

Spring 2017

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



Left to Right: Elaine Keane, Director of CRECER & Susy Albuja, Program Manager



Letter From The Director: Elaine Keane, OTD, OTR/L

2017 has gotten off to a strong start. With the help of Micheal Falcon (Pacific University) and Tanisha Monte and Siobhaun Manion (Thomas Jefferson University) we began seeing clients at our new location on January 9th. We are enjoying having a larger space and sharing the space and ideas with Gaby Urquizo, Cinthia Vallejos, and Alba from the local office for Social and Economic Inclusion for People with Disabilities. We started a ceramics group in conjunctions with them in January and have plans to continue that group with a few clients as they expand their programming into other types of groups. The grand opening ceremony was very successful and you will find more information and pictures in this newsletter. This year has already seen the addition of two groups to the list of students who have come to work with CRECER. Gannon University sent a group of OTD students from their



Florida location as well as a group of students from their MOT program on the main campus in Erie Pennsylvania. A group of OTD students are responsible for this newsletter. Additionally, WSSU sent 3 students and a faculty member for two weeks in March. I recently had the pleasure of representing CRECER at the AOTA conference. I presented a poster based on my Doctoral Capstone project, "Combining Online Education with International Service Learning to Increase

Cultural Competence." It was wonderful to see past students and faculty and network to connect with new universities to add to the CRECER family. I would also like to announce that "Combining Online Education with International Service Learning to Increase Cultural Competence" is tentatively scheduled for publication this July in the Internet Journal of Allied Health Sciences and Practice. I hope you enjoy this newsletter.

Inside this issue:

Gannon University's Invaluable Experience	2
Positioning Clinic By Lindsey Bork	3
Centro de Rehabilitación By Paulene Charles-	4
FUNHI By Carly Pollock	5
Crecher's Grand Opening Day Festivities By Caitlin Smith	6

Gannon University's Invaluable Experience

In mid-March of 2017 a group of 11 students and 2 professors from Gannon University's Occupational Therapy Doctorate program traveled to Ibarra, Ecuador. This group of students make up a portion of the inaugural occupational therapy class for Gannon

University's Ruskin, Florida campus. This experience fulfilled the students' pediatric Level 1 fieldwork rotation requirement. While in Ecuador, the group visited numerous locations such as CRECER, FUNHI Day Center, and a positioning clinic.

Before arriving to Ecuador, the group of students put together an occupational therapy specific activity file for the various locations to reference when creating interventions for various clients. *Continues on page 2*

Gannon University

Gannon University's Invaluable Experience continued from page 1

Each location had so much to offer including tons of invaluable hands on experience with clients of varying diagnoses.

The students were pushed educationally by having to think on their feet, treat diagnoses they had never seen or heard of, fabricate splints for various patients, and use their clinical reasoning skills to come up with creative, engaging, and appropriate treatment plans. The level of learning that was achieved over the days spent at CRECR, FUNHI Day Center, and the positioning clinic will forever be invaluable. Traveling to Ibarra and interacting with its' people was truly an unforgettable and eye opening experience.

Besides being pushed on an educational level these students were also pushed on a cultural level. Many students were pushed out of their comfort zone in regards to communicating to the best of their ability in a language different from their own in both the clinic and when out in the community perusing the market. Others were pushed culturally with the variety of different foods that were encountered on a daily basis. The group of 13 individuals from Gannon University's OTD program in Ruskin, FL will always hold this experience near and dear to their hearts and will have stories to tell for a lifetime.

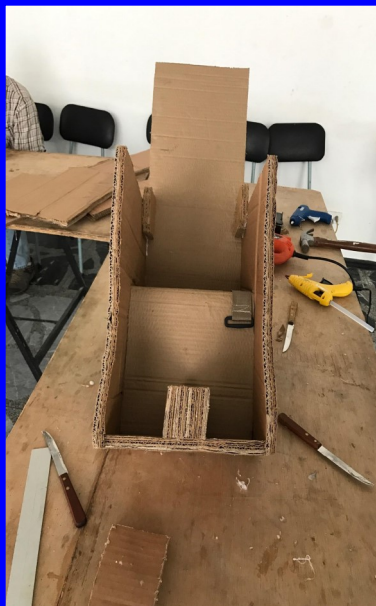
By: Sam Barley



Gannon's Experience at the Positioning Clinic

Working at the positioning workshop under Kit Frank, OTR was truly an unique experience that one wouldn't typically get in the United States. Kit is a retired occupational therapist certified in adaptive design. She designs adaptive equipment for children who have physical limitations. She uses the Adaptive Design Association model to fabricate custom adaptations out of cardboard to enhance a child's positioning for academics, art, play, communication, mobility, self-care, recreation, and socialization.

Gannon University students and professors assisted Kit in creating a standing desk, a chair, and made modifications to a child's bike. The standing desk was made for a child with cerebral palsy in order to increase her academic participation. The modifications to the child's bike was made to enhance his ability to play. That same child received a custom chair to enhance his occupational performance during his occupational therapy sessions at CRECER. This experience challenged student's to critically think about the biomechanics of the body while working with limited resources. *By Lindsey Bork*



CRECER

Outpatient Treatment Center

CRECER operates an occupational therapy center that provides free services to clients of all ages, needs, and cognitive levels. CRECER provides services in and around Ibarra, Ecuador. CRECER supplements the limited occupational therapy services that are available in the community. Ibarra has less than 5 occupational therapists for a population that includes over seven thousand individuals with a disability. In order to provide these services to the community, CRECER partners with universities in the U.S to offer Level I and Level II fieldwork experiences to OT students and other healthcare professions. This gives students the opportunity to increase their clinical and cultural competency. The students had the opportunity to work with clients at the CRECER outpatient center who presented with a wide range of diagnosis such as cerebral palsy, autism, down syndrome, cerebral atrophy, and developmental



The students had the unique experience of working through language or communication barriers, while being challenged to think on their feet. The students were able to collaborate to use their knowledge and creativity to assist the clients. The Gannon students and CRECER staff were also able to work together to provide clients with appropriate and client centered interventions. *By Paulene Malcolm-Charles*



In the picture above, some of the Gannon students were able to work with a client at the CRECER outpatient center. What seemed to present as a culturally challenging experience, turned out to be a rewarding and uplifting opportunity that brought smiles to the students faces.



During my time at CRECER, I was extremely humbled and inspired to see how much help can be provided with limited resources. Not only did I bring my own activities and ideas, but I got to learn different approaches from the staff as well. My biggest take away was being able to communicate with a non-verbal client who spoke a different language and still being able to communicate enough to complete the therapy session. – Paulene Charles-Malcolm

FUNHI

FUNHI is a daycare center service adolescents and adults in Ibarra, Ecuador. CRECER has brought students to work with clients at FUNHI since 2011 and provides FUNHI with occupational therapy services twice a week to their 4 clients. Our group incorporated fun and functional activities with the clients. These activities included an array of activities like painting, bingo, bowling, and even celebrating Carnival (an Ecuadorian tradition celebrated the week before Lent, which includes spraying others with silly string and wearing Mardi Gras masks). Being able to work with the clients at FUNHI was incredible. I absolutely loved getting to know each client individually and was fascinated with the

Case Example: Darwin

Darwin is a young man in his late 30s who spends his weekday mornings at FUNHI. Darwin has been a client at FUNHI since they opened, and seems to touch everyone's heart just by being himself! He has cerebral palsy and is nonverbal, but that doesn't keep Darwin from being the center of attention. Darwin ambulates independently in his wheelchair, and communicates by using his body language, a communication board with pictures and words, and even uses



different applications on his iPad. Darwin is always interested in participating in the daily activities at FUNHI, and appears to really love to paint and participate in the gross

motor activities like bowling, or bean bag tic tac toe. He enjoys being around people and living life to the fullest. Darwin thrives at FUNHI because he has the opportunity to socialize with his friends and participate in fun activities. He also succeeds thanks to the occupational therapy services he receives 2 times a week and the physical therapy services he receives 5 times a week. FUNHI allows Darwin to experience the little things in life that he may not have the ability to otherwise.



"I absolutely loved the clients at FUNHI. I never thought I would be able to communicate and bond so deeply with individuals who are not able to speak. Working at FUNHI taught me how to communicate effectively through other forms of communication, like communication boards, body language, and smiles"

–Amy Flores, OTS



CRECER'S GRAND OPENING DAY FESTIVITIES



Hard work, dedication and a passion for serving those in the city of Ibarra, Ecuador has lead to the grand re-opening of CRECER in a new location. Susy Albuja, Program Manager and Elaine Keane, Director, worked with members of the municipal government to make their vision a reality. CRECER translates "to grow" and as an organization CRECER is living out its mission by increasing access to those who need it most through education, treatment, and research. This day has been a long time coming and with all the community there to celebrate it made the grand opening an eventful and joyous day.

This vision came to light on February 24th, 2017 when the ribbon was cut, the toasts were shared and the celebration lasted throughout the day. They mayor spoke at the event along with other members of the community. The day ended with a group of dancers performing for the event and a tour of the newly renovated facility. Ibarra, Ecuador is now home to a free occupational therapy clinic available for all children with a disability or those in need of therapy services. Gannon University Student's had the opportunity to work with some of these amazing children.

By: Caitlin Smith

CRECER'S Mission: "Promote Increased access to health care services in under-served regions of Ecuador through education, treatment, and research"



Top Picture Left to right: Susana Albuja, project manager, Mayor of Ibarra, Elaine Keane, OTD,OTR/L

Bottom Left Picture: Gannon University student and the dancing entertainment

Bottom Right Picture: The mayor counting down for the cutting of the ribbon





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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, Es-

