

MORE In Education *or* Running to Class

In Intibucá, a change in education is beginning.



Everyone knows you can't run in high school. It's a fairly universal rule. But at the Saint Thomas Aquinas Institute in Camasca, one young man got himself in trouble a couple of weeks ago for running. He wasn't fooling around. He wasn't trying to get away from some impending discipline. No, in fact he was trying to get to his math class as soon as he possibly could. His math class is using Khan Academy curriculum and Computer Assisted Learning provided by Shoulder to Shoulder. He was trying to get there early so he could secure one of the tablets that would allow him some interactive learning. In the course of his running, he broke a chair. He'll have to pay for it. Poor kid, all he wants to do is further his education with some first class tools that make learning enjoyable.

Don't worry. We'll provide the school with enough tablets that no kids have to run to class. But what a great image! The kids in Intibucá are literally running to class because of the education they're getting.

KA LITE

We introduced Khan Academy curriculum under the model of KA Lite (learningequality.com) about two years ago at the bilingual school. With a computer server, a modem, and hand held tablets, students are introduced to amazing and stimulating class instruction interactively. It doesn't require the internet, so here where the internet is often slow and generally unreliable, the system is always available. What we've found is that the kids love it, can't get enough of it, and because they're having so much fun, they probably don't even realize how well they're being educated.

Under the leadership and generosity of our Board Treasurer, Dr. Richard Buten, we've been deploying KA Lite, along with the technology and training at other local schools with great success. Our first school was the high school in Camasca, and as evidence by the enthusiasm to get to class, it's become popular and effective. We've also introduced KA Lite to the Urbana primary school in Camasca and it is utilized there for math by fifth, sixth, and seventh grades, and will be implemented in eighth and ninth as they add those grades in the coming years. Over a year ago we gave the high school in the town of Magdalena a server with KA Lite and a modem. We promised them more support and technological tools if they could prove the use and effectiveness of it. We additionally have requests from the high schools in the towns of Santa Lucia and Concepción.



Using KA Lite at the Urbana

CREE

Frankly, however, there is a lot to put into place to advance our CREE (Centro Regional para Excelencia en Educación or Regional Center of Educational Excellence) mission. We need an organized structure among local leaders and benefactors (students, teachers, administrators). We need to develop partnerships for the provision of resources, materials, and expertise among schools and individuals in the US. In order to do this well, we needed someone on the ground here in Intibucá working with us toward effective implementation.



Grace and Paul at Magdalena Reception

In late June, Grace Twohig arrived as a long-term volunteer to assist us in the implementation of CREE. She has been working with long-term volunteer, Paul, an IT specialist, in extending our service. They have met with great success. At the high school in Camasca and the Urbana, they are supporting and monitoring the successes already achieved and creating infrastructure to advance the mission. They recently visited Magdalena High School where they were awestruck with what has occurred there.

In Magdalena, the students and faculty held fundraisers to purchase a wide screen TV for the viewing of the science and mathematics videos of KA Lite. The students were allowed to bring in smart phones and laptops to connect to the server. The students have been excelling in math and science by way of the utilization of this amazing tool. Paul and Grace returned to Magdalena with the gift of tablets. They were met with a reception of welcome and thanks. We can certainly expect great things from Magdalena. Paul and Grace will continue to visit the other area schools and provide the foundation of our education mission.

ROBOTICS AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLASSES

It is not simply KA Lite that CREE envisions. We are really speaking of the transformation of the public educational system in Intibucá. In the same way that Shoulder to Shoulder created a system of health care throughout Southern Intibucá over decades of investment, we intend to do the same thing for education. We know we need a lot of partners and a lot of resources to affect that type of change, but we are so greatly encouraged by what we have already seen. In July, seven students with two professors from the high schools in Camasca and Concepción competed in the first ever, FIRST Global, Olympic-style, robotics competition in Washington, DC, sponsored by Shoulder to Shoulder. Of 163 international teams, Team Honduras came in 40th. The



Tablets Triumphant in Magdalena

students are continuing to meet every other week, forming a local robotics team. They will assist us in advancing STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) education here in Southern Intibucá. In July and August, Duke University's Project Heal sent us five students for five weeks to conduct studies in community and personal health issues. They stayed with teachers from the Urbana, and each day offered English classes to the students. It is these types of partnerships that will advance our education mission.



So, this is the **more** of education: from scholarships to high school students, to the establishment of the Good Shepherd Bilingual School, to a modest investment in Computer Assisted Learning, to a transformation of education in excellence. As always, we seek generous support from partners to meet our ambitious, meaningful goals. **Click** below to find a few ways to help.

