



Profe Iris addresses the parents.



Edwin from the Parents' Association, Janell McBride from Shoulder to Shoulder, and Attys Patricia Sikaffy and Plutarco Rivera.

## Hope and Pride

November 16, 2014

No one from my family had ever been to college. My dad was a truck driver who never finished high school. I recall vividly my father's beaming expression, a mixture of hope and pride, the day he dropped me off at the University of Massachusetts. Yesterday, I sat in on the parents meeting at the Bilingual School of the Good Shepherd in Camasca, Intibucá. As I looked out upon those attending I experienced that eerie sense of *déjà vu*. Thirty-six years later, it was my father looking back at me with that same expression of hope and pride.

How different are the families here in Honduras, yet one thing is certainly universal. Parents want so much more for their children than they themselves obtained. Education, a quality education, is the key element to realize that goal. Education, a quality education, is simply not accessible to the great majority of Honduran families. Why hope, if hope yields disappointment? Perhaps it is better to take pride in more modest achievements. This must be the thoughts of most families raising children in Honduras. Those thoughts seem to be changing in the frontier region of Intibucá.

In 2012, Shoulder to Shoulder, the community of the Good Shepherd Catholic Church in Cincinnati, and the families of the frontier region of Intibucá dared to dream of a financially accessible, quality, bilingual school. The classrooms were designed and erected and today it is a reality with fifty-four students in kindergarten, first and second grade. It is a public school, available to everyone.

Public education has been a disaster in Honduras. There simply aren't the resources. The buildings are not maintained, materials are non-existent, the teachers are minimally qualified, and the list goes on. Maybe Honduras needs to think about a new model. *What about a partnership among the Department of Education, a committed NGO like Shoulder to Shoulder, the surrounding municipalities, and the parents themselves?* There you have it, the Good Shepherd Bilingual School. This model school is a first in Honduras. There are a great many challenges that face the parents and partners of this endeavor. But it is only with great risk that great reward can be achieved.

Attorneys Plutarco Rivera and his wife Patricia Maria Sikaffy, were present at the meeting to present the proposed agreement for the foundation of the model, bilingual, public school. Attorney Rivera exhorted those present that if this "experiment" is to have success, it will be dependent upon the dedicated involvement of the parents as represented in their committee. In those expressions of hope and pride, another emotion was palpably present. These parents are determined; determined that their children will have an education that will place them on the path of success and fulfillment. **In a few weeks on this website, there will be opportunity to support the parents' determination by financially sponsoring one of their children. It will be a tremendous opportunity to ally ourselves with a phenomenal moment of transformation.**

May these expressions of hope and pride be the force that yields enrichment!

