

TEXAS

# Proyecto Desarrollo Humano



P.O Box 1017 Penitas, Tx 78576

Website: [www.pdhrgv.org](http://www.pdhrgv.org)

Facebook: Proyecto Desarrollo Humano

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\* **PEÑITAS**

Dear Friends,

What a summer we had at PDH! Yes, it was hot, but it was also thoroughly enjoyable. Read on for the fascinating details of a truly memorable summer!

## JUNE & JULY SESSIONS FOR THE CHILDREN

PDH's Summer Sessions for our colonia children were awesome! The first session (June 5-30) technically focused on arts & crafts, but many other topics filled the days. While it was blistering hot outside (102 degrees & up), a daily average of 40 children were gathered in the blessed air-conditioning of our PDH building enjoying themselves and learning at the same time. Thanks to the La Joya Independent School District, each day's session began with a wake-up breakfast and ended with a tasty lunch. Efficiently running the whole show were seven Moms who never seemed to get tired! They made sure each child ate breakfast, then taught the arts & crafts as well as guiding games, dances, and other creative activities! They were the awesome guides who made these awesome days happen! A group of teenaged volunteers served as their "right hands."



**The mighty Moms!**



During the week of June 12-16, the children were blessed to have members of the All-Faiths United group as their teachers. Taking time from their personal schedules, these wonderful folks followed their over-all theme of Value Education working with small groups divided according to age. It was obvious that these volunteers had carefully researched their class topics and were versed in various teaching methods. Action, interaction, singing, painting, story-telling, group writing and creating—you name it, that was also included! Boredom—not included!



**The talented AFU teachers**

A member of the AFU group, Mrs. Lois Eichmann, who is a dear friend of PDH, offered a special treat to our children: introductory piano lessons! For the entire last week of June, Lois spent time with each interested child. After this limited time, these students presented a piano recital on June 30. The first time any of them had ever played in performance! Moms, staff, and all the children were a rapt audience as each student played a brief song such as “Happy Birthday to You.” Carnegie Hall never generated such joyful excitement! For the final performance, Lois played a new creation which she told the children was “Our Song” in which she had combined all of their performances into one captivating melody.



**Learning the mysteries of the piano!**



**His first-ever piano performance**

On June 27, representatives of Child Fund International and AmeriCorps interacted with the children, distributing new books, and guiding them in making “maracas” which were then used in keeping time for an impromptu dance. Afterwards, the children were instructed in making mango ice cream which everyone then enjoyed as the outdoor temperature hovered above 100 degrees!

The second session (July 5-28) was taught by professional teachers who followed the norm of “learning with fun!” And the group of Moms were again handling the logistics with assistance from the teen volunteers. As always, this July session was partially funded by The La Joya Independent School District, our 18-year partner in the after-school tutorial program for our colonia children.

Each year the teachers plan their classes focused on the language and culture of a specific country. This year the Philippines captured the spotlight! It was energizing to hear the children practicing phrases in the Tagalog language such as: “Kumusta ka?” (“How are you?”); “Magandang ka?” (“Good morning!”); “Salamat!” (“Thank you!”), and many others. Videos introduced them to the geography and various aspects of life in The Philippines. The children did a great job of presenting a Filipino dance during the festivities on the final class day which included enjoying Filipino food such as Pansit! The teachers were: Cherry Somosot (affectionately known as “Miss Principal” in this role which she has filled beautifully for 18 summers); Alma Martinez (10 years so far), and Bernie Domingo (in her first year).



And then came the “grand finale” on July 28: the field trip to The Water Park on South Padre Island on the Gulf of Mexico! Teachers and chaperones kept careful eyes on the children as they enjoyed every aspect of The Water Park. Snacking was constant plus drinking plenty of water to stay hydrated. The Dad-chaperones presided over barbecue grills preparing a delicious and plentiful lunch. As always, the two-hour bus trip to the Island was filled with sounds of joyful anticipation—and the ride back home was super-silent as the children slept off the results of a day of playing in the water!



## GETTING THE GARDEN READY



On July 5, Juan Raygoza, our hands-on agronomist instructor from UTRGV, along with his assistant, Demetrio, used their tractor to plow the entire 2/3-acre community garden plot. The gardeners then sowed the cow peas which will provide a protective covering for the soil during the summer's highest heat levels. The seeds' growth was then helped by weeks of deep soaking from sprinklers using the non-potable water from the garden's well. In early September, the cow peas will be plowed under to enrich the soil for the fall planting of various organic vegetables. These will be joined by seedlings which were being produced in the meantime in the garden's greenhouse. Harvest time promises to be plentiful!

Juan plowing the garden plot

## VOLUNTEER VISITORS



The Youth Group from St. Joseph Church in Hillsborough, New Jersey, came to help us on July 5 & 6. They worked hard under the blazing Texas sun, side-by-side with our community gardeners, uprooting old plants and weeds in preparation for the plowing of the land. We hope they will come back next year!

## HEALTH CARE ALL SUMMER

To ensure uninterrupted health care throughout the summer, our dedicated medical/dental professionals continued to volunteer their services. In our Spring 2023 newsletter, we had announced that Dr. Carlos Cruz had generously donated an I-CAT X-ray machine to greatly enhance our clinic's dental services. This cutting-edge equipment is being utilized for capturing specialized dental X-rays. We are also excited to inform you that on September 15 & 16, Dr. Cruz is organizing the Texas Mission of Mercy event in the Rio Grande Valley where free dental where free dental services will be provided. Clinica Maria Luisa here at PDH is actively involved in the pre-screening process for this event. If you are interested in participating and would like to undergo a pre-screening, please contact us at: 956-580-9726.

## NATURE'S CHALLENGES

### WATER SHORTAGE

In late June and early July, unfortunately coinciding with constant 100+ temperatures, our local water authority experienced technical difficulties which resulted in erratic water delivery and/or periods of no water. What water came from the faucets had to be boiled before using. Of course, this presented challenges as we were in the midst of our summer session for a daily average of 40 children. Our ever-creative mother-volunteers found ways to fill the gap. On July 17, Penitas City officials generously brought us eight pallets of bottled water for PDH's use and also immediate distribution to our colonia families. On the happy day of July 14, the "boil water" requirement was lifted and became just an adventurous memory!



**Distributing life-giving water!**

### DAMAGING HAIL STORMS

Back in late April, our area suffered two severe hail storms! Thank God, these events only come "once every hundred years," according to the record-keepers! The PDH building needed roof repairs, replacement of outdoor security lights, re-attachment of the internet tower, and—most excitedly—a new ceiling in Sr. Carolyn's office which had been left with a gaping hole and causing

us to wonder what projectile had pierced the roof in that area! A mile away at the ICM Sisters' home, an entirely new roof was needed. Throughout the area, many homes had damaged roofs, ripped-up trees, fallen fences, and other damage; several trailers were completely turned over! A donor came forward to help a family whose home was totally destroyed; the donor gave \$2,000 for re-building materials. At present, some damage is still evident on this western end of our Rio Grande Valley.

As we said in our introduction, this has truly been a memorable summer! From severe hail storms to water problems and a persistent drought! But through it all, God's abiding care has been with us, and our people have bravely continued their pilgrimage towards developing their potential. Thank you for faithfully continuing to walk with all of us!

With our love and prayers,

Your ICM Missionary Sisters, ICM Mission Partners, PDH Board, Staff, and Volunteers

