



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



CRECER outpatient center has provided over 300 occupational treatment sessions

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The CRECER outpatient center began seeing clients on March 18th. Patients walk in and ask for appointments, frequently being seen the same day. The hours of operation are Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 8:30-12:30 and Monday from 2:30 to 5. We experimented with the idea of having a sheltered workshop on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons, but it was canceled after a month for lack of participation. Wednesday afternoon hours were added in June. Since March 18th, more than 50 clients have been evaluated by an occupational

therapist without charge. Diagnoses have included Traumatic Brain Injuries resulting from vehicle accidents and falls, Cerebral Palsy resulting from complications at birth, Down's Syndrome, other Intellectual disabilities, Autism, and William's syndrome. CRECER has provided over 300 treatment sessions. Treatment sessions range from 30 minutes to 2 hours. As seen in the pictures, family members frequently participate in the treatment sessions.



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Our Wonderful Volunteers

CRECER has been fortunate to have had a number of wonderful volunteers come in the door since our opening in March.



Silvia Cruz

Silvia came to CRECER initially to bring her brother for treatment post cerebrovascular hemorrhage. While Elaine was evaluating her brother Susy talked to her. During the course of the conversation she asked if she could volunteer to help at the Center. It was a wonderful surprise for Susy and Elaine who had both been concerned about how Elaine would manage the reception area while treating patients. Susy was particularly worried about leaving Elaine alone in the Center when she returned to Quito. Silvia is a wonderful addition to CRECER. Although her brother is no longer a patient she comes every day that the center is open to serve as a receptionist. Silvia has a history of volunteerism and has been a tremendous help to us. She not only greets patients and their families when they arrive, but when Elaine has many patients she steps in and helps in the treatment area.

Alana Murphy

Alana came to Ibarra to volunteer with Kit and Robert Frank who developed Protesis Para La Vida. When she learned about the opportunity to help with CRECER she began working on Mondays during April and early May. She is an occupational therapist with about a year

and a half of work experience in a variety of settings. Her advanced coursework in treatment methods specific to working with children were particularly useful at CRECER. She was a great help in the first month the center was open. Alana had the following to say about her time working with CRECER:

I am so thrilled I had the opportunity to volunteer my time at CRECER. As a relatively new graduate, (Class of 2011) I had spent over a year working in outpatient pediatrics in a large hospital working daily to synthesize all my conceptual learning into clinical practice as well as learn a ton of new clinical skills to best serve my population. It was overwhelming, as I expected my first job to be. It was an incredible opportunity to then make the shift to being a volunteer occupational therapist at CRECER. There, I was humbled to serve a variety of patients in a language I could barely speak, in a culture that was entirely new to me, but where what I did have to offer was valued and appreciated. I worked primarily with pediatric patients with developmental and neurological disabilities ranging from moderate to severe ranges.

It was an incredible learning opportunity for me to navigate through cultural differences and provide best practice. I was surprised to find that using the limited Spanish I had allowed me to be a more efficient communicator. It forced me to par down the concepts I was trying to teach the family members and allow them to feel like they were the expert on their own child, and that my role was really just to empower them to best support their child's development. It was a powerful shift and one that I feel will shape my future therapeutic skills set. I am fortunate that I got to serve CRECER and have an ambition to continue to be involved with

the organization and help in whatever ways I can in the future.



Lisa Bachmayer

The week after Alana left, Elaine Keane received an email from Lisa Bachmayer, an occupational therapist from Australia. After she graduated in 2010 she worked for two years in a hospital working with patients who had orthopedic and neurological problems. Now she is taking a year or so off work to travel and do volunteer work in South America. She worked for six weeks in La Paz, Bolivia, in a prosthetics clinic before making her way through Columbia to Ecuador. She worked with CRECER for a month. The timing was perfect as she was here when Elaine traveled to the US for a week. Since Lisa was able to see the clients we did not have to close the center during that week.

Lisa had the following to say about her time working with CRECER:

I arrived in Ibarra looking for some experience in my field of work,



Occupational Therapy. I never could have imagined finding such an incredible place like CRECER. I had

a fantastic month working here. Working with such an honest, caring, and knowledgeable person like Elaine was inspiring. She is a fantastic therapist who has created an incredible facility for the community.

I felt so welcomed and so privileged to have had this experience during my travels. Getting to work with and meet Sylvia and Susy, all the patients, the parents and other family

support, as well as getting to know Ibarra has been a time of my life that I will cherish and never forget. Thank you all for your patience and support.



CRECER received an invitation from the Vice President of the Republic of Ecuador and the National Council on Equality for the Disabled (CONADIS) to attend a workshop in Quito on the theme of inclusion. The workshop was intended to promote and strengthen the role of civic organizations for the benefit of people with disabilities. The workshop gave an opportunity to representatives from non-governmental organizations to meet with the Vice President and representatives from CONADIS. The meeting began with a representative from CONADIS speaking about how many people in Ecuador have disabilities, how many NGOs currently serve those people and where they are located. Approximately one-half of the 200 NGO's are based in Quito which is the nation's capital.

During the meeting the Vice President thanked all of the organizations for serving those who needed help long before the

government began to recognize the need. He recognized that this service is done with private funds and that each organization must search for collaborators independently. The Vice President, speaking for the Government, recognized that for the good of all people with disabilities, the organizations that serve them need more governmental support.



After the Vice President spoke he invited each organization representative to ask questions or present problems that they were facing. He asked what support is needed to conduct or expand the work of the organizations. All agreed that lack of government support is an obstacle. They especially noted that economic support is needed to reach more people. The organizations also asked to have continuous training and knowledge sharing among the NGOs. In addition to the oral comments, each organization was asked to fill out a survey.

The survey asked attendees to document the problems and obstacles faced by both organizations and the people they serve and to make suggestions for solutions which could be implemented with sufficient resources. The Vice President pledged to



oversee the collection of all the information and develop a report. He also pledged to back up the report with funding to help projects move forward.

It was satisfying to be able to attend this workshop and know that the Vice President of Ecuador is willing to help organizations that are serving people with disabilities.



Parent Support Group Meets



On Thursday June 13th CRECER hosted the first support group for parents of children with disabilities in Ibarra. This grew out of the observation that the mothers in the Center waiting room liked to share information. CRECER Director, Elaine Keane talked with a few of the mothers about the idea of starting a support group. From what the mothers said, no such groups exist in Ibarra. A date was set for the first meeting. Elaine Keane adapted some information about starting support groups that she found on the Internet to fit this group. She developed an agenda and brought snacks. On the day of the meeting, mothers started arriving 20 minutes before the start time of 4pm. The meeting started a few minutes past 4 and some mothers continued to arrive after we had started. Nine women came. Two had brothers rather than children with disabilities, but since there are no groups for families they were welcome to join the group. During the first hour the members of the group introduced themselves and talked briefly about their children. Several talked about the birth and when they found out they had a child with a disability. They talked about how they came to accept their child as their own and learned to see the individual child, not just the label of "disabled child".

They talked about how their families reacted - some very accepting, some rejecting the child. The meeting kept going on, they didn't seem to want to leave each other's company. The group got to hear some interesting stories. Napkins were passed to dry the tears. One mother even said through her tears that she had told herself she was not going to cry. Everyone supported each other and assured each other that crying was OK. They planned to meet again the next day to go to a place where one of the mothers takes her son for horseback riding. The father is going to share his knowledge of the therapeutic aspects. They all seemed to enjoy the group and wanted to do it again next month. They decided on a different day of the week. Everyone was smiling when they left.



CONFEDERACIÓN LATINOAMERICANA DE TERAPEUTAS OCUPACIONALES (CLATO)

The 10th Conference of Latin American Occupational Therapist will be held in Caracas, Venezuela from the 26th of October until the 1st of November this year. The proposal "Using students from the US to promote and expand

occupational therapy services in Ecuador" submitted by CRECER was accepted for presentation in the format of a 10-15 minute video. The conference, including the video which will be prepared by CRECER, will be in Spanish. The following is a translation of the abstract which will be put in the program.

Ecuador has less than 400 occupational therapists in a country of approximately 15 million people. Thirteen percent of the population of Ecuador has some type of disability. There is a shortage of occupational therapy services for people with disabilities. Additionally, there is a lack of awareness about what occupational therapy can do for people with disabilities. CRECER is addressing these issues by bringing OT students and professionals from the US to Ecuador. In 2012 90 clients were served in 4 different sites. In 2013 services were expanded by the addition of an outpatient rehabilitation center which will increase the number of clients served by many factors. Universities have sent groups of students for 10 day service trips and also for 2-3 month fieldwork experiences. At this time services are provided directly during the months of March through August by the executive director of CRECER. University groups are used to supplement the amount of services given by the executive director and for special projects. CRECER will be working with university groups to explore the option of tele-rehabilitation in order to expand the services in the outpatient rehab center to year round. Using university students has proven to be a way to expand occupational therapy services in Ecuador.

Ecuadorian Ministry for Social and Economic Inclusion (MIES)

CRECER has been working with a representative from MIES to evaluate and treat clients who are involved in their programs. MIES has social programs for people with disabilities as well as workshops where the clients can learn skills. A small group of clients with intellectual disabilities began a simple craft activity to develop attending skills. The mothers attended the session and were able to help their children with the activity as needed. The mothers were excited about the activity and talked about continuing it at home. Unfortunately just after the group got started MIES had a grant deadline to meet and stopped bringing their clients. The programming is scheduled to start again in July. CRECER will be evaluating clients for appropriate placement in vocational and prevocational workshops. In July, a second group will be started with clients who will be able to work independently on a beading project for which MIES will supply the materials. MIES plans to assist the clients to sell the products that they make by taking them to local festivals.

Hogar Manuela Perez

On Thursday June 20th, Elaine Keane went to Hogar Manuela Perez. She was approached by a social worker from this orphanage to work with some of the children there who have learning disabilities. Initially Elaine was told there would be 4 girls that have learning disabilities. When she arrived, they asked if she wanted to see them one at a time or in a group....she said group. When they finally stopped bringing in girls there were 10 ranging in age from 5 to 14. Elaine did a few activities with them and assessed them as much as possible in a group setting. After working with the girls, Elaine spoke with the woman who had initiated the visit about specific concerns she has about the girls. She said they had problems with social integration and attention span. During the session the girls were all very involved in the activities. No problems with social skills but some problems with attending were noticed. They were interested in the activities, and some of the attending could have been made worse by the fact there were up to 3 different activities going on with the group at any time due to lack of materials to complete a single activity with everyone at once. Other girls kept looking in the windows and walking by the door trying to see what was

happening. Elaine offered to come once a week and to bring an activity that will address socialization and attending. The girls with learning disabilities will be specifically encouraged to come to the activities and the other girls may participate if they so choose.

FUNHI (Madres Unidas)

There have been a few changes at FUNHI.

David is a new client. He is non-verbal but follows conversations and enjoys interacting with the other clients and staff.

Dayana had surgery on her hip earlier this year and has not been able to return because she is not able to sit in the car. She is using a reclining wheelchair at home. Andres attended until June, but is taking some time off. Darwin, Kimberly, Fernando, Veronica and Mario Antonio have been working on dolls and marionettes. Mario Antonio celebrated his 40th birthday in late June.



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