



Centro de Rehabilitación, Educación, Capacitación, Estudios y Recursos, Inc.



December 2014

Letter from the Director, Elaine Keane:

Thanks to a group from Grand Valley State University (GVSU), what could be a slow time of year at CRECER is full of activity. They were joined by Naomi Heinz from Rush University. This is the second year that GVSU has sent a group to work with CRECER in November. These students put this issue of the newsletter together to highlight their activities. I always try to find something new for groups to do, in terms of both work and play. This week was incredibly full. I am pleased to have added another nursing home to the list of organizations to which CRECER provides services. Additionally, we have strengthened our connections with the Universidad Tecnica del Norte. (UTN) The director of the Psychology department invited the group to meet with students in the psychology program to explain briefly the role of occupational therapy. It turned into a wonderful exchange of ideas that will expand in the future. A gift from the International Federation of Societies for Hand Therapy opened the doors to work with the Physical Therapy Department. I will be working with Susy Albuja, Program Manager to nurture these new relationships and make the most of the opportunities to serve the community of Ibarra. As this year is winding down CRECER is planning for 2015 and 2016. *(continues on p. 2)*



Susy Albuja & Elaine Keane



Susy Albuja, Jeanine Beasley,
Dianna Lunsford & Elaine Keane



"The experience that I had as a student occupational therapist in Ecuador is something that I will carry with me throughout my entire career."
-Allie Karagozian,
GVSU



"The smallest adaptation, such as a built-up grip on a pencil or paintbrush increased so many individuals self-confidence during activities. I believe they surprised themselves because they did not realize they were still capable of participating in the things they once enjoyed."
- Brittney Gibson,
GVSU

Letter from the Director (cont.) The first student arrives from **2** Idaho State University on January 12th and the Center will open for the new year on January 14th. In March, we will once again welcome students from Lenoir-Rhyne University. Allegany College of Maryland continues its tradition of sending students to complete their 8 week Fieldwork rotations. Two students will come in March and one in May. The Community College of Baltimore County will once again send a student for 8 weeks. A group from Saginaw State University in Michigan will be coming for the first time in May. Chatham University has already selected 6 occupational therapy and 6 physical therapy students to make the trip next August. There are several other universities who have students interested in working with CRECER in 2015 and 2016 that are not yet confirmed. You will read about all the activities in future newsletters. Joyce Salls, the director of the Chatham Occupational Therapy Program and CRECER board member, will be spending her sabbatical studying the impact of the support group on the mothers who attend meetings. Joyce will be in Ibarra during February doing interviews. There will be other occupational therapists visiting CRECER and helping treat patients and supervise students. CRECER continues to grow!!!



Photo: Allie Karagozian



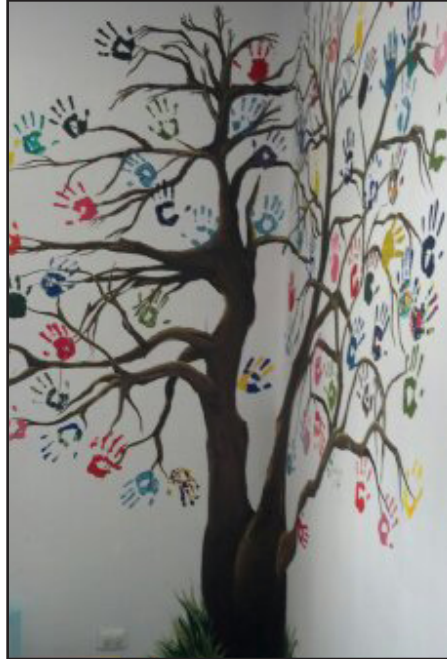
"I really enjoyed my experience and learned so much about myself and the people we served throughout this entire trip. I am so thankful to have been able to take part in this wonderful opportunity."
- Sam VanDriel, GVSU

A Brief History of CRECER

Centro de Rehabilitacion, Educacion, Capacitacion, Estudios, y Recursos (CRECER) is a volunteer organization with the mission to promote increased access to health care services in underserved regions through education, treatment and research. CRECER treats clients in an outpatient center, orphanage, adult daycare facility, and nursing homes. The word "CRECER" means "to grow" in Spanish.

Elaine Keane OTR/L is director and co-founder of this wonderful organization. Elaine first came to Ecuador in August of 2001 as part of a group of therapists working with a group of 20 occupational therapy students from Creighton University. Returning home to the USA, Elaine and her husband Richard Maslow decided to host an exchange student from Ecuador through AFS Intercultural Programs. That foreign exchange student was the son of Susana Albuja (Susy) the future Program Director and co-founder of CRECER. Little did Elaine know that taking this student into her home would be the start of a new direction in her life. Elaine contacted Creighton University about joining another group of students to Ecuador the following year. Elaine was invited to stay at Susy's home during that time and the friendship began. Over a number of years as Elaine's Spanish improved and their friendship grew, the idea of

serving Susy's hometown of Ibarra was explored. What started as Elaine doing informal volunteer work grew into the formation of CRECER. In 2010 CRECER was incorporated. A non-profit status was awarded in 2011. In 2011 and 2012, Elaine and Susie took their first OTA students from the Allegheny College of Maryland for a Level II experience. A group of OTR students arrived for a service trip from Chatham in 2012.



Up to this point CRECER did not have a place to call their own and provided services to existing organizations. Space for CRECER became available through a donation from the Technical University-North and is CRECER's current location. A group of students from Lenoir-Rhyne University designed the space and with a little elbow grease the clinic opened in March of 2013. That year, OTR Level I

students arrived from Chatham in July and Grand Valley State University in November. This schedule was repeated in 2014. The first masters level occupational therapy students to complete level II fieldwork at CRECER happened in 2014. CRECER continues to grow with the number of clients that it serves, the number of students it trains, and the number of faculty involved. The future looks bright for CRECER and is a life changing experience for all.



"Studying abroad in Ecuador is one of the best opportunities I have ever had, truly eye opening."
- Tiffany Shedlock, GVSU



"We already miss those sweet girls at the orphanage so much!"
- Kayleigh Oppenhuizen, GVSU



"Ecuador has opened my eyes to a cultural perspective I would have never dreamed of experiencing. I can now apply what I have learned from the people and community in Ecuador to my everyday practice as an occupational therapist."

- Amber Mistopoulos, GVSU

Letter from Program Manager, Susy Albuja:

Every time students come from different universities to CRECER, to Ecuador, and this time from Grand Valley State University in Michigan, there are many stories to tell, stories of connection between all for the good functioning of our work. The simplicity, the work and the enthusiasm made the work in new sites flow better. New sites such as Mother Teresa of Marrillac Nursing Home, and students of General the Psychology Department at the Universidad Tecnica del Norte, provided different experiences for both groups to achieve the best to be able to serve.

CRECER & La Universidad Tecnica del Norte Lisa Ellis

The group at CRECER also had the opportunity to visit the Universidad Tecnica del Norte (UTN) in Ibarra to meet with students of the psychology department. Introductions included a very open welcome by the UTN, an overview of CRECER's mission by Elaine Keane, and a general definition of occupational therapy in the United States by Lisa Ellis, one of the OT students from GVSU.

Following introductions, two cases of children with cerebral palsy were proposed by the psychology students with the goal of the OT students and professors providing helpful advice. It was fascinating to learn that the psychology students

work with individuals who would more likely be on an OT caseload in the United States. Suggestions for the cases included: aiding fine motor with adaptive equipment (including a universal cuff), environmental adaptation, and meeting each patient at his or her functional level.

This was a valuable experience for the OT students

because it challenged their ability to communicate across language, cultural, and disciplinary barriers. It was also an exciting experience for both UTN and CRECER as it was hopefully the beginning of collaborative relationship that will have the power to positively effect the lives of many more individuals in Ibarra.



Grand Valley State University

Amber Mistopoulos

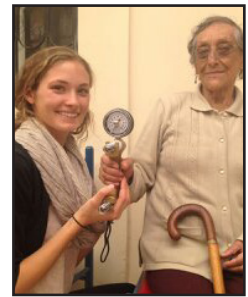


Students and professors from Grand Valley State University's Occupational Therapy Masters programs traveled together to Ecuador in mid November of 2014. This was the second year that GVSU has brought occupational therapy students to Ibarra, and specifically, CRECER, to complete a Level I fieldwork rotation.

The eight students and two professors traveled to Ibarra, Ecuador, where they created occupational therapy interventions for CRECER, two nursing homes, FUNHI Day Center, and an orphanage. Each student and professor came together to plan activities and work side by side with each other and the people from Ecuador.

This was an invaluable experience for both the students and professors from GVSU because it enabled real world learning that far surpasses the exposure of the classroom setting. It also afforded lessons on cultural sensitivity for both professional and personal realms.

The members of the GVSU occupational therapy program are grateful to CRECER for offering such a wonderful opportunity to their students for these reasons. Even one week's worth of implementing treatment in Ibarra has changed the perspectives of each student, enabling them to be more well-rounded therapy students and be inspired to effect greater change in the future.



"I had a great time with the Dynamometer Competition at one of the nursing homes. It was clear that the people with the highest cognitive status were also those with better grip strength!"
-Naomi Heniz,
Rush University

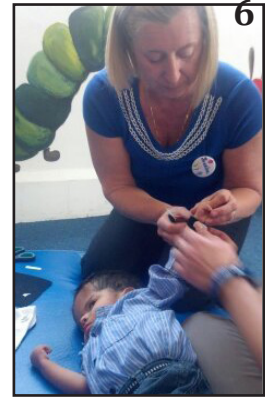


"This trip taught me about the importance and challenges of communication, and I will use what I learned in both my personal and professional life. ¡Sí, se puede!"
- Theresa Palmer,
GVSU

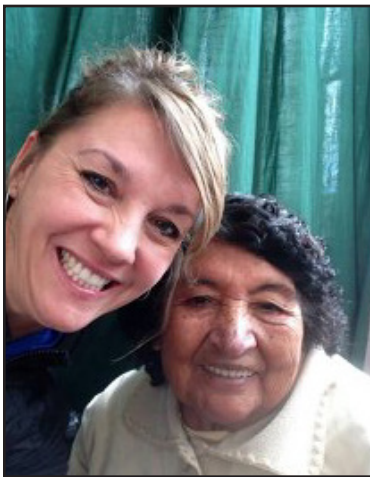
CRECER: Outpatient Treatment

Tiffany Shedlock

Having the opportunity to complete a level I fieldwork at CRECER was an extremely unique learning experience that would be difficult to beat at a traditional level I fieldwork sight. While there is supervision from the professors and Elaine, it is the students who have the opportunity to plan and implement treatment with the clients. This enabled the students to use their critical thinking skills to determine when interventions were going well or when they needed to be adjusted. Each student was able to work one on one with a client at CRECER. Some diagnoses included cerebral palsy, autism, and Down syndrome.



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Asilo Madre Teresa de Marillac

Brittney Gibson

This was CRECER's first time providing occupational therapy at this nursing home. We provided a variety of group activities, adaptations, and environmental modifications throughout the week. We helped approximately 15-20 residents each day participate in exercise classes, balloon volleyball, and several craft activities. We established a trusting relationship with the nurse aids, and were able to educate them on environmental modifications to prevent falls. Both the residents and staff at this nursing home were so welcoming, and they consistently expressed gratitude towards us throughout the week.





"I am so grateful for this experience because of the wide variety of individuals we were able to meet and work with. It was an enjoyable challenge to accurately assess the occupational lives of these individuals, especially given the multiple barriers we faced. The landscaping is absolutely stunning and the Ecuadorian people have hearts bigger than the mountains!" - Lisa Ellis, GVSU

FUNHI

Allie Karagozian

Working at FUNHI was an incredible experience. Collectively, we learned a lot about occupational therapy and the potential within each client to reach high levels of various skills and abilities. My favorite part about FUNHI was getting to know the different personalities of the clients there, and helping them succeed at each activity in their own ways. FUNHI is an excellent environment with high potential for growth and learning opportunities amongst the clients each day. It was a privilege to be a part of this positive environment during our time in Ecuador.



FUNHI Case Example: Angeles

Theresa Palmer



Angeles is a young adult who spends her weekday mornings at FUNHI alongside five other participants. Angeles began attending FUNHI within the last year, and may still be settling into the routine and into relationships with the other participants and workers. However, Angeles does respond positively to instructions and discussion from FUNHI's workers. Angeles has some behavioral concerns that vary from day to day, but generally she participates in all manner of activities from fine motor, to scavenger hunt to gross motor. One strength of Angeles' is her helpfulness; she assists her female peers in tasks when they need physical help. With consistency, positive reinforcement, trust and time it's clear that Angeles has the potential to thrive in a setting like FUNHI. One recommendation for FUNHI staff is to keep an ABC log: Antecedent, Behavior, Consequence to chart the frequency, cause and specific behaviors over time for Angeles.

Asilo de Ancianos “Leon Ruales”

Sam VanDriel

It was interesting to see how the two nursing homes that we visited differed from each other, as well as how they differed from skilled nursing facilities in the United States. To ensure cultural relevance, we needed to modify treatment techniques from the way we might traditionally facilitate them in the United States. Following some slight adjustments in practice to make the activities appropriate for the clients, we were able to employ a great variety of therapeutic OT techniques at the facility. These included meaningful leisure activities and several different ADLs such as bathing, dressing, and feeding. The individuals had such pleasant dispositions and appeared to be so grateful to be engaged while participating in the activities with us.



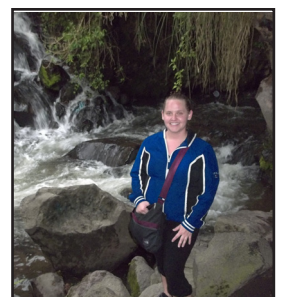
The Orphanage

Kayleigh Oppenhuizen

Grand Valley occupational therapy students also visited an all girl's orphanage in Ibarra during the evenings. The girls had fun playing games, making crafts, and singing songs. One game that inspired bonding was the friendship-web, where each person passed along a string and named a compliment for another person in the group. The final product was a web demonstrating the connection between and amongst each girl in the group. It was incredible to witness the social growth that occurred during our time at the orphanage.



Cultural Immersion



Dynamometer Donations from IFSHT

Jeanine Beasley and Dianna Lunsford

In addition to taking eight students to Ecuador, the GVSU faculty who are also members of the International Federation of Societies for Hand Therapy (IFSHT) Jeanine Beasley and Dianna Lunsford traveled with four donated Dynamometers. The dynamometers were well received by the facilities as was the training provided by Jeanine and Dianna in regards to proper use and application. Two of the dynamometers were given to separate rehabilitation departments one in Ibarra at St. Louis de Marillac and one run by the Red Cross in Otavalo. The remaining two were enthusiastically welcomed by the Physical Therapy Department at the Technical University North in Ibarra. This University previously did not have dynamometers in their program. The University wasted no time and put the dynamometers to use for an existing research project within 24 hours of their receipt. They noted that many of the administrators have carpal tunnel syndrome at the University and did a start of day/end of day pre-test/post test pilot study. In the future it will be wonderful to see how their class of 200 Physical Therapy students learn and apply the use of a dynamometer assessment in their education, research, and future careers. Thank you to IFSHT for this wonderful donation!



Donation at Asilo Madre Teresa de Marillac



Donation at the Red Cross in Otavalo



Donation at UTN

¡Gracias a todos!

Thank you to everyone who has helped CRECER
make a difference in Ibarra, Ecuador.