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THE NEW HORIZON SCHOOL NEWS



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New School Year Begins

Some of the targeted repairs are completed and some remain on the wish list as the first day of the 2015/2016 school year begins. The two main projects which were completed are the filling of the holes in the concrete floor and the installation of a range hood for the stove. We welcomed 43 new and returning students as classes began on September 7th. This is the same number of students who ended the school year with approximately the same grade mix. There are three full-time teachers this year, one FTE and two part-time teachers down from last year.

Teacher training sessions are generally scheduled in August prior to school reopening. This August Patricia Briscoe conducted the seminar.

Along with the new beginnings of another school year filled with promises and high expectations for students and staff, comes the excitement of the first organic growth in chicken population. One of the many hens has decided that the time is right for increasing its population.

The students are excited about this and we all are waiting with great expectation for the arrival of the new chicks.

How long does it takes for a chicken egg to hatch?



*A bit of fragrance
always clings to the
hand that gives
roses*



Chinese Proverbs



THE DONKEY AND I



You often hear old-timers telling stories to the young'uns about walking five miles to school in knee deep snow; uphill both ways. While the real truth may be hidden in the yarn somewhere, the intent of the teller is to inspire or motivate the young'uns, or at least to encourage them to be thankful for what they have and not to complain so much.

Well, I do live on a hill and walk a fair distance to take the transportation to school each day; downhill to school and uphill on my return. The way I look at it, is that it provides me with my daily exercise quota and eliminates the need for gym membership. As you can imagine the uphill trek is the most gruelling, depending on the time of the day, shade from trees, or buildings are nowhere to be seen.

On one of those sun kissed days while making my trip back home, I felt drenched and weary, the trip seemed extra long, and the hill twice as steep. Right about that time as I was walking with my head down, shoulders hunched, and my thoughts miles away, I glanced up and spotted a donkey about 20 meters ahead. This poor beast of burden was going up the hill as well, with two hampers laden with goods, and a rider on its back. I continued to walk with my head down. When I looked up again, it appeared that I'd gained some ground on the beast, but dismissed the thought as my being in the early stage of a sun stroke.

It was then that an idea came to me, hey, how about challenging the donkey to see who can get to the top of the hill first. In my mind we were evenly matched: it had two hampers and I had two bags, it had a rider, and me, "Poor Me" riding on my shoulders. Without a second thought I accepted the challenge on its behalf, and off we went. A few steps into the challenge I chuckled to myself for making such a crazy challenge, but I continued nonetheless, back straightened and with a new purpose in my steps.

I don't know exactly when it happened, but the "Poor Me" I was carrying on my shoulders fell off and the load I was carrying did not seem as heavy now as it was. We were neck and neck.

When I reached the driveway to my apartment the donkey was about 10 meters behind me. Funny thing was, as I turned the key into the lock of my door, I did not feel tired or burdened from increasing my pace up the hill. On the contrary, I felt elated.

Over the days and weeks since this event, as I reflect on this crazy challenge, I understand a little more how a change in one's perspective and a little effort can at times neutralize life challenges and burdens, and give life a new purpose.

Who knows, maybe there is a "donkey" in your path that must be challenged!

The Educator's Perspective

From August 9-13, the two teachers Stephanie and Niko, completed a week of teacher training session at the New Horizon School in Munoz. Overall, it was a productive week. We organized the upcoming school year and completed a few vital lessons to help the teachers in their teaching and learning.

A few specific topics addressed included:

- Reviewed and organized the yearly plan for the school year.
- Defined a mission for the school & created a poster of the mission for each class.
- Spent two days learning and presenting lessons. The teachers learned how to write a lesson plan to include components such as presenting, assessing and reviewing (PAR), and then critiqued each other's lessons to improve them. As we moved through this process the teachers began to show improvement in organizing their teaching lessons and delivering them.
- Continued our learning of reading strategies and completed more lesson plans for beginning level readers, followed with demonstrating a reading lesson and then critiquing it for strengths and weaknesses. In planning ahead, we decided that each teacher would be in charge of a special event this year such as the spelling bee, that happened last year. I will be returning to the school in January and we will begin detailed planning of these events, which are critical in building leadership and community connections.

At the end of training, after a hard week of work, we provided a small token of celebration for the teachers. Thanks to Walter again, we went to Las Cañas in Sosua for an afternoon of relaxation by the pool, followed by dinner at a local restaurant.



In moving forward we (Arlene Belle and I) have decided to create learning modules for the teachers so that they can continue their learning long after we leave. These will include specific readings and associated tasks to help them continue to improve their teaching skills and abilities.

By Patricia Briscoe



