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“If you want to help for a day, give them rice.
If you want to help for a few years, give them a tree.
If you want to help for a lifetime, give them an education.”

September 2006

The Gift for a Lifetime Lasts for Generations

Felipe Quiroz Gonzalez: You have read his story in my newsletters over the twenty-six years that I have been working with the Tijuana dump children. You may have also seen him interviewed on the news or read about him in the newspaper.

Professor Felipe, as he is known by everyone today, was one of my students in the 1980s. His education enabled him to teach English for the Mexican Department of Social Services and in a private school in downtown Tijuana. For the past sixteen years, he has been working with Responsibility, teaching preschool and computer literacy.

When most children are starting kindergarten, Felipe started working as a scavenger in the municipal dump searching for whatever was worth a peso or edible for the family dinner.

Around the age of nine he enrolled in elementary school in the mornings, scavenged in the afternoons, and attended my English classes and field trips in the evenings and weekends.

My mission in providing education for the “World’s Most Destitute” as Mother Teresa described them is to give them a choice. They can choose to be scavengers or pursue an education to be anything else.

Felipe chose to be a teacher. And he chose to teach his own, the dump children.

He also learned the importance of education. His parents never attended school, and Felipe started late. But his two children started at the age of three attending Responsibility’s preschool where he was his daughter’s teacher. And they both studied computer literacy at our school.

For elementary and junior high school, Felipe enrolled his children in a schools eight miles from their home because those schools’ teachers have excellent reputations. Since there is no public school bus system in Mexico, Felipe drove his children to and from school commuting a half hour each way through city traffic.

Choosing the best schools for his children paid off. Vanessa, Felipe’s daughter, has academically placed first or second in her grade level for the past seven years. Because she placed number one in her grade in her first year of junior high school, her principal requested that she be the welcoming guest speaker to the new students entering this year. (Her father tells me she was the best speaker at the event.)

When Felipe was sixteen, he spent his summers working with his mother scavenging the city dump. One generation later, Felipe’s son, Cristian, is now sixteen. Like his Dad a generation ago working with his parent when he was a teenager, Cristian worked this summer with his father. But not picking garbage. He worked in his father’s school teaching computer literacy to the elementary school students. WHAT A DIFFERENCE AN EDUCATION MAKES.

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When Felipe was a teenager he worked in the dump after school. Cristian, his son, is now a teenager. After school he works as a computer instructor having learned computers at our school.

If you would like to give a child the gift that s/he will pass on to his/her children, and them to their children...,please complete and return the form below. Please include your first payment. I will send monthly envelopes to those who will need them.

Or make your payments automatically online: Go to our website: Responsibilityonline.org Click Donate; click general.

Adopt a Child for School Year 2006-07

Your child's name _____

(I will fill this in and return this to you with a photo of your child within two weeks.

Your name: _____

Address: _____

Email address: _____

Each month I will pay for my child's school education for (circle one):

two days \$14 three days \$21 four days \$28 one week \$35

two weeks \$70 three weeks \$105 four weeks \$140 other _____

_____ *A monthly donation of \$_____ to the children's school to cover the extra costs*

_____ *One donation to the school to cover the extra costs: \$_____*

_____ *One payment to cover my child's education for a year: \$1,400*

Or, you can make your payments online. One I receive notice of your payment, I will send you a photo of your adopted child.