

Transformational Pastoral Care



Every Tuesday, Madre Miguel and Padre Juan have been assisting with our pastoral formation program for teens. To break the ice and set the stage for the themes of the day, our dedicated staff acts out some of Jesus' parables – sometimes they even dress up like the kids themselves to keep the engagement flowing! Just the other day program leaders Myriam, Rocio, Maria, and Rodolfo could have been mistaken for any of the earbud wearing, backpack toting teenagers roaming the third floor outside the high school classrooms. After a few skits, Madre and Padre open up discussion on different topics with open ears and hearts to encourage the spiritual and religious life of our young people.

Vilma's Testimony

Vilma Bravo and her family joined us from Pillaro, a rural area in the Province of Tungurahua located in the center of the country. She was the victim of domestic abuse, and she and her daughters consistently suffered from lack of economic and emotional support. Living in deep poverty and lacking proper nutrition, Vilma's daughters, Anahí, 7 years old, and Karen, 2 years old, were diagnosed with anemia.

Vilma had heard from her younger sister about the transformational opportunities at the Working Boys' Center. After learning about the WBC, Vilma decided to separate from her husband and move to Quito for a better life for her daughters and herself. In August 2017, her bravery and fortitude brought her to our door. Receiving assistance and support from our staff, Vilma began to feel confident in her decision to change her life forever through our values-based program, and enrolled her family.

Vilma and her sister live in the same home in different rooms as they work to get back on their feet. Both support their families by selling meat kebabs on the north side of Quito. Little by little they are strengthening their family through hard work and dedication both inside and outside of the WBC.



Between laughter and joy, students reflect on transcendental topics in their daily lives: values, drug use, responsible sexuality, friendship, community, etc. It is important that our students feel comfortable in the uncomfortable, for this is where transformation takes place.

From personal reflection, our students can empower themselves and become builders of a more just, solidary, and fraternal world. These discussions about bringing the parables of Jesus to life and applying it to our world encourages introspection and prepares the students for their sacraments.



Vilma and her girls now have a new routine: arrive around 6:20 AM to the WBC, have breakfast, take a shower, then on to study for the girls and Vilma goes to work selling food in the streets. She returns around 5:00 PM to share in an evening snack with her daughters.

On Mondays at 5:30 PM, Vilma participates in training given to parents of the childcare center. There, she learns about the concepts of appropriate height and weight standards, hygiene, nutrition, and basic care. Anahí and Karen have overcome the chronic malnutrition they had, and thanks to knowing more about the essential tools to grow up healthy, Vilma knows what foods she can give her children at home to continue to recuperate from their former situation.

Vilma has greatly improved her state of mind, and sees a future for her daughters in a safe and healthy environment. Vilma's story is one example of how safe, supportive and constructive spaces give families the tools to overcome former trauma and difficulties and find true prosperity. We are grateful to support Vilma in her journey of empowerment and the future of her family.

Every family that joins us is another divine sign of God's nudges which continue to guide us in serving and advocating for the working poor of Quito.

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WBC NEWS

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A Journey Within



Lent is a time to look profoundly, to look slowly and together with those around us. It is a beautiful opportunity to think about our lives and the life we experience with others. It is a journey to the innermost center of our being.

Speaking of Lent, it is hope – to embrace Easter and celebrate the light of the Resurrection. Pope Francis insists that we be an outgoing church that joyfully brings the gospel to many other people. To 'go out' is to speak of what Jesus offers us, to be people that welcome, who are sensitive to the pain of others, especially the most poor. It is to be understanding, helpful, and with a love without limits, like that of the Lord. An outgoing church means to be a community of faith and apostolate that is constantly searching, that doesn't remain quiet, and is always concerned with finding a solution for the great existential problems of the world.

At the WBC, we want to be a family that desires to give testimony to the gospel; to know Jesus better and better, and understand His motivations for loving the way He loved. We have wanted to communicate that same spirit to everyone, especially to our kids and young adults, who have had the opportunity to live Lent in the Eucharist celebrated by Padre Juan, the catechism, and pastoral activities. This is the reason we take a journey inside ourselves. In the depths of our lives, to go before Jesus in the things we do well, and those in which we fail. It is time of reconciliation with God, with oneself, with others, and to become more aware of how we treat the world we live in, and be at peace with Nature. With deep affection, Happy Easter!

Gustavo Calderón Schmidt, S.J.

Provincial

Young Childhood Nutrition: Illuminating the Future of Our Children

A young developing mind requires many stimuli and nutrition to function to its fullest – and at the WBC childcare center, our youngest members spend time surrounded by bright shapes, colors, books, music, and interaction. At any given moment, our children may be learning a new song, playing with a didactic toy, or munching on a nutritious snack. However, not every child entering the WBC has experienced this developmental support before their time here.

The brain of a child who has achieved the full potential of development can "shine" as a 200-watt bulb; while one that did not achieve it only reaches 25 watts, that is, almost 90% less. During the first three years of life, up to 80% of our brain is developed. The brain requires adequate nutrition and stimuli to form essential connections. Without these connections, brain development suffers irreversible consequences.

According to World Bank studies, well-nourished children, without growth delay, were more likely to emerge from poverty as adults, and obtained incomes up to 50% higher compared to those who had suffered delays in their development. If malnutrition is combined with lack of other care, such as education and hygiene, it can cause dramatic, lifelong damage.

In our childcare center, 4 out of 10 children enter with serious nutrition problems, which is why we have focused our efforts to create opportunities for growth and education among our members.

Together with our families, we have monthly health check-ups for each child, increased and improved food for children under 5 years old, and improved preparation practices of food in the kitchen to include more wholesome ingredients. Starting in the 2017-2018 school year, we've also provided weekly training for the mothers and fathers in nutrition and the care of their children led by our medical professionals.

In the first few weeks of the program, we had positive results with our little ones. Not only did the weight and mood of the children improve, but there also was demonstrable improvement of affection in their families. This allows us to see that small brains illuminate more and more, which in turn illuminates us and their future. We can't wait to see what our young ones achieve as they continue to grow spiritually, emotionally, physically, and mentally in our family of families!



Education at the WBC Continues to Innovate in the 21st Century

The history of the WBC stands out for its innovation: in 1968 it was one of the first works to open a school for working children, which had a library and innovative audiovisual material for its time. By 1970 the Center incorporated music and art classes. In 1973 it promoted technical education. By 1974 began to work with families and by 1975 the "Girls Program" started in a context where there was no response for gender equality.



What are the challenges to maintain CMT innovation in the 21st century?

In 2010, an investigation by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in Boston analyzed the brain activity of a 19-year-old university student 24 hours a day for seven days. The experiment yielded an unexpected result: the student's brain activity when attending a master class was the same as when he watched television; practically nothing. The scientists proved that the pedagogical model based on a student as a passive receiver does not work.

On the contrary, if a student is motivated to learn, he or she acquires naturally the skills they need to carry out what is proposed. If your creativity grows your knowledge expands.

This is the foundation of the new educational model applied at the WBC: Innovation XXI (Innovate + action in the 21st century)



Faithful to its history of innovation, the CMT maintains a dream: to offer a personalized education, in which each student is the protagonist of their learning, so that they acquire the skills that allow them to improve our society.

Innovation XXI is recognized as one of the best educational models worldwide, and is being implemented in the network of Jesuit schools in Ecuador.

We want our students to be above all better and more humane people who promote our values and are prepared for the challenges of this new century.



From Leaders to Family Accompaniment

Drawing what we like about our family, doing small plays about what Jesus thinks about our actions, reflecting on our work, and preparing family prayers are some of the activities we do every week so that Center parents are formed in our values.

This very important work is predicated upon ten fundamental values that enable self-management and improvement in the lives of the beneficiaries, our dear families: loyalty, personal formation, family, religion, education, economy, work, recreation, health and housing.

In this context, the WBC is not only a support program for working families, it is a foundation for human and spiritual development in which



all members of the family, including children, are called to participate. Being that the family is the essential component of the WBC, our accompaniment program works to strengthen the union, mutual support and solidarity within each family and the community of the WBC through weekly training sessions.

Formerly known as the 'Leaders' program (now known as 'Accompaniment Program'), this team comprised of member parents, staff, and Year-Long Volunteers, aims to accompany Center families on their spiritual, personal, academic, and professional formation journey. By asking the right questions, those who accompany can guide without passing judgement or giving families direct demands. They seek to assist families to use their inner divine voice to guide them on their journey and to eventually find auto sufficiency and trust within themselves.

As Padre Juan says, poverty is a spiritual problem, and the Accompaniment Program seeks to address the divinity within every CMT member that may be buried by years of trauma, distrust, negativity, and bad habits and create a place for new experiences filled with opportunity, trust, and prosperity through Christ's love.

