



Yspaniola's Host Moms

Dear Friend of Yspaniola,

In the five years since I joined Yspaniola's team of passionate educators, there has been a plethora of accomplishments to celebrate, students' successes, university graduations, and staff advancing in their professional careers. Yspaniola is honored to have been a stepping stone in each individual's journey.

We have also faced challenges. The COVID-19 pandemic had a profound effect on our everyday lives and how we interact as a global community. On page 4, we take a glimpse at how this has affected the educational development of students here in Batey Libertad.

Another significantly detrimental impact for Yspaniola and the Batey Libertad community was the mandatory hiatus of our Experiential-Learning Trips Program. The joy of welcoming new and returning visitors each year has been sorely missed, as well as the direct income that this generated for our beloved team of host moms and our education programs.

Indeed, we faced a multitude of incredibly hard decisions as our operating budget dipped from \$224,570 in 2018, to \$132,700 in 2021.

Our resilient team has worked to navigate the funding shortfalls, and we have never given up our dream of one day being able to support all the batey's students again.

Yet, our plans to construct a brand new learning center have been put on pause as we work to make our operations sustainable on a lower budget.

This would not be possible without our Yspaniola family beyond the island. This year, our holiday fundraiser will reflect upon the close-knit community that we have built together. We hope you will be motivated to participate, and more than anything, as we look forward to restarting our organized trips, we hope you come to visit us again soon.



Amy and the Yspaniola team



Daniel graduates

In September, our university scholar Daniel María Joseph, graduated *summa cum laude* from the Technological University of Santiago! He earned his Bachelor's in Psychology and began a paid internship. Daniel is a valued member of the Yspaniola family, having worked as a Classroom Assistant and a Junior Teacher before he entered the University Scholarship Program. We are immensely proud of him and look forward to following his budding career.



"I'm grateful to Yspaniola for providing me with the opportunity to attend university. Now I am thinking about continuing my education with a Master's Degree." *Daniel*



Parents graduate from Time for My Child

Time for my child

Our Time for My Child initiative aims to strengthen student's knowledge, give parents skills and confidence to help their children with schoolwork, and help foster positive parent-child relationships.

A community survey conducted by Yspaniola in 2020 revealed that 60% of parents in Batey Libertad didn't feel confident helping their children with homework.

In response, Time for My Child was developed by Yspaniola Fellow Pilar Pérez, an experienced social worker, and delivered by our University Scholar, Sofía with support from local assistant, Daniela. Sofía and Daniela conducted home visits and guided parents to complete interactive activities with their children, who were in Yspaniola's Kinder class. The parents showed up consistently to work with their children, and gave positive feedback about the initiative.

"This project was focused not only on the students but also on the parents. We really wanted to get the parents involved with their children's education and help them see what we do at Yspaniola."

Pilar Perez



L-R: Sofía, Pilar & Daniela

From scholar to teacher



Beloved teacher, Mayra, has been involved with Yspaniola for over a decade! Mayra began as one of Yspaniola's University Scholars, majoring in Education and Natural Sciences. She graduated in 2016 and decided to join Yspaniola's teaching team, working with students aged 8-16.

When we needed extra support in preschool last year, Mayra made the transition to a whole new age group. Mayra's experience in working with preschoolers was eye opening for her in terms of learning and growing as a professional.

"I am grateful for my experience in working with the preschoolers, although I am glad to be back with the older children this year, where I am able to best use my skill set.

Although we use the same curriculum and materials, I employ a different strategy for every class. Every student needs something different, and that is what makes our teaching successful. Working with Yspaniola has been not only personally and professionally beneficial for me, but it's also been gratifying to see how the benefits impact the kids in the community as well." *Mayra*



L-R: Johnny, Leidy & Yohanna

Congratulations, Leidy!

In her six years as Yspaniola's Preschool teacher, Leidy Rodríguez brought her boundless energy and passion to class every day! Despite a tumultuous year of health issues, in 2022 Leidy achieved her goal of passing the national teachers exam! To the delight of the Batey Libertad community and the Yspaniola team, she was appointed as First Grade Teacher at the local public school. Yspaniola is honored to have been a part of Leidy's professional journey and we wish her all the best in all her future endeavors.

Pandemic Effect on Student Learning

When schools in the Dominican Republic transitioned to remote learning, students in hard-to-reach communities like Batey Libertad suffered most. A lack of stable internet made accessing online classes impossible for many students. Despite our efforts to continue in-person teaching, a drop in funding coupled with obligatory small class sizes meant that we could not reach all the batey's students.

For many students who had been steadily advancing their reading skills before the pandemic, the impact was severe. For example, Michenaile was at level "E" in October 2019 on the A-Z Reading leveled system that Yspaniola uses to evaluate student progress. In a normal year, we expect students to advance 3-4 letters along the A-Z scale. When Michenaile re-entered our classroom in September 2022, she scored an "F", just one level of progress in three years. Michenaile is now back in Mayra's classroom and excited to continue building her literacy skills.



Michenaile reads in class



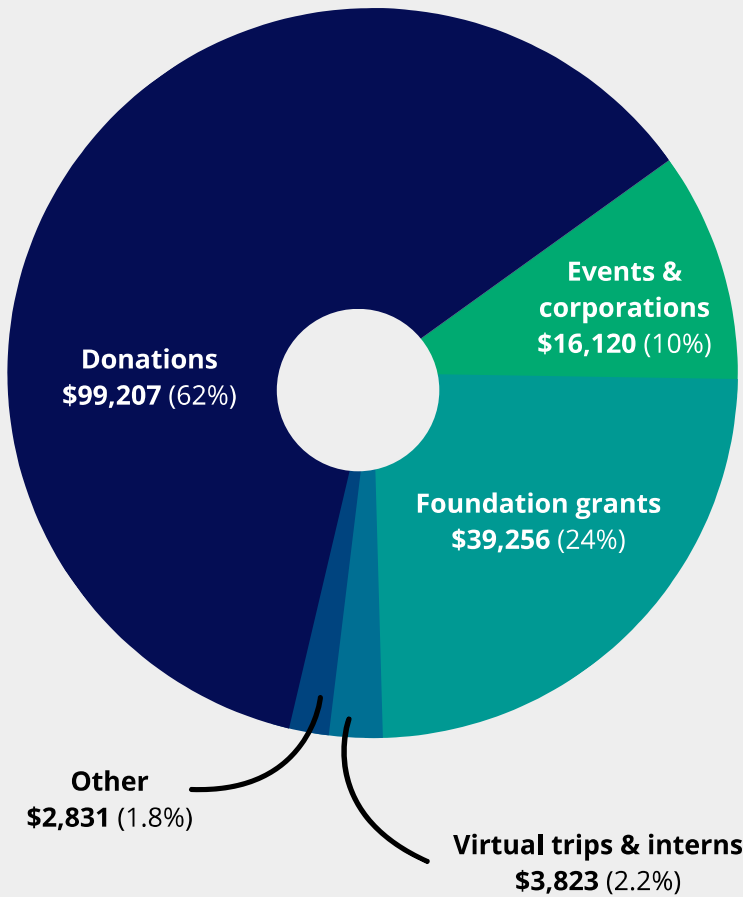
Thank you

A BIG thank you to our Summer interns, Emery and Caroline! They contributed valuable program and administrative support, and the funds they raised supported local assistant salaries to run vital summer programming.

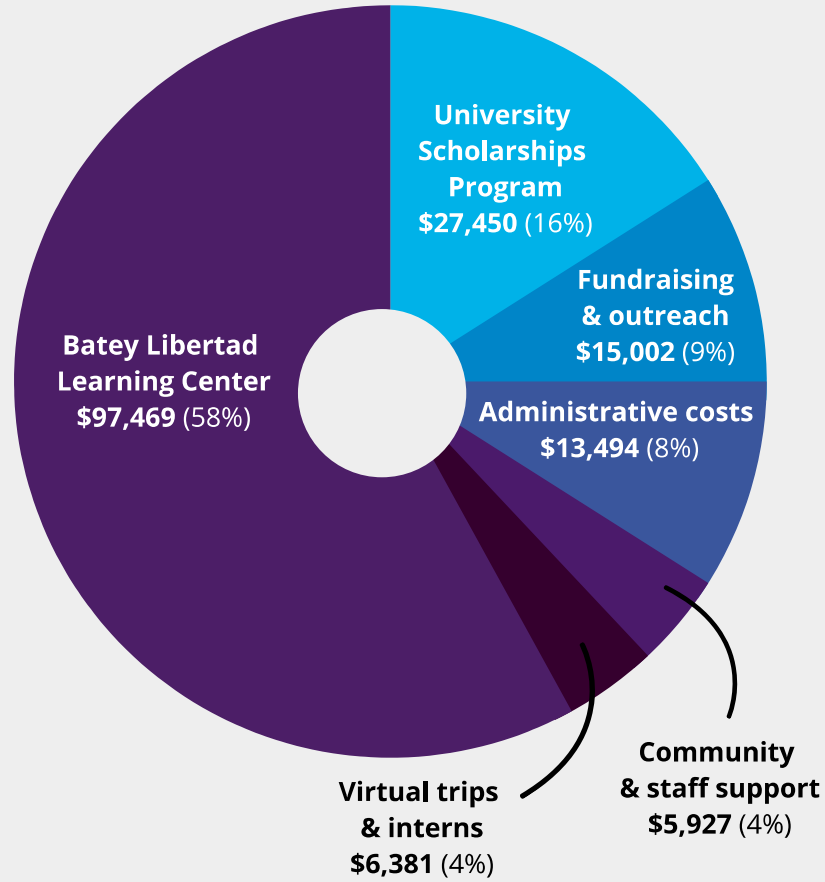
Come back soon!

Financials

Income \$161,237



Expenditure \$167,871



This year, your donations made possible...



3,600
home-cooked snacks
in our Food Program



371
hours of literacy-
focused classes



14
parents graduated from
our Time for My Child
Program



1
new university
graduate, Daniel



40
specialized phonics books
added to our library



70
students attended 90
hours of summer
academic programming