

Boletín Mensual #2

Septiembre - 2018



www.escuelacaracol.org

ENGLISH

 escuela
caracol
San Marcos La Laguna



Michael, powerful will celebration

sword have to live on in the imagination in the daily chores of a school that fights against laziness, fear, distrust, and intolerance; and that looks for the strength to keep developing towards initiative, creativity, and healthy coexistence.

The process of preparation for the small proofs of courage that the children experience attracts to the school, in the form of willpower, the grace that it brings to each of them, which is expressed in a force of will which is free, strong, and brave, and thus Michael's scale opens as a generous and protective cloth, and the iron of his sword glows in the blood of our school and screams:

here i am!

Gloria Elena Londoño
Pedagogical Advisor.
Escuela Caracol.

Escuela Caracol was born as a Micaelic impulse of a young couple filled with "initiative and inner vigor"; at the present time, it keeps growing in the hands of a group of young teachers that look to offer this new pedagogical alternative to our and nearby towns, with the strength left by their momentum and their own successes.

Last Sunday, a celestial revelation appeared in the San Marcos la Laguna sky - it was the day designated to celebrate the archangel Michael - as an announcement of the festivity to come. Now this revelation which appeared on his day shows us the opening of a snail (spiral) that expands brilliantly in the sky, and "as in the skies, also on earth".



The meaning behind these festivities is exposed in the forcefulness with which the image portrays the balancing scale between compassion and steadiness on one side and the iron sword of truth on the other.

Scale and

Escuela Caracol was part of the independence parade.

On September 15th our students participated in the municipal independence parade; they prepared handmade posters with civic messages that expressed their thoughts and feelings about current events.



They walked happily all over the town alongside students from all the other schools in San Marcos.



At the end of the parade, our musicians from "Flor de Jocote II" played several melodies for the general audience at the Central Park.





Escuela Caracol students develop their artistic vein.

During September, an extracurricular painting group was formed. It was guided by our dear Lucía (school mother), Santiago (auxiliary teacher), Andrea (sixth grade teacher) and Maria Eugenia (school administrator); and in it they taught our children some really cool painting techniques using acrylic.

The paintings were exposed during "Viva Caracol" in Panajachel and enjoyed by all the attendants.



Artists found in our sixth-grade classroom!

A few days ago something particularly special happened in the sixth-grade classroom. A special aura could be sensed and creativity was flowing out of the room and into the gardens of Escuela Caracol; inside, a group of amazing artists were busy creating works of art.



During the last weekend of September we had our first "Viva Caracol", a day in which our team shared their expertise with teachers and members of the Panajachel community. The activity took place in "Casa de Arte" with three workshops focused on elementary education, language and math.



Using sharp blades, sandpaper, and wood, our oldest group of students were carving wood. Teacher Gloria Elena is the guide on this journey, she shows them how to use the blades, how to visualize the volumes and how to create whatever they are imagining.



This exercise is wonderful for letting the children focus on a single task, exercising their imagination and realizing how much they can do and achieve.



Look at the pictures and see how talented they are!



The magic of handcrafts.

The experience acquired as a handcrafts teacher for the last 8 years lets me affirm that by working with their hands, children transform conventional materials like threads into more complex objects (animals, bags, socks, among other things), and do a lot more than just occupy their time doing something "useful", it is a therapeutic activity that fills children with joy that can't be explained. But there is a lot more to tell...

For this and many other reasons, handcrafts are a "must" in every classroom, above all at these ages of human development (from 7 to 12) where technology has occupied many moments and spaces of childhood.



In any case, we must be careful about what types of manual activities to perform. It's quite common to find publications on all kinds of media about handcrafts workshops for children that are basically on cutting, folding and pasting paper, cardboard, fabrics, or even materials that are harmful both to a child's health and to nature. We should ask ourselves: "Are these really the kinds of handcrafts that should be accompanying the child's development between 7 and 12 years old? What is the real objective of performing these activities?"



They make their own crochet and tricot needles and with them they make animals, bags, flowers, gnomes, among other things. They embroider with cross-stitch designs and landscapes, weave carpets or mats with tulle; likewise they weave their own gloves, caps, socks, and maguey backpacks; they carve their nawales in stone. In all grade levels the students sew and embroider. To say that it is wonderful and special to be a master of crafts at Escuela Caracol is still selling it short, it is an invaluable gift.

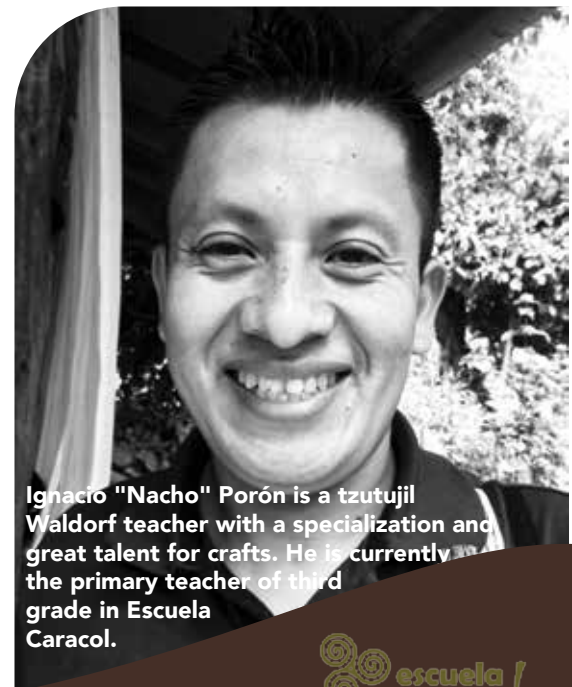
Profesor Nazario Ignacio Porón



Steiner said: Criteria comes from imaginative forces, working through the heart. It is not the head by itself but the whole human being that shapes criteria. Just think about how many senses are used when working on handcrafts –sight, touch, movement, balance, among many others–. Senses receive many impressions from the world and unite to form criteria. Our hands take us to a deeper and closer relationship with the world and, therefore, to a higher understanding of humanity. *Manualidades y Artesanías* (Hauck, 1968).



At Escuela Caracol, children learn to comb the wool (from Nahuala's Sheeps), spin the wool into yarn, and from that weave bracelets, necklaces, etc. with their own hands.



Ignacio "Nacho" Porón is a tzutujil Waldorf teacher with a specialization and great talent for crafts. He is currently the primary teacher of third grade in Escuela Caracol.



Proof of Courage

As part of the celebrations of Michael the students had two days for performing the "proofs of courage". On September 27 it was the turn of the boys and girls of first, second, and third grade. They made an exciting journey worthy of an adventure novel, in which they had to navigate an obstacle course made with tables and chairs to demonstrate their courage.



The following day it was the turn of the fourth, fifth, and sixth grade students. The level of difficulty and danger was greater for these students as they had to walk a tightrope with only the help of two poles for balance. They supported their own weight as they crossed a rope of several meters over a pool of mud.

The importance of these challenges is that the children feel valued and courageous, feelings that will help them in the future to overcome difficulties that arise in their paths and to experience the feeling of "I can!".

It was an amazing and very fun day; all the boys and girls did an incredible job on their challenges. We are proud of the courage of our caracolitos!



A new resident on the fourth-grade classroom

Her name is Freya, the students named her after the Nordic Goddess. She is a quiet and friendly white mouse that has taught the children how to be more responsible; they take turns every week looking after her hygiene, feeding and hydration. Freya will be part of their class until the end of the year, when she will go back to her previous home.



Children took special attention to her feeding, they say she loves chocolate cookies, bread and tortillas. Knowing she is a rodent, they are always very careful about ensuring she has wood to chew.

Initially, Freya came to Escuela Caracol to help children learn about rodents, finally, she stayed and will be back next year.



Caracol students learn from nature.

As a regular activity, students from Escuela Caracol learn from nature by taking care of our gardens, where they learn the complete process of cultivating plants.



They begin by preparing the seeds and the land, then they plant the seeds, prepare the organic pesticide (made with roots and leaves from local plants and water), and take care of the sprouts until they grow; the process finishes when the children get new seeds from the grown plants.

This whole experience teaches our students, in a really fun and amusing way, respect for nature, patience, teamwork and lots about anatomy and physiology of plants as it nurtures the head, heart and hands of our children.



Shorthand Writing without the alphabet

Often, as a pedagogical resource, teachers invite experts to present topics of great importance to the block currently being studied. Recently, our 5th grade teacher Diego invited Julia, an experienced secretary and shorthand expert, to introduce his students to this way of writing.



They are currently studying grammar, during which they are learning about the history of writing. As a creative experiment, the students created their own writing system from scratch.



They also studied hieroglyphics, glyphs, Chinese script, Hindu script (Devangari) and Greek script.

These experiences help our students to develop a better understanding of history and awareness of the similarities between different civilizations and cultures.

