

A Heart Warming Story



When Tom and Stephanie Smith started sponsoring Luz Adriana they made a commitment; A few years ago when Tom was visiting Project Amigo he treated Luz and her Mom for dinner. Tom told Mom "As long as you keep Luz in school, we will support her".

The Smiths were so proud of Luz when she graduated from Primary School and attended her first year of Secondary School. This summer however Luz sent Tom and Stephanie a letter indicating that she finished her year with an 8.1 GPA (B-) and was not able to continue in the Sponsorship Program.

Tom contacted Project Amigo Student Services Staff and asked what he could do to help Luz improve her grades. After all, he made a promise to her Mom who definitely would like to see Luz continue her education, but the household finances would not allow her to without the support from Project Amigo. In response, Tom and Stephanie received a letter from Student Services Director Jorge Torres:

"Dear Tom and Stephanie,

I hope things are fine with you and your family. First of all, thank you very much for your love, interest, concern and generosity.

I would like to share some information about Luz Adriana. Thanks to you and to Luz's efforts she was able to finish her first year in Junior High with an 8.1 GPA (B-).

Students and sponsors know that here at Project Amigo, as part of the requirements for scholars to get in and stay in the program are: Doing

community service, attend a weekly homework club and get an 8.5 (A+) GPA among others.

Recently Luz sent you a thank you letter assuming that she was out of the program because she did not reach the required GPA. We always try to be very flexible and supportive, so if the sponsor decides to continue supporting his/her sponsored child we are more than happy to give them this opportunity.

As you know Luz, studied at the elementary school in La Nogalera and according to her mother she was part of a "special group" called **Usaer** (The Regular Education Support Unit), a program offered by the educational department to those students who have special needs (learning problems).

Luz was diagnosed with Dyslexia. She just learned to read in 6th grade. Going into Junior High has been a real challenge (more so with the pandemic). We understand during these difficult times and situations and for that reason this past year, Zeidy (Project Amigo's psychologist), another scholar who is at University studying psychology together with Lety our Student Services Staff member, have been working with Luz in different areas from academic issues to more personal and emotional situations.

For instance Zeidy (the psychologist) had some sessions with Luz to address her shyness, as her mother told us that it is something that she observes that could cause issues in her future.

Luz really wants to continue studying through Junior High and High School and as she has expressed in her letters after High school she would like to serve in the army.

The staff who has been in contact with Luz, all agree that she has many things against her, but her willingness to continue studying may help her reach her goals (and we really hope so).

We need to accept the fact that it will be very difficult for Luz to achieve a good performance in school and we think it is important for you to know this. In the past some sponsors with students in similar situations have agreed to continue supporting their sponsored children regardless of their grades (we always try to analyze each case in particular).

Luz is responsible, she attends homework clubs on time, and when for some reason, she could not attend, she always notifies us. Even with her shyness, Luz was always willing to participate, helping in activities with incentive children or in the assembly of the "food boxes" that all scholars received during the pandemic.

So if you decide to continue supporting her, that would be great, considering that we would have to have special considerations, but with the understanding that she continues giving her very best in school (and respect her learning process).

Let us know of your ideas! We appreciate your generosity and unconditional love,

Best Regards.

Jorge Torres

From Jorge's letter to Tom and Stephanie we learned, that especially during the Pandemic a much larger number of students have dropped out of the program or out of school all together, and for various reasons:

- Need to support the family's finances and find a job.
- Lack of access to computers or Wifi.
- Stress and anxiety due to the Pandemic.
- Undetected learning disabilities.
- Difficulty adapting to the virtual learning system.
- Inadequate support from the school system.
- Missing classmates' inspiration and encouragement.

We need more sponsors like Tom and Stephanie who are willing to continue their support and don't give up on their student as long as their student does not give up on them.

Did YOU receive a letter from your student indicating that they dropped out of the program, we like to hear from you and encourage you to sponsor a new student who needs your support.

During this seasons' selection program a much larger than even number of families reached out to Project Amigo for support, hoping to give their children an opportunity to an education, which as a result will change their future.

For as little as \$135.00 per year, you can give the gift of education. Junior High and High School is \$795.00 per year. Not in your budget? We gladly accept partial sponsorships.

If you prefer to make a donation towards the General Sponsorship Program rather than towards a specific students, we would be very grateful to receive your donation

