



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



Letter from the director

Elaine Keane MS, OTR/L

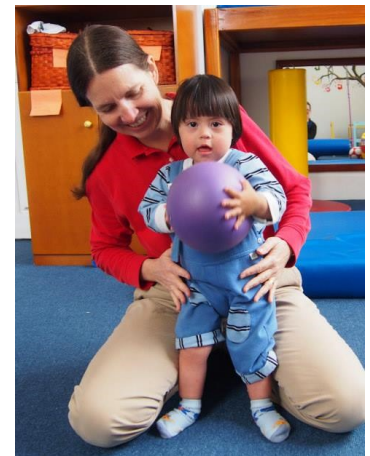
As usual the year for CRECER didn't really start on January 1st but on March 5th. I arrived in Ecuador and made sure everything was in place for the arrival of the Lenoir-Rhyne University group.

Dr. Sue Friguglietti headed the team going to the nursing home. Dr. Toni Oakes worked with me in the outpatient center. The group was made up of first year and second year students. Two of the second year students had come last year and had worked extensively at FUNHI. We made use of their leadership skills and experience to keep things going there.

Coinciding with the arrival of the group from Lenoir-Rhyne University, CRECER welcomed Melissa Mathews from the Community College of Baltimore County. Melissa is a OTA student who came to complete her level two fieldwork assignment. She will be working in Ibarra for 8 weeks. (See her reflections on page 7.)

It has been a joy to continue working with many of the children we saw last year.

Many have made obvious gains, others not as much. It was a joy to see that many of them recognized me and were ready to start back where we left off. Every week new clients come into the CRECER outpatient center. It still is overwhelmingly children who are being brought for services. It is humbling to receive the gratitude of the parents of these special children.



Inside this issue:

Reflections from Susy Albuja, Program Manager in Ecuador	2
Centro de Rehabilitation	2
Benefits of International Fieldwork	3
FUNHI	4
Asilo Leon Ruales	5-6
Melissa Matthew CCBC	7



The word spread quickly in the community that the CRECER clinic was reopening. We quickly had a full schedule planned for the students.

The group came with lots of enthusiasm and ideas. In order to make the best use of the skills of the professors as well as the students each morning we split the group into three groups.

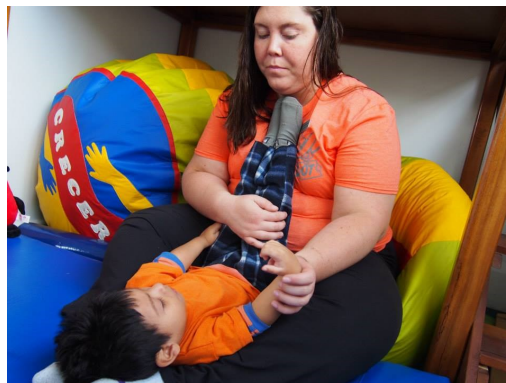


Reflections from Susy Albuja Program Manager

Translated by Elaine Keane

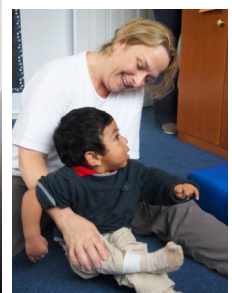
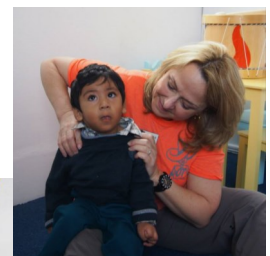
I want to give a testimony of my own experiences within CRECER. The work that I do is logically intertwined with the professional work of Elaine Keane.

I have had extraordinary experiences with the children, mothers, students and professors who have come to collaborate on this common service. Among these, I express the opinion of all mothers of children receiving Occupational Therapy from CRECER. They are always very grateful for the service they receive, by the personal attention we provide, by opening the doors with care, with kindness and professionalism. They give thanks so sincere and simple at the same time. "Dios les pague" (God will pay you,) "Gracias" (Thank you,) and "en sus hijos hallaran la recompensa" (in your children you shall find the reward.) Words and phrases that reach the deepest part of the heart, which demonstrate that our service is not in vain. This motivates us to move forward with the commitment we made at the outset and continue working with the same affection and goodwill we have had since the beginning.



Working at the pediatric clinic this week allowed me to see a vast amount of disabilities and diagnoses that I haven't encountered in the United States. Being able to work one-on-one with some of these children allowed me to improve my problem solving skills and to learn how to continually modify the situation in order to provide the best therapy session possible for the child. It also helped me to recall the different occupational therapy frameworks and to critically evaluate which one I thought would be the best way to approach the different situations. Working one-on-one with the child for my case study also taught me that no matter what you may plan out for a treatment session you need about 5 or even 10 extra activities planned in case the child has a short attention span. Therefore, working in this setting taught me how to "go with the flow" and that it is okay if a treatment session doesn't go exactly as you had planned.

Monica Eckard



Benefits of International Fieldwork



As I reflect on my 12 day experience In Ecuador, not only did I grow as a person and a future occupational therapy practitioner, I became a leader. CRECER provides students with the opportunity to work in areas of physical disabilities, pediatrics, geriatrics, and mental health all within a city block. The organization also allows for occupational therapy students to expose creativity skills where resources are limited which in turn will instill a stronger, more well rounded occupational therapy practitioner, in them no matter which country they decide to work in. Providing occupational therapy services in a third world country, with limited resources, truly allowed for multiple learning opportunities to grow as a leader, experience the culture, and give to a population who otherwise would not receive therapy services. Katie Henriques



My experience working in clinics in Ibarra, Ecuador pushed me out of my comfort zone and required me to unlock hidden traits of my personality. Through the many cultural immersion activities, I found out that I could face my fears, rely on fellow classmates, and communicate using another language. Once in the clinics, I found myself volunteering to lead activities, developing and adapting activities, and engaging with each individual. When I was working with clients I found that my previous worries about making mistakes and making a fool of myself no longer mattered. I relied on my knowledge from previous classes and made successful decisions in treating and interacting with patients. The opportunities I was given were unlike any that I would have had in the United States. Through working at the multiple sites I learned the importance of flexibility, gained an appreciation of another culture, and built up my confidence. The experiences gained through my service trip to Ecuador have changed me for the better. Knowing that I can successfully make decisions when it comes to treating patients will allow me to thrive in both the classroom and in my future fieldworks. My new found appreciation of other cultures will allow me to better understand the needs of my future patients and help me be an advocate on their behalf. I am immensely thankful for the experiences I had in Ecuador and look forward to more opportunities to service in foreign countries.

Erin Plumley



FUNHI

STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Throughout the week we each worked at Madres Unidas and we all had to work together in order to plan out the order of events for each day. We worked together to create tasks that worked on range of motion, fine motor skills, and overall body movement. Although, we had the order of the events planned out for each day sometimes things didn't always go as planned or the activities didn't take as long as we thought; therefore, we still had to learn to be quick thinkers and develop meaningful activities at the spur of the moment. Working at Madres Unidas taught me about being a leader and taking initiative, whether it was to get everyone's attention to start the day or to discuss with my fellow classmates about how an activity didn't seem to be going very well, so maybe we should switch over to something new. This experience also taught me to have faith in my cohort and to listen to others when they had ideas about the best way to approach a situation or when they contributed an idea about an activity we could try.

Monica Eckard



This trip taught me a lot about myself, helped me to build upon the good qualities of being a leader.

Monica Eckard

Asilo Leon Ruales

STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Our first day at the nursing home we had to help bathe the patients. It was very different from anything I had ever helped with at a Skilled Nursing Facility in the U.S. If it would

had been last year I would have been very nervous to help out. This year I saw that I had evolved and I jumped right in. No, it was not the most pleasant experience, but it was humbling. Putting aside my needs and wants in order to help

these women opened my eyes to truly what an occupational therapist is. No matter the person, the diagnosis, the condition, the age, the size or the smell everyone needs to be taken care of. The volunteers and workers at the nursing home encouraged us to rapidly move the women through the shower and dressing process. However, as an OT I know the importance of independence and letting someone do things for themselves as long as they are able to and safe. It may have taken longer but I was amazed at the ability of these elderly women. Most of them could dress themselves when

given the opportunity. On Wednesday another student and I went back to the nursing home to try new activities with the patients. We came up with a Yoga stretching routine. As my leadership skills develop I have learned that not everything will go as planned and it will be ok. My idea of the stretching routine was not how it turned out. The patients did not understand the importance of going slow and breathing in after each exercise. However, they were having a great time and that is what truly matters. -

Rachel Chapman





They have one washing machine for 58 residents, almost everything is hand washed.



The patients all have jobs... this lady was hanging laundry



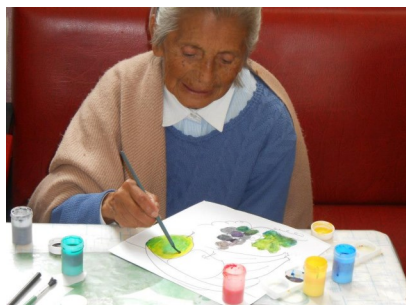
My time in Ecuador has taught me that everything is not "by the book," that change is the only thing that stays the same, and thinking on my feet is a great way to learn. I feel prepared to jump into new situations even when I am nervous of the outcome.

Rachel Chapman

STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Due to the fact that I spoke more Spanish than others in my group, I became the designated interpreter. This allowed for the opportunity to jump into action, explain the rules or protocol to the English speaking students, and communicate with the Spanish speaking employees as well as clients. For example, when working in the home for older adults, an explanation of the bathing/hygiene routine was provided in Spanish by the employees and I was to explain it to the students in order to implement the routine with the residents.

Katie Henriques



Asilo
Leon Ruales

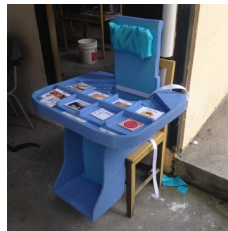
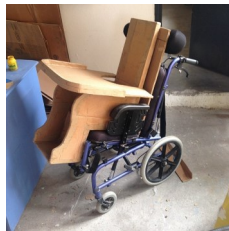




Melissa Matthew

Community College of Baltimore County

Coming to Ecuador has been long in the making for me, not only as a student, but for me as a person. To begin with, I was born and raised by two parents who lived in Ecuador during the 1960s as Peace Corps volunteers. They met during college and when my father was unable to fight in Vietnam, he was given the option of working for the Peace Corps. He moved to Ecuador, wrote my mom a letter asking her to marry him and she flew to Quito and they were married in Ambato in 1968. Since I was a child I was raised on their stories of living in Ecuador, of working with the indigenous people and the poor. I have always dreamed of coming to this country and now I am here.



During the second week, I went to work with two OTs making positioning devices out of cardboard. I was taught so I could teach at a course for therapists, parents and kids. It was very interesting and exciting to be able to make such helpful equipment with common things such as cardboard and wooden nails.



Being here is a dream come true. Not only am I following my passion of Occupational Therapy, but I am in the country my parents were married in, the country where the lessons taught to my parents have been passed on to me.



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

Phone USA 301-722-5420
Phone Ibarra, Ecuador 062-605-831
Internet phone 301-202-8357
CRECER.Ecuador@gmail.com

<http://crecerecuador.wix.com/crecer>

What does our logo represent?

The underlying yin-yang sign represents two different forces coming together. These forces can be seen as the people from the US and Ecuador who are working together to build this project. They are represented not as one force greater than the other but as equals and complementary to each other. The hands represent the human element of people reaching out to each other. The colors include the red, white and blue of the US flag and the yellow, blue and red of the Ecuadorian flag. The flag of the city of Ibarra is also red and white. CRECER, the acronym for Centro de Rehabilitación, Educación, Capacitación, Estudios y Recursos, is in the center of the design. The word "crecer" means "to grow" in Spanish.