

OYE el Cambio

Hear the Change...

“I’ve changed my way of thinking about the saying ‘youth are the future.’ We are the present – the ones who will make the changes that need to happen today for a better tomorrow.”

**-Heidi Montoya,
OYE Scholar**



New Chapter in Progreso

After a month of vacation in January, OYE has begun a new chapter in its effort to keep promising Honduran youth in school despite the nation’s high dropout rates and low education levels. After bidding farewell to several former students who have graduated from school or entered the Honduran work force, OYE has offered 55 scholarships to promising youth, welcoming three new members to the OYE family.

OYE’s programs have undergone a few changes. *Arte La Calle*, OYE’s public arts initiative, has been busier than ever, already carrying out two large mural projects in El Progreso. *OYE el Ritmo* and *Revista Jóvenes*, the radio program and youth magazine, have merged into a single communications program under the leadership of one youth leader. The *COPA OYE* sports tournament is hard at work preparing for this year’s soccer and volleyball competitions, which will begin in April. OYE has also formed a youth-led fundraising team that will be carrying out local fundraising activities each month to help support OYE and raise awareness within Honduras.

The situation in Honduras remains uneasy. Widespread poverty and unemployment, along with significant street gang and drug trafficking activity, have resulted in extremely high crime rates. In January 2012, the Peace Corps pulled out all of its volunteers from Honduras due to the country’s security situation. But OYE has stayed put to carry out its mission of empowering educated, informed, and talented youth who are the present and future of Honduras. OYE’s work would not be possible without the generosity of its supporters, and we thank each and every one of you for continuing to keep Honduras’s youth in your minds and hearts.

Did you know?

Platano Forest in Honduras was nominated for one of the seven new wonders of the world.

Contents

- 2 OYE Welcomes Three New Scholars
- 2 Bracelets for a New School Year
- 3 GW’s Alternative Break Trip to Honduras
- 4 Let the Capacity Building Begin; Scholar Spotlight: Oscar Osorio
- 5 Form Part of the OYE Family; Special Thanks to DAI



OYE Welcomes Three New Scholars

At OYE’s first monthly meeting, its three newest scholars received a thunderous applause when their names were called to receive their scholarships. This year’s new scholars are Oscar Ruben Suazo Dominguez, Samuel Adonay Reyes, and Nathaly Adilene Alberto Santos.

Oscar is 12-years-old and he attends Notre Dame Institute. His favorite subject is natural science, and his dream is to become an architect. Oscar, like many of the kids his age, likes to play soccer, watch movies, paint, and make new friends in school. Having grown up without a father has been a challenge for Oscar, but he looks forward to meeting new people and forming a family at OYE.

Adonay is a 16-year-old who has led a trying life path. When Adonay was 8 years old, his older brother was shot and murdered before his eyes. He spent years growing up on the streets without the support of his parents until he found a home at Proniño, a local NGO that supports Honduran street children. Adonay is a gifted student who hopes to become lawyer who specializes in children’s rights. “We are the future,” Adonay says, “and we have a vision of being better for our country.”

Nathaly, 14-years-old, is a gifted student with the highest grade point average in OYE. Her personal goals are to graduate from high school, to become a doctor who specializes in gynecology or neurology, to develop a foundation that supports youth, and to promote positive values.



Oscar Suazo



Adonay Reyes



Nathaly Alberto



New bracelets on sale from Estilo OYE.

Bracelets for a New School Year

Once a month during the school year, the students and staff of OYE meet to discuss upcoming projects, touch base on what is happening in their lives, and award the kids with their monthly stipends. The first meeting of 2012 was no exception. It began with an introduction of the OYE staff, the interns, and each of the four coordinators, who explained their areas of expertise: sports, arts, communications, and now fundraising. This year, OYE’s local fundraising team has launched a hand-made jewelry initiative based on its previous soda-tap bracelet project. OYE scholars, staff, and interns spent many hours putting together these colorful charm bracelets, which will be sold locally, with all proceeds going to support OYE’s scholarship program. At the end of the scholars’ first meeting, each person received two bracelets to sell in town. While selling the jewelry is a way for the kids to give back to OYE, they will also be spreading the word about OYE’s work and the meaningfulness of local scholarships for promising youth.

GW's Alternative Break Trip to Honduras

University students creating positive social change

George Washington University holds an "Alternate Winter Break" for students to do something meaningful and educational during their winter break. This year's trip was held in El Progreso, Honduras for some hands on learning and a chance to experience local culture. The group was 20 people strong and made up mostly of freshman and sophomores with some juniors and seniors in the mix.

During the day the GW students split up into two groups. Each group went to different locations to perform hands-on service in distinct parts of El Progreso. One group went to Proniño, an NGO and residence for former Honduran street children, and worked with OYE's *Arte La Calle* program to put an artistic touch on one of Proniño's buildings. Although the weather was scorching, the students were able to catch some shade while spending time with the boys. The second group went to Escuela Visitación, a school located in the center of El Progreso, to carry out another mural Project. This location had more shade, and because the school year had not begun class was not yet in session. However, the mural was a wonderful surprise for the students after their arrival back to school in February.

Each day after lunch the students returned to the OYE headquarters for cool air, educational forums, and dance lessons. OYE planned a party at the end of the week for locals that included a dance off for some friendly competition among the students. Each night during their stay, the volunteers had dinner at the home of one of the scholarship recipients. This was a great way to see where the scholarship students lived and to get a taste of



Honduran cooking at its finest.

Between the mural projects, soccer matches, educational opportunities, and time spent with children, GW students were able to experience and understand a reality of Honduras that most tourists do not get to know. During their one-week stay they visited Campo Americano, a secluded get-a-way with gorgeous views of Honduras's tropical landscape. On their last day in Honduras they traveled to the Tela to relax and reflect on the beach. There, they met people from the local Garifuna communities and enjoyed the warmth of the Caribbean waters.

Before the GW volunteers returned to D.C., OYE youth presented GW students with a task: to talk about OYE and spread the word about its mission. Doing something as simple as talking about OYE is a way for volunteers to raise awareness about the organization and the good it is doing for promising Honduran youth who are struggling against economic hardship, violence, and disintegrated families. OYE's hope is that these volunteers will continue to create change, perhaps even inspiring others to visit Honduras and lend a helping hand to OYE and its kids.

Let the Capacity Building Begin!



Each Saturday OYE kids head to the office where they participate in capacity building and leadership training. The capacity building workshops address social issues that the scholarship recipients do not have an opportunity to learn about in their schools. This year OYE will be presenting modules on family, self-esteem, sexuality, courtship, gender diversity, discrimination, the national reality of Honduras, and the environment.

OYE offers a space for youth to learn, analyze, and develop an understanding for social issues that affect their lives. The OYE staff feels that these modules will make the scholarship recipients more knowledgeable about specific issues, further enabling them to create positive change. OYE staff hopes to develop the leadership skills necessary to become active and responsible participants in civil society as well as in Honduran business.



Capacity building modules are taught by OYE staff, youth coordinators, and young professionals. This year two student interns from Mary Baldwin College, DeAngela Alexander and Amy Williamson, taught the module on self-esteem. One of the activities they performed was a demonstration of how negative experiences can affect an individual's self-esteem. Through the activity, called "The Bucket List," self-esteem was compared to a bucket of water. This bucket starts out full at birth, but whenever people develop negative beliefs about themselves, it is equivalent to poking little holes in the bucket that cause one's self-esteem to drip. During the module, OYE kids brainstormed a list of things people say or do that "poke holes" in their self-esteem buckets, as well as techniques that can be used to improve self-esteem. These lists were posted at the office to serve as a constant reminder of the module.



Scholar Spotlight: Oscar Osorio

My name is Oscar Eduardo Osorio. I'm 17 years old and was born on May 23, 1994, which makes me a Gemini. I'm from El Progreso and have 3 sisters. I'm happy to be the only boy in my family, but I wouldn't have minded having a brother.

I'm in my final year at Perla del Ulua High School. After graduating I want to continue with my studies. I'd like to study computation and teach in the future. I like spending time with my friends, drawing, playing in my school's marching band, listening to music, dancing, and, of course, checking "Facebook." Add me!

My experience in OYE has been unforgettable, and I know it will continue being so. That's because at OYE I have learned many things like being a comfortable public speaker and expressing what I truly think and feel. I am part of the art project "La Calle," where I'm given the opportunity to paint huge murals throughout the city. I love OYE, which to me is much more than just an organization. It's family.

Favorite color: green

Favorite music: All kinds

Favorite quote:

• "All that is proposed is achieved."

Favorite movies: *Titanic* and *Brokeback Mountain*

Form Part of the OYE Family...Make a Change!

Your support has carried us through times of political turmoil to allowing us to grow our scholarship program. When we started, we only had the resources to provide 5 scholarships a year. But thanks to people who believed in the untapped potential of the youth of El Progreso, we have grown into a multi-faceted youth development organization with programs in the arts, communications, sports, and more.

By making a gift to OYE, you can have a tremendous impact on our ability to offer more scholarships and enhance our leadership development programs for Honduran youth.

Your support is only the beginning. Each scholarship liberates OYE youth from the path of gang involvement, violence, and drugs and allows them to focus on their education and development. The challenges that Honduran youth face today are not new, nor are they easily solved. However, OYE is helping develop a generation of leaders who are equipped with the tools and education necessary for making a difference. **We invite you to be a part of the change!**



Check donations can be made out to "Organization for Youth Empowerment" and sent to:

Organization for Youth Empowerment
3351 18th Street, Washington, DC 30010

You can also make secure online payments on our webpage at www.oyehonduras.org.

OYE extends a special thank you to DAI for supporting OYE with a \$10 thousand grant. ¡Muchas gracias de la familia OYE!

