

Transforming the Hearts of Children!

By Juan C Montenegro



When you read this article you may be sitting down in front of your computer, in a nice place or even at your home in a comfortable chair with a cup of coffee in your hand... but at this time there are lots of children who do not have any place to go but the streets. This is about how a young person can transform the world of someone in need. I hope you enjoy it and it motivates you to become an agent of change, the only thing that we need to transform the world is YOU!

“I have been on the streets of Guayaquil for the last two years. I am only 12 years old and no one cares for me. I left my home because my step father abused my mother and relatives, he used to come home drunk and beat us up. I was tired of it,” complained David when I asked why he was on the streets!

Giovanni Garcia, a 19 year old California volunteer missionary is working in the streets of Guayaquil, Ecuador. He is part of the Salesian Youth Movement in USA and two years ago he decided to be an agent of change, to be some that shows to these street kids that they are beautiful human beings who have potential.

Imagine spending the night in a place where there are not windows, the roof is falling apart and the mosquitoes are hungry for blood. This is the place where Gio and the street kids spend every night. This is the only place where the kids can feel some kind of protection; this is where they can feel at home.



Every day the schedule is the same. Everyone wakes up at 7:00 AM to do some chores. At 8:00 they have breakfast followed by more chores. At 9:00 they wash their clothes and then it is off to school aid” where those who do not go to formal school (everybody) get introduced to the learning process. They have a break at 11:00 followed by lunch at 12:30 PM 12:30. The afternoon is similar to the morning schedule and the day ends with bed time at 10:00 PM

The idea of having this schedule is to promote a sense of responsibility in the children. Their street lives are very unstructured and filled with dangerous survival efforts. They need to experience structure before they move on to the second stage of the process. This first stage is essential. The children are first recruited and commit to the program and are given the basic skills for success.

Giovanni spends the whole day with this young people. It is difficult because they are ill mannered and lack a sense of self worth. Their motivations are to basic survival. They

steal, settle disputes with fists. The major obstacle to their development is the drug trade and use.

These children can also steal ones heart. One day at lunch we were sitting down to a meal of rice and potatoes with some chicken which had been donated to the program. When the children saw all of that food and the chicken their eyes grew wide with astonishment and joy at the prospect of meat on their plates. It was just awesome! After they eat they gathered around us and began to reach in with giggles and squeals of delight eat our leftovers.

How many times we are upset because we do not have the things that we want. These children have nothing, not even food to eat. Giovanni has decided to make a radical change in his life so he can make a difference in the lives of these street kids. What change do we need to make?

The good work of people like Giovanni has helped many of these children who are in the street. One of these kids was Bairon. He entered the “Street Kids” program as a rough confused youngster with no future. He is now going to high school and volunteers his time with Giovanni. He is a clear example of what is possible with the help and love of volunteers.

Now is your time... Use this article as an inspiration for yourself. Share it with your friends, but do not put it aside. I hope that you are inspired to do something. As I said, *the only thing that we need to transform the world is YOU!*



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