

# The Center Chronicles



NEWS FROM THE CENTER - A FAMILY OF FAMILIES • QUITO, ECUADOR • SPRING 2022

## Our Kiddos are Back!

After **695** days of virtual learning, our students are back on campus! To see the classrooms filled, to hear the halls echoing with laughter, and to witness the friendships blossoming again is truly a blessing.

The Center's teachers were exceptional during the COVID-19 pandemic. Although there was no pre-established plan for learning-at-a-distance, the Educational Team improvised to ensure that their students would continue with their education no matter what. At first, Facebook and WhatsApp were used as the main platforms, but, after some time, Zoom came along and changed the game for the Center teachers.

For families that did not have access to the internet or a computer/smartphone, teachers would print out worksheets and create activities that the parents would pick up at the beginning of one week and drop off the next.



"I AM SO EXCITED!"

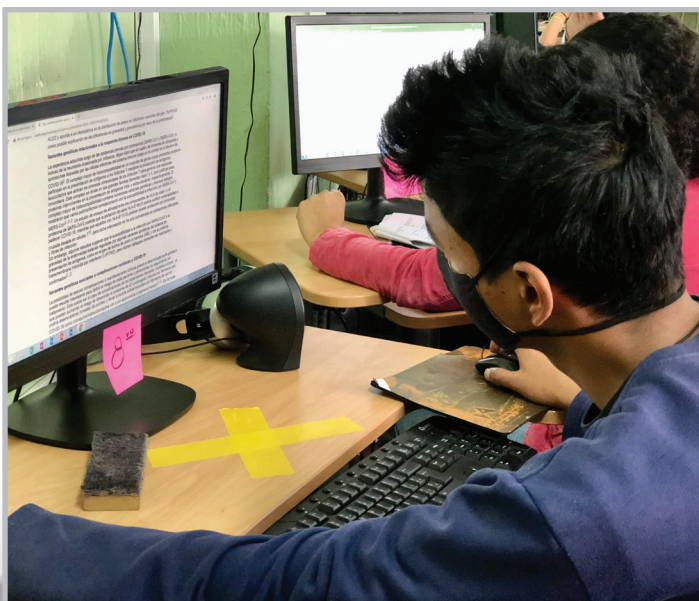
"It's great to be back with all my friends!"

"It's incredible to see my students' faces again, even if they are behind masks."

"We get to play!"

"I didn't realize how much I missed it here."

"I know my teachers tried their best, but in-person classes are so much better."



With doors opening at 6:40AM, there's just enough time to get to the first class of the day. The school day will end at 1PM for all our students, and, for the time being, there will be no extracurricular classes and activities to ensure everyone's health and safety.

The Center students - from kindergarten through high school - were *ecstatic* to come back to in-person classes. For almost two years, students were learning by any means necessary all while stuck at home. We know that many of them will need extra support - both academically and emotionally - and the school psychologists, faculty, and staff are ready to support their needs!

# Community Outreach Efforts

Within the past month, there were two devastating landslides in both the La Gasca neighborhood (just 20 minutes south of the Center) and throughout the Cotopaxi Province (2 hours from Quito). These disasters were due to severely increased heavy rainfall. Homes and crops were destroyed. Families were displaced and people are still missing, and more than 20 people have lost their lives.

Despite these tragedies, the response was immediate. We stand in solidarity with our neighbors in La Gasca and have been officially recognized as a donation center as well as a refuge. On the local level, we have received perishable and non-perishable food items, fresh water, clothing, cleaning materials, masks, blankets, and pet food to create kits for the communities affected.

Over the past few weeks, various members of the Center team have joined

local municipality representatives and other community-based organizations to drop off donations and distribute food to those affected by the natural disasters and to those assisting the clean-up process. The Center has been able to provide more than 100 kits to families in need.

Alex Altamirano - a former Center member and current staff - shared that, "We were able to share with people who lost everything in a blink of an eye. These kits were nothing compared to what these families lost, but it was something to help. And to see the faces of those kids, parents, and grandparents - their smiles - it really makes you want to continue helping those around you."

To all those who contributed to help the Center support our neighboring communities, we are grateful for your generosity!





## Collin Hennessey

Hometown: I'm from Glen Ellyn, IL.

Area of Study: Economics and Mathematics, with a focus in Business Finance.

What Inspires You: I am most inspired through the experience of making new friends. I believe that every being is an artist in their own right, with passions and gifts and the ability to change the world in some way. In understanding the passions of others, I am able to reflect on my own life, my own goals, and my own gifts.

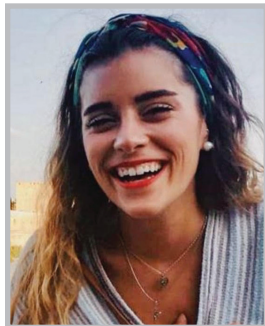
“The pandemic has pushed me to become an early riser: I'm usually up and moving at around 5am! I believe that knowing, understanding, and loving our bodies is essential to sustained contentment: yoga, and newly, the martial art of Capoeira, are two of my personal passions. I am also learning how to play the drums! Music = life force.”

### **How did you find out about the Center?**

I was led to The Center through a coworker. My *compañero* was from Quito, and met his now wife while working at the Center. I was enamored by his stories of Quito...burning a *muñeco* for *Año Viejo*? Excuse me?

### **How would you describe your role at the Center?**

My role is two-handed. One part of my job is in helping to develop an urban agriculture program; we work with our families to cultivate the Center's urban garden, sharing knowledge, veggies, and smiles along the way. More than just *comida*, our larger objective is to cultivate our relationship with *Pachamama* (Mother Nature) through a sustainable lifestyle. I also have had the joy of teaching English to the youth of our Center (8th, 9th, and 10th graders). Finally back to in-person class as of this month!



## Cristina Corredor García

Hometown: I'm from Córdoba, Andalucía in the south of Spain.

Area of Study: Social Education, from the Universidad de Huelva (Huelva, Spain) - it's a mix between social work and community involvement/participation.

What Inspires You: I believe that humble people who fight for a better world, vulnerable people, and people who share their light with others, inspire me, and I can learn so much from them. I also think that getting

to know diverse realities and all the different faces of the world is incredibly important for the soul to learn.

“People say my laugh is peculiar, yet contagious. I love to get lost in whatever corner of the world, and stargaze. I enjoy cooking, although I need to continue learning. I detest routine, and love to learn new things!”

### **What caught your attention about the Center's mission?**

How The Center's team works and connects with the community. How people bring out the best in each other within the staff, and every member of the Center's "Family of Families." Also, I can see that it is really a group effort! Everyone collaborates with each other; which makes The Center's work more efficient, which is how it should be.

### **What is your role at the Center?**

My role is to give my "grain of sand" in all that I can; helping support and build something greater. I'll be working alongside The Center's Social Team, and I cannot wait to accompany the families!



Celebrated our first-ever high school graduating class

**2021**

*What a Year!*

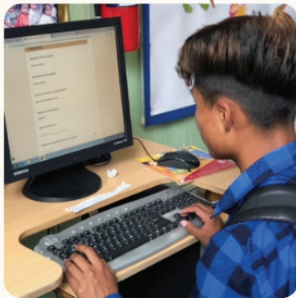


Hosted health, agro ecological fairs, and monthly markets with much needed items for our community



Served over 150 families with four early childhood development centers in the community

**You helped us make 2021 successful. With YOUR help, we...**



Continued virtual learning & provided computers to more of our families in great need



Opened our adult skills & training courses in baking, barbering, cooking, cosmetology, and urban gardening



Assisted over 3,000 families with food supply

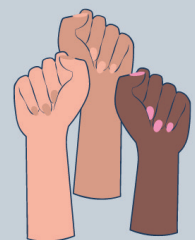
**Please mail contributions to:  
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**Jim Parks, C4WF Board President  
Email: [boardpres@c4wf.org](mailto:boardpres@c4wf.org)**



**INTERNATIONAL  
WOMEN'S  
DAY**



March is Women's History Month, and March 8th is International Women's Day. Thank you for supporting our girls and women. Your gifts help us bridge the gender inequality gap!