



Working with the Schools

In March of this year Open Windows began a series of assessments in mathematics and reading comprehension to start measuring what our students were learning. Whether due to the two plus years of lost schooling during the pandemic or to some other factor, the results were disappointing. The math scores, for example, indicated that the students knew almost nothing about measurement, geometry, telling time or solving word problems.

We concluded that the children were not learning what is intended in the national curriculum, which defines the appropriate levels of achievement for each grade, and that much more attention needed to be paid to the competencies included in the curriculum, especially in reading and math. However, Open Windows itself could affect only a fraction of the children in the town; to be fully effective we would need the help of the schools.

We hired a consultant who had helped write the national curriculum for mathematics and developed a proposal for monthly workshops with local public primary school teachers. The school administration accepted the proposal (all costs are borne by Open Windows). Each workshop lasts five hours, split between math and reading, with the teachers divided into groups representing first to third grade and fourth to sixth. Each workshop focuses on specific competencies described in the national curriculum. The school district has made attendance mandatory and one district outside of San Miguel Dueñas has begun to send its teachers. Sessions will continue through November.



We intend to make this an ongoing part of our program, continuing to work with the teachers in Dueñas but also expanding to any nearby districts interested in enhancing the knowledge and skills of their teachers, and ultimately the knowledge and skills of their children and youth. While we do not yet know how quickly we might see positive results in the students' abilities in math and reading, we are committed both to continuing the workshops and to ongoing assessments of the students' knowledge and skills. The results of those assessments will help guide both the direction of the workshops and of the work of Open Windows' own teachers.

Después de las evaluaciones del conocimiento de matemáticas y lectura entre nuestros estudiantes en marzo, concluimos que hay que aumentar el énfasis en las competencias del currículo nacional. Ahora les proporcionamos talleres mensuales a todos los maestros de primaria en San Miguel Dueñas. Con la ayuda de una consultora que trabajó en el currículo nacional de matemáticas, los maestros aprenden nuevos conocimientos y nuevas habilidades.

Volunteer Dentists Bringing Smiles



The last week of June saw the return of Dr. Odette and her team of volunteer dentists and interns, some from Guatemala and some from the US. While this was the first visit to Guatemala for some of the interns, Dr. Odette has worked with Open Windows for over 11 years.

The volunteers were able to examine 127 patients, including two adults, providing 409 fillings, 74 extractions and 42 crowns. One of the interns, making her first trip outside the US, said she was struck by the cultural differences (the children were much better behaved than children coming to the dentist in the States) but a

bit disheartened by the need to triage, i.e., to decide which cases to treat when there was simply not enough time to take care of all of them.

One mother who brought her daughter to have one molar pulled and another filled expressed her appreciation for the work the volunteers were doing. She was especially happy to see that all children in the community had the opportunity to receive dental care, whether they normally come to the learning center or not.



Dr. Odette has long emphasized the importance of oral health for total physical health, and she said that new evidence exists to support her view. During her visit she told Open Windows, *“If you have gum disease, you can get heart disease. If you have gum disease and you’re pregnant, you’re going to have a low-birth-weight baby. The connection is becoming clearer, scientifically. There’s the evidence, but people are still not educated enough, anywhere, about the connection between dental health and overall health.”* Her hope is that step-by-step people will learn about the benefits of oral health and the means to achieve it.

Durante la última semana de junio, la Dra. Odette y su equipo de dentistas y practicantes trataron a 127 pacientes en Ventanas Abiertas. Los voluntarios, que vinieron de Guatemala y EE.UU., hicieron 409 sellos, 74 extracciones y 42 coronas. La Dra. Odette espera que en el futuro sea posible enfocar más en prevención que en tratamiento.

Upcoming Events	
Dates	What’s Happening
October 16	Final Competency Tests in Reading and Math
October 16 - 20	Light Up Guatemala – DWC Installs Eco-stoves
October 31	Meeting with Parents of Scholarship Applicants
Nov. 2 – Dec. 13	Reinforcement Classes
Feb. 19 – 23, 2024	Balmoral High School Volunteers



Measuring Progress

As our regular readers know, only about half of Guatemalan children continue their educations beyond primary school. In the previous newsletter we also showed some of the difference an education beyond the primary years makes, and an important part of our mission is to increase the proportion of students who move beyond sixth grade. Unfortunately, we do not have either good statistics on how San Miguel Dueñas compares to the rest of the country or reliable information on why students choose to stop their schooling early. So, we decided to find out.

In May we launched two survey efforts. One is aimed at former students of Open Windows, whether of the after-school program or the scholarship program. The purpose is to find out where those youth are now in terms of education, job status and family situation.

The other survey is aimed at all youth in Dueñas 14 to 20 years of age. Here, we want information about the level of schooling those youth have achieved, whether they are continuing with their educations and, if not, why not. The combination of the two surveys should provide us with a way to begin comparing the results our students achieve with those of the rest of the population, ultimately helping us to improve our services.

Para empezar a medir nuestro impacto, en mayo Ventanas Abiertas lanzó dos encuestas. Una apunta a los jóvenes que recibieron servicios de Ventanas Abiertas en el pasado. La otra busca respuestas de todos los jóvenes entre 14 y 20 años en San Miguel Dueñas. Queremos averiguar cómo los resultados educacionales de nuestros estudiantes se distinguen de los del poblado entero para asegurarnos que proporcionamos los servicios más efectivos posibles.



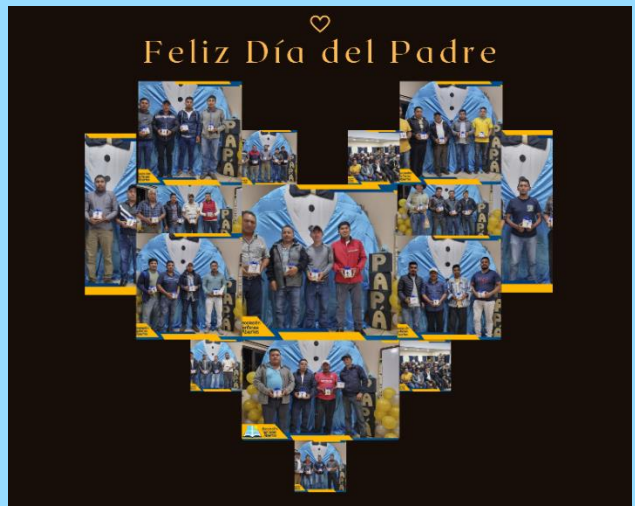
Celebrating Mothers and Fathers

Two of the many casualties of the pandemic were our celebrations of our students' parents. For three years we were unable to hold our parties for Mother's Day and Father's Day, so this year we compensated with extra efforts and pageantry. In May we held two sessions for the mothers, one in the afternoon and one in the evening, because more mothers were attending than we could accommodate at one time. In total 130 mothers attended. In June the dads filled our largest room when we hosted more than 70.



The events represent both an opportunity to celebrate the contributions the parents make to their children and to encourage them to continue supporting their children's education. That they already understand the importance of education is evidenced by the fact that these parents are sending their children not only to school but also to Open Windows to get as much help as they can.

Every attendee left with a bag of gifts and those who won the competitions we devised to generate embarrassment and laughter went home with extra prizes. After a snack and a slide show, the participants posed in groups for photographs commemorating our honoring of them and their role in educating the next generation of Guatemalans.



Después de tres años en los que no pudimos celebrar el día de la madre y del padre, este año compensamos con pompa, regalos y fotos de cada uno. Hubo dos reuniones de las madres porque no tenemos el espacio suficiente para las 130 que asistieron. Los 70 padres llenaron nuestro salón más grande. Las reuniones incluyeron discusiones para animar a los padres a apoyar la educación de sus niños, concursos que los hicieron disfrutar a los padres y causar mucha risa.

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