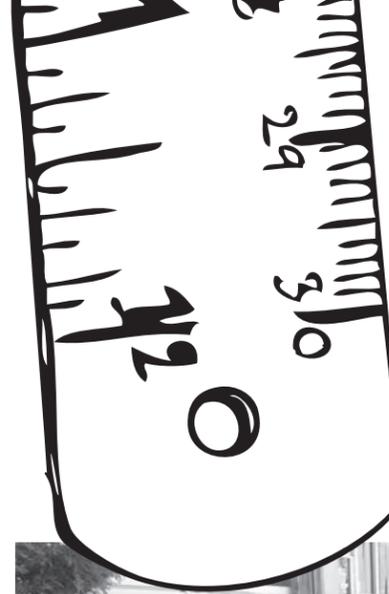
Community is such a broad term; we often view it as a group of people with something in common, but even within one community there are many more that work to support the larger picture. In our ASFG community for example, we can be broken into various entities: sections, grades, clubs, special interests; the list seems endless. All these different aspects of our community bring balance and uniqueness to what ASFG represents, which is a quality that truly makes us stand out from other schools.

We see the Sin Fronteras community bringing beauty into the broader spectrum, while the Debate Club provides a logical and assertive aspect that our community upholds. A contrast can also be made within the Early Childhood section that spends their time using drawing and playing to teach lessons, while High School students take on diverse responsibilities. Yet within this demography we have both students and adults (teachers and staff members), and we are all incredibly different.

As we are a perfectly functioning well-oiled machine, the moment one piece withdraws, we cease to be what we were before. This isn't necessarily bad. I believe ASFG excels at adapting, changing and upgrading, which in turn, has taught its students to do exactly the same thing. Imagine our limits if we still had those old chunky computers, instead of our new MacBook Pros. Or if we didn't open our doors to a wider range of races, sexual orientations and nationalities? It is this multiplicity which helps to make us an outstanding community. Furthermore, we respect this diversity, and nourish it in as many ways as we can with events like Art Fest and International Family Day.

Being in High School, for example, I am exposed to an immense variety of people. Despite our different interests and passions, we all get along pretty well. Yet, it is interesting to see how some "categories" merge into others. No longer does it mean that because you are the AP Physics geek you can't also be a football jock or a drama kid. Furthermore, it shouldn't be surprising that many of our outstanding student artists are also some of the best MUN delegates. By encouraging us to follow a variety of interests, ASFG has taught us to embrace and grow into the people we want to be.

Community in itself is defined as "a group of people who live in the same area (such as a city, town, or neighborhood)", while the plural of the word: communities, is defined as "a unified body of individuals"(1). You, me and everyone else is just that: a necessary piece of the puzzle. And, really, this is exactly what ASFG is: a large scale body, formed of many individuals. The ASFG community.



Growing IN PRE-FIRST

by Emily Beck, elementary teacher

Pre-first students are the newest members of the ASFG elementary school community. They started this year with a brand new set of community members, values, responsibilities, and privileges. The first half of the pre-first year has been spent strengthening the classroom community from within, and focusing on what it means to work hard independently and with others in our groups. As spring approaches, it is the perfect time for our students to reach out to the greater communities of ASFG, Guadalajara, and the world.

The garden unit began in pre-first as a service-learning project, because what better way to improve the lives of others than through the beauty of nature? This unit has since expanded and developed a deeper concept, one that looks at the cycles of nature and asks the important questions: "How does the earth help me?" and "How can I help the earth?". Students are studying the growth of plants and learning what they need to survive - air, sun, water, space, and soil. They are learning about what it means to care for another living thing by providing these necessities every single day, and are experiencing the joy of watching something grow and flourish with this care. The students have also begun to investigate the role of insects and other animals in the lives of plants, opening a wider scope which connects to the importance of community and teamwork. As students start to understand the intricate workings of our natural planet, they are also beginning to consider the importance of preserving it. Inspired by Dr. Seuss' *The Lorax*, students are using persuasive writing to reach out to members of their communities to make the world a better place. This important work includes petitions to prevent litter, letters to encourage saving electricity, and posters to promote responsible water use.

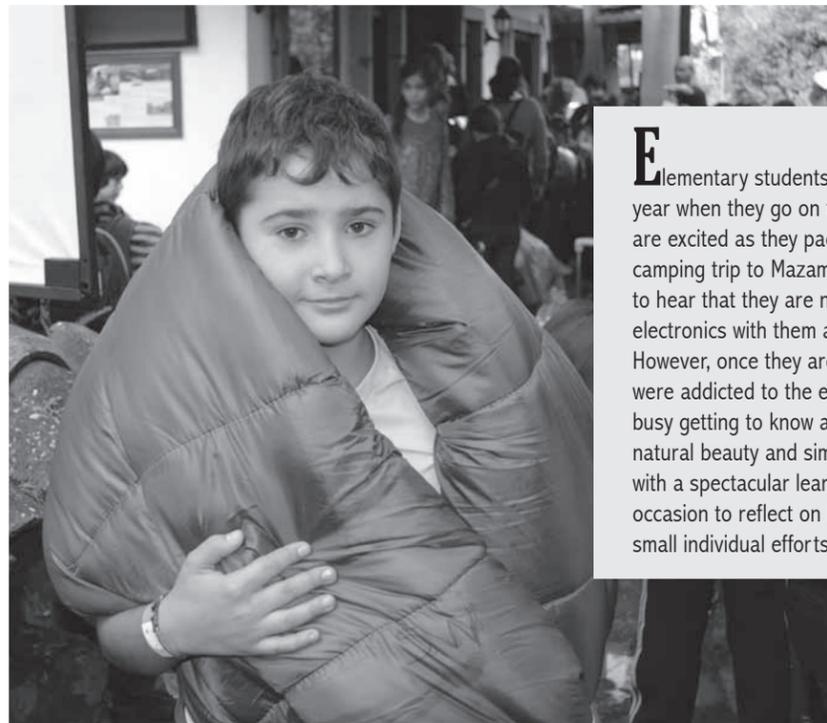
While members of the ASFG community may pass by our classrooms and think "What a lovely sunflower!" or pause to admire our fresh vegetable gardens, they might not realize just how important this project is to our pre-first students. Behind the green leaves, pink blossoms, and dirt-covered hands, the roots of empathy, responsibility, and community are taking hold. What a joy it will be to watch them grow!





CONNECTING COMMUNITIES in Elementary

by Dawn Lussier, Elementary Principal
and Paty Martí, Elementary Counselor



Elementary students look forward to fourth grade as it is the year when they go on their first, official ASFG study trip. They are excited as they pack their bags to go on a three-day camping trip to Mazamitla. Students are always disappointed to hear that they are not allowed to take cell phones or electronics with them and that the TV in their cabin is off limits. However, once they are there, few even remember that they were addicted to the electronics in their lives, as they are so busy getting to know an extraordinary new community. The natural beauty and simple life of Mazamitla provide students with a spectacular learning opportunity, as well as a unique occasion to reflect on how much we can do for others with small individual efforts.



“They taste hot fresh milk straight from the cow.”

Fourth graders breathe the fresh mountain air as they form into animal groups and follow their leaders into exciting activities. They get to appreciate bugs, intricate spider webs, blue bees and enormous, colorful beetles in their natural habitats. Children are encouraged to carefully observe the many new wonders waiting for them in the forest. The night hike allows them to experience how our eyes adjust to the dark, and how the same initially scary trail transforms into a world of familiar silhouettes, moving to an orchestra of sounds, brightened only by the moon and the magnificent stars.

The Mazamitla children and their families enjoy reading the colorful picture books and look forward to new additions at the end of every October. Students excitedly shop at the market and in many other small stores and find all sorts of wooden treasures to take back home. The townspeople are ever so grateful for the purchases made by the students, as they supplement their regular earnings.

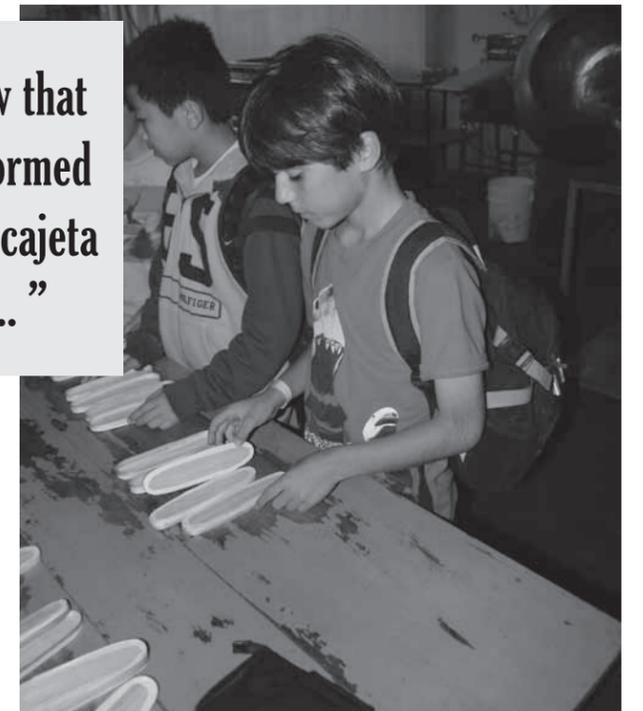
Students always beg to stay for a few more days. They return home to their families tired, but very happy, bringing with them a new appreciation for nature, as well as new friends, experiences and memories that will last a lifetime. And, having left behind a little something that will always be felt as never enough for all that Mazamitla has given to ASFG students.

Participating in community activities such as singing and eating s'mores around the campfire, creating a cabin chant and joining in team building exercises lets students interact with one another in ways they never have before. Their relationships strengthen as they listen to anecdotes in the cabin at night, help each other carry backpacks, look for lost articles, eat, sleep and have fun together for three whole days.

Students are able to make the connection between every day products to nature in a way that is impossible to do in a big city. They taste hot fresh milk straight from the cow. Then they see how that milk is transformed into delicious cajeta in the factory, where they have a chance to pour, package, and then purchase tasty cajeta treats. Children also witness how the milk becomes stinky but very tasty cheese, in a family farmyard. These experiences develop a new appreciation for all the hard work behind the products that we consume every day and take for granted as we buy them from big stores in the city.

The children get so much out of the Mazamitla trip that it is only fair for them to give something back. Every year the students visit the town library and take a book to donate. There is a section of that library that ASFG has created with the donations of 4th grade students over

“They see how that milk is transformed into delicious cajeta in the factory...”



THE LAST ASOMEX

by Francesca De Simone, high school student



The alarm went off at 4:30 in the morning, but I didn't mind. I was already up and having a quick breakfast before picking up some teammates and going to the airport. Once getting to the airport we checked in and waited for the rest of the team. Everyone had way too much energy for it being that early in the morning, but this was because it was for ASOMEX soccer. After the flight and bus ride to Puebla, where the tournament was being held this year, we went to watch and cheer on the boys at their first game, which they won on penalties.

That night, the ASFG boys and girls soccer teams were too excited, as well as nervous, to go to sleep early. We stayed up talking, laughing, dancing, and bonding more as a team. We finally did go to sleep after packing our bags for the early start the next day. The inauguration was at 8:00 a.m. With the loud music playing and all the other teams lined up it finally sank in that we were here, as well as it being the last ASOMEX for the seniors, including myself. As the spokesperson spoke about ASOMEX and sportsmanship, everyone was too excited and nervous for the official start of the tournament. Our first game was against ASF (D.F.), which we all knew was a very tough team. After that game we had a quick lunch and played our second game of the day versus Queretaro, which were the winners from last year's ASOMEX. Although we lost both games that day, we put up an amazing fight against Queretaro, who unfortunately scored in the last seconds to break the 2-2 tie.

For me, stepping onto the field is what I live for. The adrenaline rushing through my veins, my heart thumping, and my mind focused on nothing other than winning the soccer ball. Playing soccer is my escape from the real world, from schoolwork, from the future, from problems with friends. So each game I give 100% of my effort. Being the captain of the girls' soccer team comes with responsibilities, such as keeping a cool head throughout the whole game as well as staying positive, which sometimes can be a challenge when we are losing. In the end we won two games and came in fourth place. Each game everyone on the soccer team left everything on the field, and I'm proud to call them my teammates. There was some yelling, some words exchanged with other teams, many cuts and bruises, and a couple of injuries.

But every grudge was left on the field, because afterwards we were able to make friends. Going to this tournament was not always about the game, but meeting new people from around Mexico. We became good friends with the girls from Queretaro as well as those from Puebla. It showed us that people from different cities and backgrounds can come together over small things such as soccer. ASOMEX was an amazing experience which was both mentally and physically challenging. I am sad to say this was my last ASOMEX, but I know I will keep these experiences forever.

"I'm proud to call them my teammates."



Supporting All of Our Students: THE ROLE OF MONITORS WITHIN SCHOOL

by Gloria Jiménez, Early Childhood Psychologist

Monitors form an important and enriching part of the ASFG learning community, as do the students they work with. A monitor is a person hired by parents to provide one-on-one support, within the school environment, to a student with exceptional needs. Our school has monitors helping students in all sections of the school.

Monitors can be required for different reasons; to support students with physical disabilities, specific learning needs and/or behavior. Days may bring unexpected emotional or behavioral difficulties for a child and monitors regularly improvise and accommodate for the child's specific needs. Monitors also face the task of balancing the amount of individual support with opportunities for independence. When asked to reflect upon and share the challenging and rewarding parts of their role at school, two of the monitors who serve early childhood students noted feeling a sense of fulfillment from getting to work with one student individually and developing a deep bond with that child. They also take pride in seeing their students' educational and emotional progress as they are integrated into the classroom and learn to enjoy school.

ASFG believes all students benefit when students with different needs are included in our school community. Teachers model patience, tolerance, and respect for diversity, which helps all students feel a sense of belonging. Inclusion brings forth students' innate compassion, which we observe when students understand and respond to their classmate's struggles with care and concern. Students with exceptional needs inspire others with their resiliency, perseverance, humor, and kindness. Education is a dynamic web of connections through which each participant learns and grows. These connections extend beyond the teacher-student relationship to include parents, classmates, monitors and other community members. Our ASFG community is strengthened through the inclusion of students with different needs and the work of dedicated monitors.

JOSÉ CLEMENTE OROZCO: Alumnos del ASFG emprenden el viaje de ser maestros

por Tania Romero y Ale Vázquez, estudiantes de high school

“Quiero ser una mariposa”, contestó Andrea, alumna de cinco años del jardín de niños del estado “José Clemente Orozco”, en la colonia Santa Tere, en Guadalajara. En este kínder, varios estudiantes del ASFG han asistido aproximadamente por tres años a ofrecer clases de inglés como parte de su servicio social. Estas lecciones son impartidas dos veces por semana, las cuales están basadas en el juego, que se incorpora con disciplina para así lograr un proceso de aprendizaje, efectivo y rápido. Este proyecto comenzó en 2013 por iniciativa del director de preparatoria, Gabriel Lemmon, junto con varios estudiantes incluyendo a Tania Romero y Alejandra Vázquez, quienes tiempo después se ofrecieron para continuar con su proceso de iniciación y después mantenerlo. Hasta el día de hoy, más de 600 horas han sido otorgadas a los alumnos participantes. Para ser voluntario en este servicio primero se informa que se requiere dedicación extrema, ya que es un proceso crucial en la vida de los pequeños. “Es muy importante que nosotros como maestros seamos ejemplos de dedicación, compromiso, entusiasmo, responsabilidad y disciplina. Por eso pedimos que todos los involucrados siempre estén presentes, participen y den siempre su máximo para que así los niños desarrollen un gusto tan grande por el inglés como el de los alumnos del ASFG,” comenta Alejandra Vázquez.

Este proyecto ha ido presentando diferentes retos que los alumnos del ASFG han tenido que ir aprendiendo a resolver, basándose en los valores que han desarrollado gracias a los maestros y a sus propios compañeros del colegio. Sin embargo, se han obtenido logros en transmitir los valores del ASFG y enseñarle a la comunidad cómo apoyar y ayudar. “Hemos tenido diferentes obstáculos durante el tiempo que llevamos trabajando en este proyecto, pero creo que al final ser parte de la familia de José Clemente Orozco nos ha enseñado algo más que ser maestras: nos ha enseñado a convivir con alumnos de otros grados en un ambiente diferente, a ser más pacientes, flexibles y hasta a encontrar nuestro niño interno. Diría que los niños nos han enseñado más a nosotras, que nosotras a ellos”, expresó Tania Romero.

Este año escolar se le ha añadido un nuevo enfoque al proyecto. “La lectura es una habilidad a la que le tengo un gran afecto gracias al colegio, debido a esto decidimos incorporarla más, en José Clemente



Orozco”, dice Luciana Méndez, alumna de último año del ASFG que ha sido una gran voluntaria en el proyecto. Es por esto que gracias a una generosa contribución por la biblioteca de nuestra escuela ahora los niños están aprendiendo a desarrollar habilidades de lectura; teniendo como ejemplo a las maestras de preescolar de nuestra institución, se están encontrando momentos para leer cuentos que enseñen valores y que al mismo tiempo les parezcan divertidos a los niños. La intención, según las maestras, es forjar un gusto por la lectura para que así cuando dejen el preescolar y emprendan su viaje a la primaria, los niños se lleven más que un segundo idioma.

Todo lo que los maestros han aprendido gracias a su educación en el ASFG es lo que se ha intentado transmitir a los alumnos de este jardín de niños. Esto incluye el seguir instrucciones, ser respetuoso y amable con todos, con el beneficio de un segundo idioma. Los maestros de este jardín de niños no sólo son responsables de enseñar otra lengua sino también de aportar al desarrollo de los niños. Es por eso que ser voluntario en este servicio social es visto como si fuera un trabajo formal, no sólo como un proyecto extracurricular. Al final del día, los alumnos del ASFG están teniendo la gran oportunidad de ser una gran parte de la educación de los niños y formar parte de la familia que es José Clemente Orozco.

“Quiero ser una mariposa”

El ASFG en la comunidad

por Iliana Fernández, Directora Técnica de Primaria, Programa Mexicano



La labor educativa que se realiza en una escuela no se circunscribe a los muros de su edificio, sino que se extiende a los diversos grupos comunitarios a los que pertenece. El ASFG tiene una activa y solidaria participación en la comunidad, tanto en la interacción con las familias de sus alumnos como en su relación con la localidad.

Los padres de familia forman parte activa de la enseñanza-aprendizaje que se promueve en el ASFG. Los directivos y maestros mantienen una comunicación continua sobre el apoyo al trabajo del maestro; también se ofrecen conferencias y talleres de superación personal y para la optimización de su propia labor educativa en casa. El ASFG, a través de su fundación de becas educativas, es solidario con aquellas familias que experimentan dificultades financieras inesperadas, dando así oportunidad de que sus hijos continúen su educación en su colegio.

La solidaridad expresada a través de acciones que denotan una conciencia social y el trabajo cooperativo, son a su vez, contenidos de aprendizaje con un alto grado de importancia en nuestra institución. Por ello, el ASFG cuenta con un programa de aprendizaje a través del servicio cuya misión

es desarrollar en los alumnos la generosidad y la responsabilidad social. Es aquí, precisamente donde la relación escuela-comunidad tiene la bondad de retribuir a ambas partes: se da y se recibe por igual. Al servir a su comunidad, los alumnos aprenden a través del análisis de la situación en la que han decidido intervenir, la generación de ideas para brindar apoyo, la reflexión sobre las necesidades satisfechas y lo que falta por hacer, beneficiándose así ambas partes.

Además de buscar el bienestar de las personas, la responsabilidad social que el ASFG promueve en sus alumnos está muy ligada a la protección ambiental. La misión del colegio es educar al alumno para que sea un ciudadano comprometido con su comunidad tanto vecinal como global. Alumnos, maestros y padres de familia han tomado parte en campañas, realizado trabajo voluntario y han hecho aportaciones económicas y en especie para contribuir a la conservación y restauración del medio ambiente. El ASFG, consciente de que su propio ejemplo es esencial en la sensibilización de todos los miembros de la comunidad, ha puesto en práctica múltiples iniciativas que lo han llevado a obtener reconocimientos como “Escuela Modelo” o

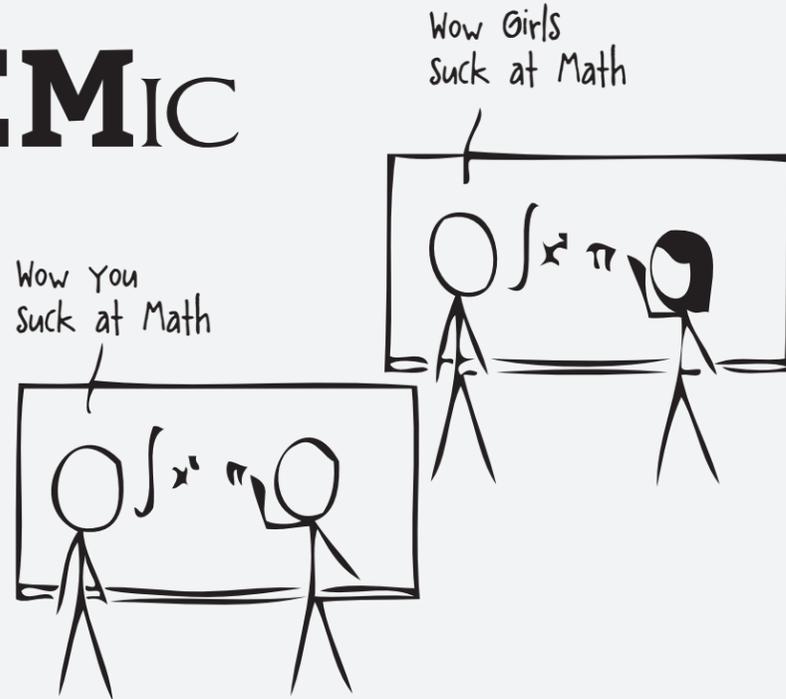
“Escuela Verde” por parte de la Secretaría del Medio Ambiente.

Otra manera en la que el ASFG se solidariza con su comunidad, es abriendo sus puertas a maestros y directores de otros colegios y escuelas para compartir con ellos el conocimiento pedagógico obtenido a través del programa de desarrollo profesional que el colegio mantiene. De esta manera, se pretende contribuir a la innovación y el mejoramiento continuo de la educación en México.

El trabajo cooperativo y la solidaridad que el ASFG realiza en la comunidad extra-muros, permea a todos los niveles al interior del colegio. Los maestros colaboran entre sí y aprenden unos de otros, dejando atrás los modelos del pasado donde cada maestro era como una isla al interior de su propio salón. Padres y maestros sostienen una comunicación continua sobre el desempeño de los estudiantes y trabajan juntos en la formación de cada niño. De igual forma, los alumnos viven diariamente el aprendizaje colaborativo con sus compañeros y así aprenden a convivir, a trabajar juntos y a ser empáticos, lo que será una herramienta indispensable en sus vidas como ciudadanos del mundo.

A SYSTEMIC problem: Coding & Gender

by Jennie Kies, Technology Integration Specialist



Students at ASFG had more opportunities than ever to learn about coding this year. From early childhood students learning with Bee-bots, elementary students coding in their technology classes, middle school students using Scratch in science and math classes, and time to tinker in the library, students from throughout the community participated. Coding helps students realize that computers, cell phones, cars, and other tools are not magic, but that these devices respond in predictable ways to certain situations. In addition to better understanding the world around them, coding helps students improve problem-solving skills, persistence and logical thinking. It also provides an opportunity for boys and girls to be digital creators instead of consumers.

Although women make up approximately 57% of college undergraduates, only 18% of computer science majors are women. This disparity is also apparent in other science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) majors. Why are so few women pursuing these careers? Research shows that girls begin to lose interest in STEM fields in middle school, but the barriers girls encounter begin even earlier in their lives. They receive less encouragement from parents and teachers to pursue STEM fields even though they perform as well on STEM assessments. Gender roles and stereotypes also affect what girls perceive as acceptable aspirations. Stereotype threat, the concern that one's performance can be seen through the lens of a negative stereotype, can undermine girls' performance and interest in math and science. So how can our community change the message that girls receive?

Role models help girls build confidence. Seeing women in successful STEM careers helps relieve the burden of representing the whole gender. Studies suggest that the most effective role models are those who play up their own early struggles and who impart the idea that struggle itself is normal. Students also benefit from emphasizing

similarities between boys and girls and working toward inclusivity. Apart from asking women programmers and engineers to visit your classroom, which you can do, make sure to use examples that show women in STEM fields. Word problems about people in engineering situations should be about Ana and Margo not just Bob and Diego. Small changes in how information is presented and discussed can have large impacts on how students think about themselves and their potential.

Another simple tool is self-affirmation. This strategy encourages thinking about personally important aspects of one's life before beginning a difficult task. Effective for all students, self-affirmation improves performance by helping them cope with threat or stress by thinking of something other than the stress. So before exams or complicated projects, avoid asking students to identify with a group (gender, race, etc.), which can trigger stereotype threat. Instead, ask students to think of values and beliefs that are central to their identity: connection with family, passion for soccer, friendships, etc. The Mindfulness and Growth Mindset movements in our community are related to self-affirmation and research shows that all of these strategies can help students manage their anxiety and improve performance.

Finally, refrain from obvious or subtle stereotypes and generalizations. Statements with, "girls are...", and, "...for a girl!" influence attitudes more than you know. The cartoon included with this article is a great example of these unconscious generalizations. "You suck at math" is directed to a boy, but "girls suck at math" is directed to a girl. How does that make other girls in the classroom feel? Discouraging comments can stay with someone forever, but so can encouraging ones. Encourage girls in our community to explore and engage with science, technology, engineering, math and coding by implementing some of these strategies in your classroom.

ALUMNITALKS@ASFG

por José Chacón (ASFG 2002), Presidente ASFG Alumni Association

¿Cómo no recordarlo? El momento que esperábamos con ansiedad, cuando después de muchos años de esfuerzo, vimos que llegaba la recompensa: el día de nuestra graduación. En ese momento, pusimos fin a nuestra fase de estudiantes; una etapa marcada de recuerdos, de crecimiento, aprendizaje, y amistades. Sin embargo, nuestra relación con el ASFG no terminaría, y en ese mismo momento empezamos otra etapa; una que perdura por el resto de nuestras vidas, y es la etapa como exalumnos del ASFG. En ese momento nos convertimos en parte de una comunidad mucho más grande, una comunidad histórica que tiene 108 años, miles de miembros y muchas generaciones.

Como exalumnos, reconocemos el valor que tenemos como comunidad. Las bases educativas que se nos dieron durante nuestros años de estudiantes nos permitieron continuar un plan de vida basado en el descubrimiento eterno del aprendizaje. Nuestros exalumnos destacan en todas las carreras y profesiones imaginables. Vemos con mucho orgullo y gran admiración nuestra enorme diversidad de talento y conocimiento colectivo que hemos logrado.

El objetivo principal de la Asociación de Exalumnos es asegurar que esta comunidad de la cual todos los estudiantes serán parte algún día, se conozca entre sí. Estamos trabajando en fortalecer la red de exalumnos, estrechar los lazos intra e inter generacionales, y acercar a la comunidad de nuevo con la escuela. Creemos que cuando los exalumnos nos reencontramos, además de encontrar un lazo en común, descubrimos que hay grandes oportunidades de aprendizaje y profesionales.

Este año hemos decidido que una de las mejores maneras de enfocar nuestros esfuerzos para acercar la comunidad de exalumnos, y ayudar a difundir ese conocimiento, es invitar a exalumnos con experiencia especializada al colegio, a dar conferencias. A estos eventos estamos invitando tanto a la comunidad de exalumnos como a todos los demás miembros de la familia ASFG.

Las conferencias, llamadas "ALUMNITALKS@ASFG" tuvieron su primera presentación este 28 de enero, con la visita de nuestro exalumno, Francisco Anguiano, de la generación del 2001. Francisco es cofundador de la agencia de marketing digital Intagono, ubicada

como #1 de la región, por la revista Merca 2.0. En su conferencia, Francisco nos enseña el modelo que utilizan para planificar y medir las estrategias de marketing digital y nos comparte dos ejemplos reales: uno siendo un caso de éxito de un proyecto con un cliente que evoluciona a convertirse en una campaña muy completa, y el ejemplo de un experimento social realizado por el Washington Post, el cuál muestra el contraste en el éxito de una campaña cuando se crea, se comunica y se difunde una marca correctamente, y cuando no. La retroalimentación de todos los asistentes fue muy positiva y se culminó con una sesión interesante de preguntas y respuestas.

Nuestra siguiente conferencia es el primero de marzo y en esta ocasión nos visita nuestro exalumno Manuel Gutiérrez de la generación 1988. Manuel; es un inventor y emprendedor exitoso de Silicon Valley, con más de 30 patentes, y ha recibido reconocimientos internacionales por sus contribuciones a la industria de proyección tridimensional. Manuel nos estará hablando sobre el tema de Realidad Virtual y sus aplicaciones en la industria de la educación.

Estamos muy emocionados con esta iniciativa de conferencias que estamos desarrollando. Esperamos que nos puedan acompañar y que nos apoyen para que estos eventos continúen siendo un éxito. Para más información pueden visitarnos en nuestras redes sociales, y actualizar sus datos en nuestra base de exalumnos, para asegurar que reciban toda la información necesaria sobre las conferencias futuras.

"Estamos trabajando en fortalecer la red de exalumnos, estrechar los lazos intra e inter generacionales..."



“The atmosphere was alive! A marvelous chemistry created by those in attendance.”

Thank you for attending the 4th annual Empty Bowls event! On March 17th the fountain area was transformed by a group of vibrant volunteers. Thousands of bowls blanketed thirty tables. Eager students, parents and teachers formed a long line with anticipation. Strategies were plotted to grasp a favorite bowl. Simultaneously 400 liters of soup were staged, an artist auction was arranged and students prepared to perform live music. The atmosphere was alive! A marvelous chemistry was created by those in attendance.



In the weeks prior to Empty Bowls the middle school experienced a role play called ‘Dinner for the World’. It was designed to increase understanding of ONI and their response to the causes and effects of hunger. At the start of the activity each student was presented with an identity. Participants were divided by their identity into low, middle and high income countries. The number of students in each group was proportional to the global population. Eight students in the low income country group sat on the floor and were given eight crackers. Ten middle

income students sat in chairs and were presented with 10 cookies. And two high income country students sat at an elegant table (with candles in one classroom!), and were politely served a wonderfully sweet treat. The students were invited to enjoy their food while the advisors observed. In some cases sharing of food occurred between income groups. Other students that were hungry quickly ate, “with no looking back” as one student explained. Strong voices spoke of resorting to stealing, a justifiable action in their mind. Ideas were discussed and exchanged about justice, equity of resources and how ONI is working on the complex problem of poverty.

The success of Empty Bowls depends entirely on its volunteers. No other ASFG service learning project draws on the talents of community members from all school sections, the wonderful pink palace staff, and for the first time the fine people who clean and maintain our school. Let's pause and appreciate that fact. Thank you to all our volunteers! Special recognition must be given to skillful student artists who donated their designs to the silent auction, and to the joyful performers who entertained us. These new elements added excitement and beauty to our 2016 Empty Bowls event.

More than 20 years ago an art educator in Michigan alongside her students created the concept of Empty Bowls. The focus was raising money to provide nutrition to local communities in need. With a quick internet search more than two decades after its start, one can see Empty Bowls has spread widely throughout the United States and is growing internationally as well. In 2012, Empty Bowls was initiated on our campus and community support has surpassed expectations. After four years we've raised nearly half a million pesos!

In 2014, ASFG sent a dynamic group of five 8th grade boys to the Dominican Republic to attend the Global Issues Network conference. Their goal was to grow Empty Bowls internationally. The presentation was a hands-on learning experience. When finished the participants returned to their home schools throughout Latin America with a clay bowl, and the knowledge needed to start their own event. The Carol Morgan school of Santo Domingo has since held two Empty Bowls events on their campus. The presentation worked! After all these years the goal is simple and remains the same. A community of people organize, make and sell many ceramic bowls, and then donate the money generated to support local communities experiencing hunger.

Our partner in Empty Bowls is the Organismo de Nutrición Infantil (ONI). They have 47 centers that provide nutrition and education throughout Guadalajara. We've been fortunate to collaborate with an organization that shares our desire to educate students about the issues of hunger and malnutrition. The funds raised at Empty Bowls are directed to the Santa Cruz ONI center. With a closer look at ONI, you'll discover that feeding the hungry is only one element of what they do. Their underlying mission is to break the cycle of poverty by preventing developmental stunting. By doing so children born into impoverished communities have a chance of growing strong, learning in school and thereby acquiring the skills necessary to earn a living wage.



EMPTY BOWLS

Thursday, March 17TH

by Jodi Peterson, high school teacher
and Chris Peterson, middle school teacher

REINVENTING TODAY FOR A BETTER TOMORROW

by Julie Villand, Instructional Programs Director

ASFG faces a myriad of complex daily choices regarding teaching and learning. Often times, we turn to our northern neighbor to discover best practices by attending their leading-edge workshops. However, an upcoming ASFG conference will provide us with a distinctive opportunity to turn to our southern neighbors who are an essential part of our international independent school community. The Tri-Association, which is the American Schools Association of Central America, Colombia, Mexico, and the Caribbean, is a significant contributor to ASFG's circle of influence, providing a networking platform for similar international schools.

ASFG has the honor to host the Tri-Association's 35th Annual Educators Conference from October 3rd to the 7th, 2016. At this event, over 800 educators from the region will gather in Guadalajara to examine both familiar topics such as literacy, math, and creativity as well as brand new topics like humane education, design thinking, and compassionate global engagement. The fact that all ASFG teachers will be able to participate together in conferences and workshops hosted by trailblazers in the field is an excellent catalyst for equipping a learning community with resources needed to recharge one's innovational batteries. ASFG is often struck by the profoundly similar experiences of our neighboring international schools. By studying key elements of success at each of these schools within the Tri-Association, ASFG can better understand how to improve teaching and learning on our campus. Networking with similar schools in the region not only builds fellowship, it also provides collaboration, information, advice, and enrichment.

The Tri-Association has chosen the theme of Reinventing Today for a Better Tomorrow to center the conference message towards sustainability and innovation. The intention is to make clear that educational institutions are crucial players in awareness, knowledge, and action towards a sustainable future. The quest for sustainability is transforming the way in which we view our world. Perspectives through the lenses of environment, economy, and society are all necessary to build a healthy future for each one of our schools and communities. Innovation is about doing something better while sustainability drives this process towards addressing those needs appropriately within the context of a healthy environment, economy, and society.

Fifteen years have passed since ASFG last hosted this same conference. In that time, ASFG has participated every year in this conference hosted by similar schools such as Mexico City, San Jose, Bogota, Cartagena, and Santo Domingo. This year, ASFG hopes to offer our region the conversations and tools each school requires to better prepare their most important clients: our next generation.



Nuestros Amigos Polinizadores son Parte de Nuestra Comunidad

por Karla Solana, maestra de early childhood

Se dice que a mayor conocimiento, mayor responsabilidad, y esto ha sido evidente de manera natural en nuestros alumnos de preescolar. Entre más conocen sobre los beneficios de la polinización de las abejas, mariposas, catarinas, colibríes y murciélagos, por citar algunos, más es su deseo de celebrar cuando ven uno alimentándose de las flores y de cuidarlos, a estos y a su ambiente.

A lo largo de los últimos años, hemos estado trabajando para crear un ambiente en nuestra área de recreo que invite a diversos polinizadores a visitarnos. En un inicio, comenzamos creando un jardín con asclepias, planta preferida de la mariposa monarca, jardín que recientemente fue certificado como estación de paso de estas mariposas. Poco a poco, estas mariposas comenzaron a llegar para dejar sus huevecillos, atraídas por el aroma de estas flores. Para nuestros alumnos ha sido mágico el poder estar tan en contacto con las mariposas y con el proceso completo de su ciclo de vida. Nos ha dado la oportunidad de estudiar cómo las orugas salen de sus huevecillos creciendo a velocidades sorprendentes, alimentándose únicamente de estas plantas. Posteriormente hemos estudiado cómo se convierten en crisálidas, generando luego el proceso de la asombrosa metamorfosis de la cual nace la monarca. Estas mariposas son liberadas por nuestros niños con sentimientos mezclados de felicidad, nostalgia y satisfacción.

Ha sido tan maravillosa esta experiencia, que nos ha impulsado como sección a generar más rincones que atraigan a otros polinizadores. Se investigó entonces el tipo de plantas florales oriundas de Jalisco que pudieran atraer a otras especies de mariposas, abejas, catarinas y colibríes. Con ellas se construyó "Nuestro Jardín de Polinizadores" en la parte posterior del área de recreo. Varios de nuestros alumnos visitan este jardín en su hora de juego y en momentos especiales creados por sus maestras, para poder observar a nuestros amigos polinizadores en acción.

Actualmente, nuestras bancas ubicadas en el pasillo de la entrada en preescolar despliegan una hermosa vista, donde resalta el aroma y el color violeta de las flores de lavanda. Hemos sido testigos de la rápida visita de colibríes, que en un suspiro se alimentan de estas flores y parten para después regresar, así como de ocupadas abejas que trabajan sin parar. Estamos muy agradecidos con una de nuestras mamás de sección, Zoitsa Stamatis, quién donó las plantas y dedicó de su tiempo para plantarlas.



Hemos descubierto que una gran población de polinizadores está en riesgo por el aumento de fumigaciones en el área de la agricultura. Los invitamos a unirse a nuestro esfuerzo por salvarlos, creando espacios con flores que promuevan su desarrollo, como la lavanda, orégano, caléndula, salvia, girasoles, entre otros. Juntos podemos hacer una diferencia.

"NO POLLINATORS, NO FRUIT."

Ellie, alumna de kinder

"ESTÁN COMIENDO LA MIEL DE LAS PLANTAS."

Isabella T., alumna de kinder

"CON SU LENGUITA ESTÁN SACANDO EL NÉCTAR."

Santiago A., alumno de kinder



Los Q'eros

by Julieta Hernandez, high school student

Throughout the years, communities have managed to make an impact on the world with their culture, beliefs, and traditions. The Mayans in Mexico, the Incas in Peru, and the Egyptians have shown humanity how they saw the world. In the 21st century, it's a challenge to find communities that still preserve the traditions of their ancestors, but deep in the corners of the world, those communities do still exist.

Deep in the Andes Mountains in Cusco, Peru, there is a small community of 700 people called Los Q'eros. Los Q'eros are known to be the last direct descendants of the Incas. During La Conquista in 1527, several groups of Incas managed to escape and hide in the mountains where the Spanish could not reach them. One of these groups built what is known today as Quico Grande. This town is located between two huge mountains, where the sun only comes out five hours a day. With strong winds and temperatures that can reach below -10 degrees Celsius, Los Q'eros have adapted to survive these conditions.



One of the strongest characteristics of this community is their devotion to mother earth or what they call "Pachamama." For hundreds of years these communities have managed to survive with scarce resources such as water, potatoes, alpacas, cocoa leaf, and quinoa. Even though it may seem they consume a small portion of food, their health is excellent. Due to the high altitude, growing their food can be tough. That's when they reach for Pachamama and make offerings to her called despachos. During a despacho they offer her money and personal belongings. They burn them while asking for the resources they need. Despachos are a complicated process.

In the community of Quico Grande there are two levels of priesthood, Alto Misayo and Pampa Misayo. An Alto Misayo is a person that can connect directly with Pachamama and ask for any of the four elements of earth; an Alto Misayo can only be chosen by the Earth.

Dona Maria Apaza is the last Alto Misayo in the world. At 87 years of age she travels around the world teaching the values of spirituality and nature. She was chosen at the age of 12 when she was hit by lightning and was in a coma for two weeks. During those two weeks people believe she developed the ability to connect directly with Pachamama and the four elements of earth: water, soil, wind, and fire.

Los Q'eros are a community that is aware of globalization and pollution. Because of these reasons they try to stay as far away from society as they can in order to preserve their culture and traditions. For kids and teenagers, living in the town of Quico Grande leads to a poor education and future. That's why at the age of 18 they leave the town and move to Cusco where they finish their studies and create a life. Living at high altitudes and separated from the world may be difficult, but it is also a blessing. Los Q'eros are a community that teaches the world how we should live – in peace, in harmony, and with respect for one another and for mother earth.

I went to Peru during the summer with an association called INKARRI. INKARRI is an association that takes care of communities like these. They help explain to the world that communities that are extremely vulnerable are alive and still exist. As part of INKARRI I believe in the power of meditation to create a world of peace; it makes you open your eyes and allow yourself to see a side of life you never noticed. Whenever we travel and meet new people we realize that there are no true differences between people; we are all human beings in search of love and a better life.

To know more about INKARRI and the different workshops and trips they provide, visit the website <http://www.inkarri.us/>

And to know more about Los Q'eros and their culture visit my webpage of images <https://julieta-hernandez-foto.squarespace.com/>





Fomentando la práctica de MINDFULNESS

en nuestra comunidad

por Laura Solórzano, maestra de early childhood

En los últimos años el interés por la práctica de *mindfulness* ha ido aumentando en nuestra comunidad. Cada vez más, nos hemos dado cuenta de los grandes beneficios que una práctica constante del desarrollo de la atención plena nos puede brindar.

En repetidas ocasiones he escuchado a educadores y padres de familia hablar de lo valioso que es contar con herramientas que nos ayuden a manejar el ajetreo de la vida diaria y a desarrollar atención para vivir plenamente el momento presente. Esta conciencia ha dado lugar a una iniciativa que crece día con día.

En el colegio hemos formado un comité de *mindfulness*. Este nació de manera orgánica cuando un pequeño grupo de interesados en el tema (maestros, administrativos, directores y consejeros) nos unimos para buscar la manera de sembrar esta semilla en cada una de las secciones del colegio.

Hemos compartido ideas, estrategias y recursos que poco a poco se han ido esparciendo en nuestra comunidad. Algunos de los programas que han formado parte del entrenamiento de miembros del staff, padres de familia y alumnos son:

AtentaMente, Mindful Schools y The Mindful Child.

Hemos invitado también a todo miembro de ASFG a participar en las sesiones de *mindfulness*. Estas tienen lugar los martes a las 7:00 am, los jueves a las 8:00 am y los viernes a las 2:45 pm. Son sesiones guiadas en las que se trabaja el desarrollo de la atención sostenida. También se tocan temas como compasión, generosidad y gratitud. Con frecuencia hay sesiones enfocadas en poner atención plena al cuerpo, lo cual es indispensable para el cuidado de la salud.

La práctica personal es la base de todo. En una clase de Mindful Schools un maestro dijo algo que me quedó muy grabado, "Puedes dar un currículo entero de *mindfulness* a tus alumnos, pero lo que más impacto tendrá en ellos es la presencia y atención que tú proyectes. Tu modelo será la mejor enseñanza." Esto es completamente cierto. Cuando yo doy clases de *mindfulness* a mis alumnos de cinco años puedo notar cómo perciben la intención de la clase y como se sintonizan con el maestro.

Como padre de familia este es la mejor manera de empezar a hacer *mindfulness* con tus hijos, practicándolo tú mismo. Así como dicen que si quieres que tu hijo lea, deja que te vea leer, creo que en este caso podemos aplicar la misma filosofía.

Algunas herramientas para practicar *mindfulness* para adultos son la app Head Space y el curso en línea, *Mindfulness Fundamentals*, de Mindful Schools.

Hace poco, al terminar una de las sesiones de veinte minutos de práctica, una de mis compañeras recordó la primera vez que nos sentamos en el colegio e hicimos una sesión de un par de minutos. En aquel momento, hace aproximadamente tres años, esa pequeña sesión generó una serie de sentimientos. El primero fue lo nuevo que era darme la oportunidad de tomarme un tiempo en mi espacio de trabajo para cerrar los ojos y buscar equilibrio y bienestar. Por otro lado, generó un sentimiento de emoción y felicidad al pensar que esto podría seguir pasando en el colegio, no solo para un pequeño grupo de personas, si no para toda una comunidad. Ese viernes, al terminar una jornada de trabajo practicando el desarrollo de la atención plena con compañeros y alumnos del colegio que asistieron por interés propio, me hizo sentir afortunada de ser parte de esta comunidad.



TODOS POR EL RESPETO Y LA TOLERANCIA

por Leticia Flores Ochoa, maestra y psicóloga

En días pasados tuvimos en el colegio una serie de conferencias y talleres impartidos por el Dr. David Barrios Martínez. El Dr. Barrios es uno de los más reconocidos sexólogos y terapeutas a nivel nacional e internacional. Estos espacios se destinaron para hablar sobre la DIVERSIDAD, con padres y madres de familia, maestros y maestras, psicólogos y directivos buscando abrir un diálogo y preparación en este tema que por demás resulta interesante y actual hoy en día.

La diversidad, un tema que a pesar de haber existido siempre y formar parte de nuestra naturaleza humana actualmente nos llena de dudas, comentarios y preguntas sobre cómo tratarlo con nuestros hijos. Esto debido en gran manera a acontecimientos recientes en la legislación de nuestro estado y nuestro país. Es por esto que el colegio se da a la gran tarea de abrir espacios en nuestra comunidad educativa y poner el tema sobre la mesa para comentarlo y prepararnos.

La diversidad... como decía nuestro expositor: "Es lo que nos hace ser cada uno o cada una de nosotros. No son las semejanzas con el otro, es la diferencia y la diversidad, lo que nos hace seres únicos e irrepetibles. Es lo que nos da identidad, lo que nos enriquece como especie humana".

En cuanto a la diversidad sexual, en particular, es algo que siempre ha existido. Lo que ha cambiado es la respuesta o postura de la sociedad ante el reconocimiento de estas diferencias y ante la legalización de ciertas normas, lo cual hace tan importante informarnos y prepararnos respecto a estos temas.

Pero, ¿cómo abordarlo? Es la pregunta de nuestra y muchas escuelas

y familias.

Cinco puntos son los que se marcaron como importantes en la postura de nuestra escuela: RESPETO, TOLERANCIA, INCLUSIÓN, NO DISCRIMINACIÓN Y ACCESO A INFORMACIÓN CIENTÍFICA Y ADECUADA A LA ETAPA DE DESARROLLO DEL ALUMNO.

Cinco aspectos que podemos aplicar no solo a la diversidad sexual, sino a cualquier otro aspecto como: religión, grupo étnico, creencias, cultura, costumbres etc. Creo que en la medida que apliquemos estos cinco puntos tendremos sociedades más justas, más equitativas, menos violentas y con mejores seres humanos.

Sin embargo, como padres de familia y principales responsables en la educación de nuestros hijos e hijas, transmitamos a ellos nuestros propios valores dentro de la familia. Estos siempre serán respetados y seguramente en corresponsabilidad con la escuela, formaremos mejores hombres y mujeres para este mundo que les ha tocado vivir.

PARA REFLEXIONAR...

La necesidad de etiquetar, nombrar, diferenciar comportamientos ha servido para estigmatizar, marginar, castigar o bien para ensalzar, acreditar, reconocer y valorizar las conductas de los individuos; para categorizar a unos mejor que a otros y crear desigualdades y culpas hoy en día. Las diferencias afortunadamente existen, pero estas diferencias no nos deben llevar a buscar desigualdades.



UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF Planetary Rights

by Stefanie McGrath, ASFG Green Coordinator

Al Gore, 45th Vice-President of the United States and environmentalist, shared a story in his TedTalk, "The case for optimism on climate change", about President Kennedy's mission to land a man on the moon. It was in the early '60s and all over the United States people spoke about the dramatic and ambitious goal. Many citizens believed it too costly, fallible, and simply impossible; even some NASA employees doubted Kennedy's determined goal. Eight years later, astronaut Neil Armstrong stepped on the moon and a loud cheer was shared by the NASA mission control engineers in Houston. The average age of those engineers was 26 years old. That means 8 years earlier when they heard Kennedy's challenge they were 18 years old. This story moved me, though maybe not for the reasons you might think. Sure, I think it is cool that we landed a man on the moon. But, the fact that 18 year olds rose to the unsolved challenge and accomplished what no man had accomplished before, well, wow, how cool is that?

I am in the unique company of working with our future engineers, inventors, and problem-solvers. I am also deeply committed to tackling the world's climate crisis, an endeavour with the same troubling concerns as President Kennedy's challenge: too costly, fallible, and, what some might think, simply impossible to overcome. I realize our global climate crisis is more vast and systemic than sending a man to the moon, however, I choose to find optimism where doubt could prevail. Helen Keller said it best when she said, "Doubt and mistrust are the mere panic of timid imagination". What is required by each of us is curiosity, skepticism, thoughtfulness, rationalism, and a willingness to step outside our comfort zone. What is needed by each of us is to become enlightened consumers and active participants of the democratic process. We owe it to our future generations.

As the school's sustainability coordinator, I am optimistic and not just a wishful thinker. Our progress is based on hard work over a number of years and supported by many people in our great community. Though our school has made significant, sustainable improvements by reducing our carbon footprint (composting 20% of cafeteria and garden waste, installing photovoltaic panels, eliminating 70,000 single use plastic bottles consumed per year, busing, recycling), we are a long way off from being carbon-neutral, a green vision for our campus. Parents support our reusable party boxes found in Early Childhood and Elementary classrooms. Seniors are building a solar powered charging station for mobile devices and creating an urban garden with a local after-school program. Middle School teachers created an interdisciplinary unit that allows students to look extensively at school waste in its many forms. Middle School students initiated a community project to eliminate single use plastic bags. Third grade students sift

through local newspapers to learn about current environmental issues in Guadalajara. Early Childhood and Elementary students garden with their teachers. And Early Childhood students care for butterflies and pollinators with our certified Monarch Waystation and pollinator garden. Together, students, teachers and administrators are arriving to school on bicycles and bringing their recyclables from home to Filadelfia's parking lot recycle center. And we are still far from done.

Rudiger Dornbusch, German economist, said, "Things take longer to happen than you think they will and then they happen much faster than you would have thought." I personally connect to this quote in my work with so many caring, active citizens as we strive to improve, re-think, and reinvent a sustainable school. At times I feel the task is quite daunting. Yet, I rely on the numerous examples of past societal struggles that began with many resounding no's until there was a loud yes: abolitionists, women's suffrage, civil rights, apartheid, gay and lesbian rights, just to name a few. Hopefully, sooner rather than later, we can add "universal declaration of planetary rights" to the list of accomplishments. What a happy, healthy world it would be!

To learn about...

 *Parent Green Team, visit:*
parentgreen.wix.com/desafio-verde

Our school's busing, visit: 
www.asfg.mx/atschool/transport.aspx

 *Our Filadelfia recycling center, visit:*
bit.ly/FiladelfiaRecyclingCenter

 *Student-driven MS project, visit:*
Facebook "No más bolsas-Guadalajara"



The American School is situated in Colonia Providencia, and we are neighbors to a number of classical homes and beautiful parks, as well as new high rises and upscale restaurants and boutiques. The colonia, or neighborhood, is both a bastion of tradition and on the cutting edge of change.

In the 19th century the area was mostly woodlands, with a large hacienda extending from Avenida Providencia to Rubén Darío. While there were a few neo-classical and Porfirio-era homes in the area back in the early 1900s, it did not become a real colonia until the thoughtful planning and development by Miguel Aldana Mijares in the mid-1950s. (His offspring would attend the American School and one would become an art teacher.)The main streets were laid out with the names of Canadian provinces (Ottawa, Ontario, Quebec), South American countries (Sao Paulo, Buenos Aires) and famous authors and artists (Pablo Neruda, Rubén Darío).

From 1950 until the turn of the 21st century, it was an area consisting mainly of family homes (some extravagant, some modest), with many puestos typical of Mexican neighborhoods: pastry shops, millineries, stationary stores, shoe repair shops, hair dressing salons, small taco stands, and ice cream stands. Neighbors would meet on the way to do a chore or to purchase small items; they would stroll around the many small parks, they would greet each other as they passed on the sidewalks. A teacher walking to school in the morning would hear: "Buenos días, Maestra!" several times

OUR HOME IS PROVIDENCIA

by Michael Hogan, high school teacher of the San Patricio Battalion.

before she finally arrived at the gates.

Much of that changed as more city dwellers from Mexico City arrived after the terrible earthquake in 1985. The population density increased as did the traffic throughout the 1990s. Developers began building high rise apartment buildings. By the year 2000, towers dotted the skyline. Law firms and real estate companies bought some of the classical homes and turned them into offices. Cell phones replaced casual greetings, and boutiques replaced stationary stores. As planning for the Pan American Games began in 2010, some of the changes were positive. Parks were upgraded. New meeting places were created. Several casual restaurants and coffee shops were opened where people could sit and chat. Through it all, the American School students and teachers adjusted to the changes and contributed to the community. Here are a few places (among many) where you can still find both communities interacting each day.

Dr. Atl Park Just a block from the school, on Colomos between Montreal and Ottawa, is a beautiful eucalyptus park where one can relax at the end of the day and meet neighbors and their friendly dogs. The park is well-groomed and is dedicated to the artist and volcanologist, Dr. Atl. A bronze bust of him is in the center of the park and was designed and executed by former ASFG drama teacher and artist, Malcolm MacDonald.

Heroico Colegio Militar Head east, cross Americas, and there is a street running diagonally called Calle H. Colegio Militar. There you will find the military hall where generals and other senior officers meet and host cultural events. They have also interacted with the school on several occasions, most notably hosting the premier of the Irish Soldiers of Mexico: Soldiers of St. Patrick, a documentary based on the history

Pablo Neruda Vertical Park: Begin at America and Pablo Neruda, where a bust of the Chilean poet commands the hill, and you can walk or bike east to west about 2.25 km. on a paved pathway, surrounded by green shrubs, shade trees, and roses. At the western end is a circular fountain built shortly before the Pan American Games, and there begins Colonia Colinas de San Javier. Along the route there are rest stops where you can sit and chat, use cardio machines, check the Internet on your portable device, or explore the allegorical sculptures designed by Diego Martinez Negrete. You are sure to meet a friendly neighbor, a student, or a teacher any weekend morning.

Punto Sao Paolo: A popular stop these days is the area at the intersection of Sao Paolo and Americas, which features a multiplex movie theater, a five star hotel, great coffee shops, upscale restaurants, a Mac store, and fashion boutiques. It is a great place to just hang out and have a coffee with friends, pick up an accessory for your tablet, or have a healthy meal. Here writers and artists, students and professors, locals and retirees find ways of keeping the community vital.

Remember the hacienda from the 19th century? You can still see a bit of it captured from history at the Casa de Platos on Calle Sao Paulo, where the original building has been preserved and turned into a gourmet restaurant.



EL ARTE DE CREAR ENTORNOS QUE DEN UNA SANA FORMACIÓN MÁS SÓLIDA.

por Mtro. Moisés Contreras Reinoso,
Neuro Coaching y desarrollo del capital humano

Educar a un hijo se ha convertido en un tema complejo para la mayor parte de las familias. Ya no son solo hijos de sus propias familias, ahora son hijos del entorno, de la sociedad en las que les toca vivir, la influencia de los amigos, las redes sociales, los viajes que realizan y las personas con las que se relacionan. La presión por pertenecer a una sociedad cada día más materialista, donde la imagen y el estatus tiene mucha fuerza, se contraponen a la formación que algunas familias quieren dar a sus hijos.

“Parents School” ha tratado de ser el espacio que buscan los padres de familia para reflexionar, pensar y dialogar con otras familias sobre la mejor manera de formar a sus hijos en este mundo tan complejo. Muchos son los que participan y han encontrado respuestas a sus preguntas sobre cómo manejar la disciplina, los límites, la inteligencia emocional, los valores, la sexualidad, la atención, el desarrollo de competencias para la vida, el fortalecimiento de la fuerza de voluntad y muchas otras cuestiones que conforman la educación de los hijos.

La intención de los padres es muy positiva, pero es claro que los estilos de vida que tienen muchas familias no ayudan a que la formación sea realmente adecuada. La intención no basta, hay que ir creando sistemas de vida más austeros, con valores más claros e intencionados. Se complica mucho la solidaridad y el ver por los demás; hay un clasismo que limita la sana relación entre los niños y jóvenes; el “Tener” le está ganando la carrera al “Ser”.

Muchas familias están buscando un equilibrio en la formación de los hijos y asisten a cursos, conferencias; los temas se platican en el café y en las reuniones, pero no se animan a cambiar algunas maneras de vivir. “Los demasiados” están dominando la “Simplicidad”. Los padres de familia se sienten desbordados por las exigencias de muchos de sus hijos: cada vez quieren viajar más, tener la mejor tecnología a menor edad, tener grandes satisfactores sin hacer gran esfuerzo, el uso y abuso del alcohol y otras drogas; en algunas familias todo esto se está viendo como parte de los

procesos de la adolescencia y los riesgos son muy altos.

Es muy difícil generalizar, en una comunidad educativa donde existen diferentes maneras de educar a sus familias, pero la presión por cumplir ciertos estándares sociales, es muy fuerte. Las familias quieren “lo mejor para sus hijos” y pierden la visión global de sociedad, de comunidad. Existe cierta educación hedonista; se llega a pensar que “Dar lo mejor” es sinónimo de buena educación.

La formación de los hijos antes dependía de gran manera de la familia y la escuela, pero con los cambios culturales de las últimas décadas, la influencia del entorno es de mayor relevancia que en otras épocas. Crear entornos, ambiente, situaciones donde los hijos y la familia en general tenga valores más trascendentes, como el cuidado del medio ambiente, la solidaridad, el compromiso social, el respeto al diferente, la compasión, la fidelidad por el amigo, la institución o la pareja, se ha convertido en un reto para las familias.

No hay que dejar de luchar día a día, continuar dialogando, pensando, discerniendo, haciendo comunidad para lograr mejorar la cultura y los entornos donde se manejan los niños y los adolescentes. Somos los adultos los que podemos provocar, motivar y convocar a nuevos estilos de vida. No es suficiente darles “Lo mejor” en clases y viajes; no es suficiente tener buenas calificaciones, ni estar en los cuadros de honor. Lo más importante es dejar en las nuevas generaciones una visión más humana, con grandes valores de justicia y paz, de respeto y amor por el prójimo. Una educación más sencilla provoca sociedades más solidarias. Los entornos determinan valores y comportamientos.

¿Quieres que tu hijo sea feliz durante toda su vida? Dale menos y enséñalo a amar a los demás y en especial a los diferentes a él; ésa sería una “formación de calidad”.



“DALE MENOS Y ENSÉÑALO A AMAR A LOS DEMÁS Y EN ESPECIAL A LOS DIFERENTES A ÉL...”

ASFG ELEMENTARY SCIENCE INSPIRES COMMUNITIES

by Ignacio Salazar, elementary teacher

What is being taught in our elementary science lab does not simply stay in the lab or even in the city of Guadalajara. The lessons in the lab are shared with teachers from Jalisco and many other states in Mexico. In these workshops, the teachers are exposed to some of the hands-on-science activities that are being performed in our ASFG science lab on a regular basis. This past year, I (representing ASFG) was invited to share some of our science curriculum with people from the small, coffee plantation town of Xicotepec, which is located in the mountains of Puebla, Mexico. Twenty-eight elementary teachers and administrators participated in two four-hour workshops. They were very engaged in the science activities and were so impressed by what they had learned that they asked for copies of our science curriculum. I was happy to share the materials with the educators from these rural communities.

I was pleasantly surprised to see how similar this group of adults was to our own students when they are in the lab. Their hands and minds were engaged in the activities as they mixed liquids, solids and gases and they were often surprised by the final results of the experiments. They realized, as they made hypotheses, predictions and final conclusions about the experiments, how important following the scientific method is.

The videos I shared, of some of our ASFG students performing the same science activities here in our lab, and examples of the students'

written assessments further convinced these educators of the need for an inquiry-based science program in their schools.

The ASFG science outreach program has had a very positive impact on hundreds of educators throughout Mexico and has truly benefited these communities. As a result, I have been asked to provide more workshops and share additional science curriculum.

I will continue to share my knowledge with teachers from other schools as they have learned, through our program, a more effective, scientific and fun way to teach science and achieve better results.

I believe that the greatest compliment came from a few teachers who, after having participated in a workshop, expressed a desire to write their graduate thesis on science education and asked for professional assistance from the ASFG Science Department. As members of a teaching community, we are empowered by the idea of educators helping educators.

“I was happy to share the materials with the educators from these rural communities...”



WHEN IS BLOCK PLAY MORE THAN JUST PLAY? Always!

"Block play promotes communication..."



by Sarah Gehrke, early childhood teacher

As children communicate, negotiate and problem solve during block play, they are not only building science, math and language skills, they are also building a community of friends, learners, negotiators, and problem solvers. In early childhood at ASFG you will see children playing with many kinds of blocks: wooden big blocks, table blocks, pattern blocks, linker cubes, 1 cm blocks, wooden cubes, snap blocks, big blue blocks, and LEGO. Providing a variety of blocks allows children to play in different ways.

Block play promotes communication. As students build together they must express their needs or wants to each other. They must choose their role in the community by choosing how they communicate with others. Do they get what they want by being aggressive, flexible, passive, or demanding? How do others react to their communication style? Do they choose to be the leader or follower, the dreamer or doer? They experiment with social roles. Children begin to understand that how they communicate can affect how they are responded to by others in their classroom community.

Block play crosses gender, age, and language boundaries. Boys and girls play together, often building complex structures. Children of different ages can participate in block play together. Children do not have to share a similar language to participate with each other in block play. A new student in my class speaks neither English or Spanish but happily participates in block play. He is regularly invited into the play by his peers and enthusiastically helps with the construction.

A recent interaction of children playing together with different colored blocks and plastic animals, shows the way block play allows for conversation, flexibility and inclusion. These are all parts of a positive classroom community.



"We are making land and water animals."

A group of three children were placing blue and green blocks in groups on the floor. They were setting animals on top of the groups of blocks.

Child #1: "We are making land and water animals."

Child #2: "This is the green for the grass."

Child #3 Added a sloping long block and said "so animals can slide."

Child #4 Entered the play and asked: "can I help you make the habitat?"

Child #1 "Yes."

Child #1 Added red blocks near the green and blue and said "The red can be the lava."

As many as eight children moved in and out of this block play group. Each time a child came into or left the play group the community of learners changed. In subtle ways the rules of building established by the original group were either enforced or revised.

Block play in early childhood classrooms is a powerful tool for building community. It is a time to learn communication skills, play in flexible groups, reinforce academic language, practice flexibility, form new friendships, negotiate needs, and have fun with peers. All of these skills are important building blocks for becoming a positive member of any community.

GROWING UP AND GIVING BACK: THE GROWTH OF GRADE 5 SERVICE LEARNING

by 5th grade teachers

Did you ever wonder where the bake sale money goes when you pay a 5th grader for that delicious homemade chocolate chip cookie? Service learning in the 5th grade has come a long way in the past few years. It has undergone multiple modifications and has grown to fit students' interests.

For more than 15 years, 5th grade has been working with La Escuela para Niñas Ciegas. It is a wonderful organization that provides a unique learning opportunity for our students.

In the past, 5th graders were able to meet the students and teachers of La Escuela para Niñas Ciegas once a year, which made a lasting impression for all. Even after the 5th grade, students came back to inquire about the children they had met. Unfortunately, having more than 100 students in one program did not allow students to forge lasting relationships. Students yearned for a deeper connection.

We realized that students needed multiple occasions to bond, but we knew that the students and teachers of La Escuela para Niñas Ciegas did not have the time to meet with five small groups of students five or six times a year – that would mean about 30 visits per year for their school!

We began to look for additional service learning opportunities in the community to add to students' experiences. Ms. Aizuri Minakata, veteran 5th grade teacher, heard a food drive advertised on the radio for Casa de Salud Huichol. We jumped in with both feet and supported both efforts for several years. We knew that this enriched our students, but could we do more?

In 2013-2014, ASFG teachers attended workshops that demonstrated the rich learning opportunities provided when service learning is tied to curriculum. Our faculty was encouraged to provide students with choices based on their passions. This is when we realized we were on the right path. We brainstormed ways to improve what we had already begun. It became clear that in order to foster deeper connections and student commitment, we needed smaller groups, more frequent visits, and diverse project choices.

Feeling a bit wary of exactly how this would work, we pioneered three projects. Teachers paired up to share the lead: two teachers leading

35 to 40 students per project with seven project days dispersed throughout the year. What a difference this made! Students chose their project via survey and we witnessed a connection unlike previous years. Students and teachers alike were more passionate than ever. Still we asked ourselves, how can we improve this experience?

This year we are supporting five different projects, all as diverse as the students who choose to work with them: CAAN (Centro de Adopciones Avanzadas), Mother Earth Club, Villa Hogar, Activists for the Environment, and Escuela para Niñas Ciegas. Groups are small – between 15 and 25 students – and are able to work with their projects five to seven days per year. Students genuinely look forward to these project days with eagerness. Parents are pleased that their children are enjoying a way to serve the community, teachers notice the real enthusiasm and dedication each student brings, and the students love being part of a real world experience.

So support the bake sales! The next time you see a 5th grader selling brownies, you'll know you can help five good causes AND satisfy your sweet tooth!



CRECIENDO Y AYUDANDO:

REVOLUCIONANDO EL SERVICIO A LA COMUNIDAD EN 5TO. GRADO.

por maestras de 5to grado

¿Alguna vez te has preguntado a dónde va el dinero que pagas por una deliciosa galleta con chispas de chocolate hecha en casa comprada en una de las ventas de pasteles que organizó quinto grado?

El servicio a la comunidad en este grado ha crecido mucho en los últimos años. Ha experimentado varias modificaciones con el propósito de cubrir los diferentes intereses de los alumnos.

Quinto grado ha trabajado con la Escuela de las Niñas Ciegas por más de quince años. Esta escuela es una organización maravillosa que brinda una experiencia de aprendizaje única para nuestros alumnos. En el pasado, los alumnos de quinto visitaban una vez al año a las alumnas y a las maestras de esta escuela, lo cual dejaba una impresión duradera para todos. Inclusive, después de terminar quinto año, regresaban a preguntar por las niñas que habían conocido. Desafortunadamente, un programa de servicio a la comunidad en el que hay más de 100 alumnos no permitía forjar relaciones duraderas. Se anhelaban relaciones más estrechas. A fin de crear esa conexión, nos dimos cuenta de que los alumnos necesitaban más oportunidades para vincularse, pero sabíamos que las alumnas y las maestras de la Escuela de las Niñas Ciegas no tenían el tiempo para encontrarse con cinco pequeños grupos de alumnos cinco o seis veces al año, esto significaba alrededor de 30 visitas al año a su escuela.

Entonces, empezamos a buscar oportunidades adicionales de servicio en la comunidad para anexarlas a las experiencias de los alumnos, ahí fue cuando Aizuri Minakata, una maestra con experiencia en este tema, escuchó en el radio sobre recolección de comida para la Casa de Salud Huichola. Tomamos el reto y apoyamos ambos esfuerzos por varios años. Sabíamos que esto enriquecería a nuestros alumnos, pero ¿podíamos hacer más?

He aquí la narración de lo sucedido; durante el año escolar 13-14 los maestros del ASFG asistieron a un taller en el que se demostraba las oportunidades de aprendizaje que proveía el servicio a la comunidad cuando estaba ligado a la currícula. Se motivó a los maestros que estábamos presentes a proporcionar opciones basadas en los temas que apasionaran a los alumnos.

Aquí fue cuando nos dimos cuenta de que estábamos en el camino correcto. Hicimos una lluvia de ideas para mejorar lo que ya habíamos comenzado. Nos quedó claro que para forjar relaciones más profundas y para que los alumnos se comprometieran seriamente, necesitábamos grupos más pequeños, organizar visitas frecuentemente y brindar diferentes opciones.

Sin saber en realidad si este plan iba a funcionar, nos atrevimos a iniciar tres proyectos. Nos organizamos de manera que cada proyecto fuera dirigido por dos maestras, de 35 a 40 alumnos por proyecto y siete días para visitas repartidos a lo largo del año ¡Qué diferencia!

Los alumnos escogieron el proyecto en el que querían participar a través de una encuesta y nosotros fuimos testigos de una conexión que no se había visto en años previos. Tanto los maestros como los alumnos estaban más motivados que nunca. Aunque, aún nos seguíamos preguntando ¿cómo podemos mejorar esta experiencia?

Este año estamos apoyando cinco proyectos diferentes, todos tan diversos como los intereses de nuestros alumnos: CAAN (Centro de Adopciones Avanzadas), Mother Earth Club, Villa Hogar, Activists for the Environment y La Escuela para Niñas Ciegas. Los grupos son pequeños, de 15 a 25 alumnos y tienen la oportunidad de trabajar en sus proyectos de cinco a siete días por año. Los alumnos desean genuinamente y con entusiasmo que lleguen estos días, por su parte, los papás están contentos de que sus hijos estén disfrutando al servir a la comunidad, las maestras notamos el entusiasmo y la dedicación que cada alumno pone en estas actividades; por su parte los alumnos se sienten muy bien al experimentar el mundo real.

Así que, ¡apoya nuestras ventas de pasteles! La próxima vez que le compres a un alumno de quinto grado un brownie, estarás ayudando a cinco nobles causas y estarás satisfaciendo tu dulce antojo.



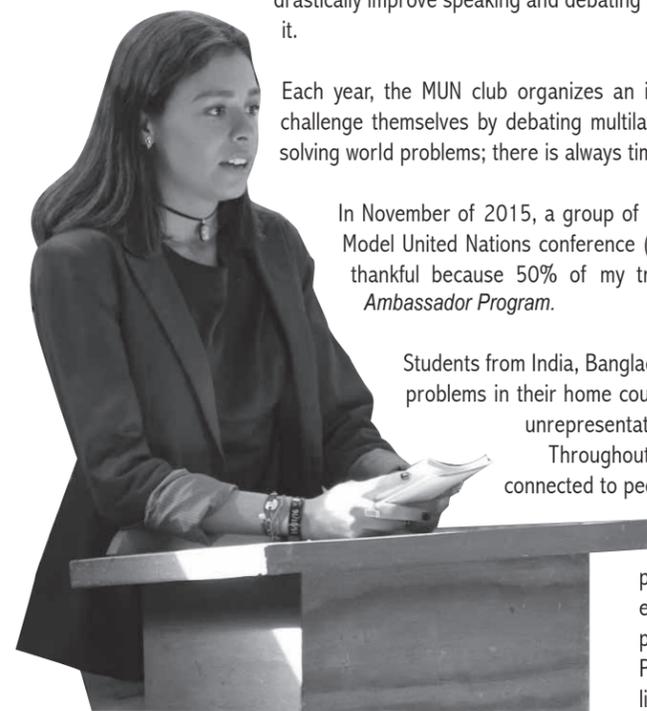


GUAMUN
GUADALAJARA
MODEL UNITED NATIONS

MUN

by MUN Club President Paloma Calderon and MUN Advisor Liam O'Hara

The high school Model United Nations club is known for its longstanding effort to prepare and engage students in diplomatic negotiations regarding pressing world issues. It is my opinion, after being part of the club for three years, that MUN is a platform for a much greater educational experience. As Mr. O'Hara, the teacher leader of the club says, "As delegates you pretend to be a country to solve problems, but in the process have very real opportunities to grow and learn." Not only does participating in simulations drastically improve speaking and debating skills, it also shapes our view of the world as a whole and connects us to it.



Each year, the MUN club organizes an international trip to a conference. These trips allow club members to challenge themselves by debating multilateral solutions with other strong students. Not all of the time is spent solving world problems; there is always time to talk to other delegates about their lives.

In November of 2015, a group of 20 students and teachers attended the Dhirubhai Ambani International Model United Nations conference (DAIMUN) in Mumbai, India. As a student, I am especially fortunate and thankful because 50% of my trip was funded by the ASFG Alumni Association through its *Student Ambassador Program*.

Students from India, Bangladesh, Saudi Arabia, and Mexico found time to speak about their lives and problems in their home countries. We heard of the inefficient legal systems and other problems of unrepresentative democracies. We found that Mexico shares similar problems.

Throughout the trip, discussions comparing Mexico and India were constant. We were connected to people halfway around the world in both a literal and a figurative sense.

During the simulation, as we debated world problems, we made personal connections to people. However fleeting, they impacted our experiences and lives in a real way. As we immerse ourselves in this pretend world of simulations we develop real life skills and experience. Perhaps more importantly, we make real connections to people and their lives the world over and in the process forever alter our own lenses.



Apart from the four days of rigorous debate in the simulation, we also toured India for two weeks and immersed ourselves in its culture as best we could. We visited beautiful palaces and ate delicious meals, but our senses were assaulted by extreme poverty in the streets as well as incredibly pressing health issues in the city. The disparity in wealth and lack of access to basic health and sanitation facilities left deep impressions on us all.

Fortunately, we spent a day with the Delivering Change Foundation, who seek solutions to a variety of the world's most pressing problems. We had a private tour of one of their pet projects, Tanishka Women, which empowers women leaders of rural villages to change their communities. It was inspiring to see many of the principles of the UN that we had spent days debating. The women showed us the reservoir they created to solve a water shortage crisis and how they were developing clean burners to use natural wastes to cook their food. During the trip we came face to face with the difficult challenges that people face the world over, but the strength of community and tireless effort that drive people to make changes left us with an enduring sense of hope.

These trips are not the only way in which MUN provides experiences for growth. Last year, a group of dedicated MUN club members and Mr. O'Hara decided to take ASFG's MUN program one step further. They created Guadalajara Model United Nations (GUAMUN), a student-run international simulation for high school students. Our organizing team, the GUAMUN Secretariat, is in charge of every detail of the conference,

from designing logos and inviting schools to researching topics, writing the background guides, training the chairs, and even fundraising and organizing the schedule and meals.

This year, 17 students spent eight months planning and preparing the intense three-day event. The attention to deadlines and coordination with so many different people all provide valuable real world experience. Putting on an event for students to pretend to solve world problems involves a ton of less weighty real problems. ASFG was proud to host the second annual edition of the conference. We were grateful to welcome delegates from five different schools in the city and see them connect. It is through the conference that both students and faculty member built relationships outside of the ASFG community that will continue to grow. We were also able to compare our MUN clubs and share different strategies. As GUAMUN continues to grow both in size and educational impact, it is our goal to make a bigger impact on ASFG and in our surrounding community.

MUN simulations bring people together. As we sit together and rehash each simulation, story by story, the new perspectives and growing sense of community — or sense of a growing community — fill us with hope for a better world. There seems to be a lot of value in pretending.

"MUN simulations
bring people together."

You're not alone

by Scott Brennan, elementary school teacher

Shortly after their children were disappeared, the parents of the 43 Normalistas of Ayotzinapa came to Guadalajara to speak in the historic Salvador Allende auditorium of the Universidad de Guadalajara.

As the parents entered the auditorium, and sporadically throughout the event, the packed auditorium broke into a chant: "No están solos, no están solos." You're not alone.

At one point an audience member asked, "I am, like everyone here, mortified by this situation, and I would love to help out but I have a life here in Guadalajara from which I can't just pick up and leave. Should I take \$500 pesos from my pocket and donate it to the movement? I will, but that seems meaningless and useless. How can I, and all of us, being so moved by this nightmare, move forward and support the cause?" The parents of the 43 responded, "No, keep your \$500 pesos, and thank you, but what we need is the message of this audience and its chant, 'You're not alone.' This attitude, one of solidarity, is what we need. We need people and institutions to get involved in our fight, in our marches, in our battle to demand justice for our children and for Mexico."

One year and seven months later, the parents continue their determined cause, and none of their demands have been met. None of their questions have been answered, and few have faith that the current investigations will amount to anything. Yet they continue en pie de lucha.

They continue their fight for the most basic justice.

I had the good fortune to work with the parents over my summer break. I also had the opportunity to become familiar with the extremely beautiful and culturally diverse, but troubled and violence-plagued state of Guerrero. All summer long I worked on taking the parents' portraits and recording their testimonies about their children and their hopes for the movement they've started – a movement which has grown into an internationally recognized call for justice in a country with an estimated 27,000 disappearances since 2006.

For the one year anniversary of the disappearances, on September 26, 2015 Amnesty International and the BBC published a selection of my photos and the parents' testimonies. The project was recently exhibited at the photo and videography school, la CAAV for 43 consecutive days, and it will be exhibited by the Congreso del Estado de Jalisco and in el MAZ (Museum of Modern Art Zapopan) in Zapopan. During July and August, it will be exhibited in el Museo Casa de la Memoria Indómita in Mexico City. Most importantly, the parents themselves have been using the portraits to support their movement.



You're not alone.

The American School has been very supportive of the project and put together an exhibition at the school where the entire community at ASFG could view the photos and write letters to the parents expressing their support. These letters are soon to be delivered to Ayotzinapa. ASFG went out of its way to secure the first exhibition here in Guadalajara at La CAAV, which has opened doors for further exhibitions in the city. Middle school art teacher Chris Peterson decided to use the portraits for his annual portraiture unit. When I was invited into Mr. Peterson's art class his students led a discussion that turned the space into a multi-disciplinary study of Mexican politics, human rights, and the power of art to capture the human condition. When I saw the class's completed portraits, I was amazed by the quality of the work. The students' pieces portrayed thoughtfulness, self-expression, understanding and meaning. The work was overwhelmingly compelling.

The attention given to Ayotzinapa by ASFG serves as a means, however small, of preventing the awful events of September 26, 2014 from being forgotten. By incorporating Ayotzinapa and the 43 disappeared into its main functions, by sharing the feelings of the ASFG community with the parents of the disappeared through hundreds of handwritten letters, by bringing Ayotzinapa both into the classrooms of the school and out into the city of Guadalajara, the community at ASFG has united its voice with the chorus of support throughout Mexico and the world declaring "No están solos." This expression of solidarity is admirable.



"This attitude, one of solidarity, is what we need."



¿QUÉ SIGNIFICA PARA ASFG ESTAR INSPIRADOS EN REGGIO EMILIA?

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE REGGIO INSPIRED AT ASFG?

by Tina Carstensen, Early Childhood Principal and Norma Guinto, Mexican Program Director



Reggio Emilia is a town in northern Italy which for the last fifty years has had a municipal infant, toddler, and preschool program considered around the world to be a model of excellence in early childhood education. ASFG's early childhood program has been inspired by this approach for over twenty years.

Esperamos que disfruten este experimento en el que decidimos respetar nuestras lenguas maternas de tal manera que, Tina entrevistaba a Norma en inglés y ella contestaba en español y viceversa, creando así un artículo verdaderamente bilingüe.

Reggio Emilia is a town in northern Italy which for the last fifty years has had a municipal infant, toddler, and preschool program considered around the world to be a model of excellence in early childhood education. ASFG's early childhood program has been inspired by this approach for over twenty years.

Pregunta para Tina: ¿Qué te inspira de la propuesta educativa Reggio Emilia?

Being inspired by the Reggio approach pushes me to be a better person because inherent in this approach is the idea of listening to others (children, colleagues, and parents) with curiosity, openness, and with the expectation of being able to learn something from the children and adults with whom I work. It has helped shape how I view children — not as potentially important, but as important and capable right now. And I love the way that Reggio recognizes life in a school community - in a classroom - as alive and growing. It encourages reflection and research into the students' ideas and therefore keeps the work in school fresh and exciting.

Question for Norma: There is a famous quote by the founder of the municipal preschools in Reggio Emilia, Loris Malaguzzi, that is written over one of their schools. It is "Nothing without joy." What does that quote mean to you?

Niente senza gioia, es una frase que nos motiva a valorar cada momento como una oportunidad para maravillarnos con la belleza en nuestras interacciones cotidianas con los niños. Nada sin alegría significa para mí, que la escuela debe ser un lugar de gozo para todos los que la habitan y que los adultos debemos ser responsables de la creación de contextos que protejan y fomenten la alegría de aprender.

Pregunta para Tina: ¿En qué o cómo es diferente la experiencia escolar de un niño que asiste a una escuela inspirada en la propuesta reggiana?

Children will know their ideas are valued and that they contribute to the school culture rather than merely being shaped by it. So in that sense, we can say a child in a Reggio-inspired school environment feels more empowered than a child in a program driven by adult priorities.

En ese sentido, yo agregaría que empoderar a los niños es también tener presente que la niñez es el tiempo en el que el niño juega para expresar su manera de entender el mundo y su rol en él. En una escuela inspirada en la propuesta reggiana, los maestros entienden que el juego es para los niños una herramienta indispensable para aprender y que tener espacios donde puedan relacionarse a través del juego en grupos pequeños, en grupos grandes y aún con ellos mismos, es sumamente importante para que desarrollen las habilidades necesarias para vivir en comunidad.

Question for Norma: How has your experience learning about and working in a Reggio inspired school environment changed you?

Antes de conocer la propuesta Reggio Emilia creía que los niños eran seres frágiles a quienes los adultos debíamos proteger, ahora entiendo a los niños como seres con grandes ideas, con capacidades que deben ser valoradas ahora. Debido a que Reggio y la maternidad llegaron a mi al mismo tiempo, pude llevar a la práctica sus ideas fundamentales en mi interacción con mis propios hijos y esto me permitió a la vez, entender mejor a los padres de mis alumnos y compartir con ellos la propuesta reggiana.

Reggio también me ha enseñado a ver la riqueza de investigar con otras maestras y a aprender de lo que nuestros alumnos piensan y hacen. Lo anterior, son grandes fundamentos de esta propuesta que siempre que

trabajo con educadores fuera de ASFG trato de compartir.

Question for Norma: What role does documentation play in this approach?

La documentación es una estrategia que ayuda a las maestras a evidenciar la grandeza de los niños y a comprender qué está pasando en los procesos de aprendizaje.

Documentando los procesos de los alumnos, las maestras pueden recabar información que les permita crear contextos que hagan posible que los niños avancen en la construcción de conocimientos y habilidades. Al releer dicha documentación, los alumnos y maestros reflexionan no sólo acerca de lo aprendido sino de cómo aprendieron.

Nos ayuda también a comunicarnos con otros fuera del salón de clases, celebrando cómo los niños piensan y representan sus ideas a través de diferentes medios como el video, la fotografía, la narración y la gráfica.

Pregunta para Tina: ¿Cuál es el rol de los padres desde la propuesta reggiana?

Parents can observe what their children are curious about and get curious about it too — sharing the joy of discovery with their child. They can show their children they are interested about what they are doing at school. If parents show enthusiasm in this way, it sends a powerful message to a child that his or her school experience is of value to the family. And if parents are able to get involved with classroom or school wide initiatives, that is wonderful. They might volunteer in a classroom, join the parents association, or join a course through the parent school. I think this involvement is as healthy for our students' families as it is for the school.



“Los niños como seres con grandes ideas, con capacidades que deben ser valoradas ahora.”