



COLEGIO ANEXO SAN FRANCISCO DE ASÍS

Bogotá, Colombia – Summer 2019

Dear CASFA Friends and Supporters,

Summer greetings to you from down in Bogotá! We are in that short window between ending one school year and beginning a new one, so we wanted to give you an update on some of the highlights of our last semester, as we gear up for another exciting year! (Naming you as our benefactors gives emphasis to the meaning of the name: persons who are good (*bene*) doers (*factores*)...and you are surely that for us! You faithfully help us to sustain this meaningful, rich-yet-poor project of ours that gives LIFE to so many—so *THANK YOU* for that!

Now here are a few details of what we have been up to, as of late:

Inter-Collegial Youth Gathering Organized by CASFA by S. Carolina Pardo and Magali Pinilla

The terms ‘memory’ and ‘oblivion’ sound like opposites or, for some, even a total contradiction. However, for the Uruguayan poet, Mario Benedetti, in his poem “Oblivion is Full of Memories,” he expresses how “forgetting” in the social realm is an intentional process, in which certain events and situations are *sent away* so they are not in the consciousness of a people.

Nevertheless, these forgotten events, which usually are sent to the “forgotten land” by the powers that be, are held in the collective memory and can be “dusted off” to be recovered; they can be brought back to remind us of who we are, and how to change the course of a society.

Reflecting on this poem, 17 sophomore students, with



the guidance of teachers and staff, decided, like the characters of Macondo in a Gabriel García Márquez novel, to “remember what had been forgotten.” In this process, the students got close to the painful armed and social conflict that our country, Colombia, has been involved in during the last six decades.

By asking themselves the questions: “Who are we?” and “How do we address the oppressive reality that society has forgotten?” the students explored different actions, ways and “languages” to answer these questions; deciding to use art as a way to explore and

share this reality with other youth in a gathering at our school.

The students conducted a critical analysis of the political situation of our country in the last decades, discussed specific events, roots and causes, and decided that the theme of a second “youth gathering” would be “Oblivion is Full of Memories.” A networking process was started, and fundraising events were planned to invite groups that have been exploring the political history of our country through photography, theater, music, weaving, performance and storytelling.

As a result, on April 12th, we hosted 250 participants, ranging from sophomores to seniors from area high schools. Thirteen different workshops were offered throughout the day, which also included a cultural event with live music, theater in memory of the victims of the armed conflict, and a professional play to close the event.

Needless to say, the smiles on the faces of our CASFA students, and their pride in being able to accomplish this big challenge, were proof that we had achieved our goals.

Through art and music, through beauty and hope, through fun and joy, the youth reflected on the causes of the armed conflict—which is rooted in the marginalization, exclusion and impoverishment of large sectors of the population—and defined more clearly their role in rebuilding our country.

CASFA Students on Mission by Fabiana Pulido (Senior student)

Six of us CASFA students recently participated in the Mission 2019 project organized by our sister school, Colegio Santa Francisca Romana. This outing is organized annually, aimed at touching hearts in some part of Colombia, by demonstrating, through service projects, the love that God has for us. This year, the Mission experience took place in Mongui, a small town in one of our most historic regions, the state of Boyaca. We spent five days in Mongui sharing our



services with people from different stages of life—children, youth and

elderly—with the intention of giving them hope. We wanted to leave a new spark of light in their hearts, so that, little by little, together they could create a great light. We wanted to remind them that *any* person can be of service, no matter their age or resources, as well as remind *ourselves*

that, in order to effect change in our country of Colombia, all that is truly needed are hearts open to serve.

Some of the things in which we were involved included: initiating a leadership youth group, painting murals, visiting the elderly and shut-ins in their homes, and playing with the children. We wanted to get to know an historic town but, most importantly, to create a bond with our sister school students, known as “Pachas,” [from the Colegio Santa Francisca Romana], and to impact our country through a very important value—that of service—which our school has been teaching and strengthening in us as



an essential part of becoming leaders.

To **serve with enthusiasm**: words perhaps difficult to define, yet, in this experience, we discovered that to serve is to show forth the deep, inexhaustible love of God, and enthusiasm is simply the presence of God in our lives.

“I AM Mission” is what one says upon returning from such an experience!

U.S. Trumpet Expert visits CASFA Orchestra

Our CASFA Orchestra Project got a new boost this past semester with the stimulating visit of Amy Dunker, DMA, a Professor of Music Theory and Composition at Clarke University in Dubuque, Iowa, and a specialist with the trumpet. Amy came to Colombia with the express desire to share her gifts and encourage talent among a broad variety of young students, both elementary and secondary. Among her school visits was a day spent at CASFA, interacting with the students in their music classes and offering a “trumpet concert.” Picture this: a roomful of 3rd graders with an



assortment of trumpets, which they had never touched before, all learning how to at least blow through the mouthpiece...and some even succeeding in achieving some pretty significant tones! An impressive outcome was that one student, Simon Rojas, became so enthused that he dedicated himself to practicing and experimenting...and he wound up playing a trumpet solo at the Spring Recital of the CASFA Orchestra!

One of the highlights of Amy’s stay was to welcome 13 CASFA students to a day of workshops at another local

school, the Colegio Vermont, known for its orchestra development. It was a challenging “hands on” experience for our students, providing them with added incentive to develop their own musical skills.

Her influence was obvious at Spring Recital time. Our Pre-Orchestra and Orchestra groups made significant improvement in the past year. This is,



of course, also due to the patient dedication of our resident “Music Man,” music teacher Luis Eduardo Gonzalez, who has worked wonders with our students. The Recital clearly demonstrated the students’ progress and featured some new instruments,

including Simon's contribution, as noted earlier, plus a lovely clarinet solo by 7th grade student, Zaira Suárez.

The audience was very enthusiastic in its response. Our hats are off to these budding young musicians!

End-of-Year Projects by Constanza Guzmán, Academic Coordinator

At the end of the school year, as in every year, pleasant and surprising projects await us, prepared by the students with the accompaniment of their teachers.

The presentation of these projects is actually a celebration, in which the students demonstrate what they have learned from their parents, as well as from their classmates, teachers, and sometimes from invited experts. But above all, they demonstrate to themselves how they can apply their knowledge to solve problems in their community; always seeking the common good, as framed by Franciscan principles.

An example of this was the project of seventh grade students in which, thanks to teamwork, both teachers and students articulated the areas of mathematics, science, English, social, Spanish, arts and ethics. They built scale models, with representations of the different biomes, with their flora and fauna. They also made social cartography of the neighborhood and represented their emotions on stained glass. Based on the analysis, they proposed alternatives to solve some of the problems that were characterized by these displays.



These end-of-year interdisciplinary projects are a marvelous way to not only tap the students' creativity, but to give ample proof of the integration of learning that has been taking place!



So as you can see, LIFE continues to abound in many forms here at the Colegio San Francisco de Asís—and it is due, in great part, to the marvelous, concretely sustainable assistance you offer us with your generous and continuous contributions! We are deeply grateful...and we hope that you can feel, through these pages, your own investment in this miraculous reality known as the CASFA Family.



May our tender God continue to bless *YOU*, even as you extend a blessing to others. The students, staff and families of CASFA offer you their profound *THANKS!*

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