



SMILES OF YESTERDAY AND TODAY



Valencia, Barquisimeto and Carora (Venezuela)



Persons served 187



People working on the project 28

27 Volunteers
1 Hired



Presentation of the social reality

In Venezuela there are very few spaces dedicated to the elderly for their health care and recreation. With the high percentage of migrations in the country, grandparents are left abandoned, many with responsibilities with the raising of grandchildren and others waiting for a job in order to survive.

The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated the social isolation of many older adults, limiting their opportunities for social interaction and increasing their risk of depression and other mental health problems.

In the neighborhoods that we serve with the project in Valencia (Barrio El Impacto), Barquisimeto (Barrio El Trompillo), Carora (Sector Lajas Azules and Francisco Torres), are places of low resources with a high demand for informal economy and absence of youth who

have migrated mostly to Colombia, Peru and Chile leaving their parents with their children and with the hope of receiving these parents the economic to be able to stay in Venezuela, being unsuccessful migration. Due to this high migration are the elderly members of the family nucleus who have fallen into depression due to the state of abandonment by relatives, influencing their emotions and triggering hidden chronic diseases such as cancer, stroke, vitiligo, Alzheimer's, osteoporosis, diabetes.

They are isolated grandparents who have illnesses, others despite their health conditions are integrated into work to accompany their grandchildren as legal representatives in the country. This is how the initiative was born to create a space that values a lifetime of these grandfathers and grandmothers

and their dignity as older adults, a space where yesterday and today meet to gather smiles of hope and regain the importance of life, bringing together different generations, each serving from their life experience, focused on motivating, recreating, rebuilding family ties and the importance of each life in society.

The children serve with the greatest gesture of love and patience and the grandparents receive it, the young people learn from each experience of these older adults and at the same time share and accompany the day through games, listening and speaking, the young adults from their experience organize, carry the logistics and are committed to serve with greater responsibility.



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Simple description of the task to be performed

1. The grandparents attend the dining room to receive lunch once a week in Carora, in Valencia 4 days a week and in Barquisimeto 3 days a week. In order to have these lunches, there is a logistics of integrating families from the community to cook and donate food, donations from companies and the economic contribution of Itaka-Escolapios; volunteers are committed to cook and serve and in some cases of grandparents in beds they are taken to their places, the young people set the tables and accompany them carrying the dishes to the tables and homes, as in the cleaning of the space.
2. Special activities are carried out on Mother's Day, Father's Day, Christmas, each grandparent takes moments of sharing and joy through games, dances, songs and gifts, a celebration for them.
3. With the social work, 5th grade students from the schools are integrated, visiting homes, rescuing the history that each grandparent has, writing down the anecdotes and teachings that they have also received and then sharing them with their classmates. These are days of visits that bring smiles and company in the midst of the loneliness they have at home.
4. During the year, health days are held and medicines are given out, as well as personal care days (haircuts, hair drying and straightening, hair braiding, nails and painting).



Achievements in recent years

- » To recognize the value of the family in young people, to be able to see who in their family is in the process of family abandonment.
- » Grandparents feel that they are accompanied by young people, that they are part of a community and that they are valued.
- » They value space and appreciate it.
- » Nutritional recovery.
- » Improved quality of life, emotional improvements.
- » They feel useful and capable of performing physical activities.
- » They grow in bonds of trust with themselves.
- » These are meaningful experiences that help children, youth and the elderly to see themselves as part of a society where we all live together and support each other.



Future intentions (lines of improvement)

- We want to encourage more meetings, to move from special activities to monthly meetings, where students can get involved with social work and children from other projects (Calasanz movement and school support).
- To be able to serve more days a week with lunches where needed.

