

## Yo Puedo Retreat 2014

November 19, 2014

This past weekend, a phenomenal event occurred for the Yo Puedo (I Am Able) girls. Yo Puedo is a peer empowerment program for girls in the fifth and sixth grade. In peer reinforced education, they are empowered to learn skills, become responsible, grow in self esteem, and start small businesses that they themselves manage and operate.



A creative activity.

On Saturday, November 15 through Sunday, November 16, eleven girls, representatives from the twelve Yo Puedo sites from the many towns and villages of the Intibucá frontier region, came together for their second annual retreat at the Santa Lucia Clinic. Grateful for the support of teachers, parents and administrative personal from Shoulder to Shoulder, the girls celebrated successes of the past year and looked forward to new events for this coming one.

The girls received permission from their parents. A hired car drove across the frontier region, collecting girls from the various schools. They were ecstatic to see the car, confirming the reality of the retreat. Arriving in Santa Lucia Clinic around midday, the girls ran desperately to reserve their beds, covering them with personal items. A few minutes to rest, then onto lunch.

After lunch, the activities commenced. The girls introduced themselves and participated in several activities, each with its own special lesson. The "Birthday Line," for example, had the girls line up according to their birthdays. Without using any words, this was comical, but it also demonstrated the importance of non-verbal communication and teamwork. For the activity "Treasure Bag," two groups were given a bag including paper, crayons and markers, masking tape, scissors, with other items, and were asked to create something meaningful. They organized themselves around the project, demonstrated flourishing creativity, and recognized that each girl had a specific, critical role to play in the process.



Finding Self-Esteem.

Near the end of the retreat, a few videos on self-esteem and goal setting fueled discussion about the girls' short and long-term goals. The success of the retreat was evidenced by how well the girls came together and found their voice.

Minsis Ramos Diaz, Coordinator for Yo Puedo, is grateful to the generous hearts of sponsors. The unconditional support is truly what our young people need. The girls are taking to heart the power of the simple phrase, "I Am Able."