



Friends of Cabrera, Inc.

*Dedicated to Cabrera, DR*



Faro de Cabrera, SRL

*Guiando y Empoderando*



EL  
**BIEN** Responsabilidad Social

# Yearbook

**2015 – 2016**

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## **To all of our friends and family,**

We would like to thank you for another amazing year! Your love, prayers, and energy are the most valuable resource we could ask for. We exist thanks to the tireless efforts and big hearts of all those involved. The following pages give a small insight into the wonderful time we have had this past year. If you are new to our project and would like to know how to get involved, please don't hesitate to contact us! You will find our contact information below.

**All Love,**

Alicen Bessire

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# New Students

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Faro was blessed to receive 11 new students this past year. This brought us to a total of 23. They had a combination of language preparedness: Native Spanish with mid/high level English proficiency, Native Spanish with no English proficiency, native English with no Spanish proficiency.

The two students who already had solid foundations in English have polished and expanded their vocabulary tremendously over the past year. Of the Language Learners with no proficiency, four have successfully transitioned into both receptive and productive levels of language (verbal experimentation and self-motivated usage), and five have reached an acceptable level of receptive language development (auditory comprehension) to be prepared for the following academic year.



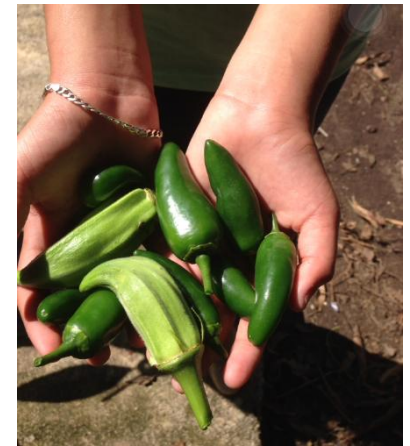
They have all transitioned well into their social surroundings and are at or near grade level standards in the content areas. We are excited to have a full age range in our school again (spanning 1st – 12th grades) and feel our students have developed a more family-oriented mindset. They take responsibility for each other and have the opportunity to not only be the learner, but the teacher as well as they tutor, advise, and play with students younger than them.





# Gardening

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Our investment in an evening watchman has paid off in more ways than one! We've cleared out the brush and made our banana and plantain crops more efficient. Because he is there in the evenings and people can see that we are actively working the land, the bunches aren't getting stolen like before. He has also taken it upon himself to plant and tend to a number of rotating crops such as corn, cassava, peanuts, squash, okra, and tomatoes.

Our older kids' gardening projects have also been fruitful this year! Our compost pile is constantly tended to and the jalapeno plants that we cultivated from seed produced from about February to June. We sold the peppers weekly to various people around town as well as to one of the bigger markets. We've also sprouted some herbs and spices in the hopes of tending to on an herb garden for our kitchen this coming year.

Our younger kids got their hands dirty towards the end of the year and helped mix dirt, fill pots, plant seeds, and water the plants. They learned about the water cycle and observed how terrariums could trap moisture so that our tiny pants could survive the heat over the weekends when we weren't there. While exploring the gardens, they developed a respect for nature and learned to observe the differences between various plants and plant parts.





# Plastic Recycling

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For the past 2 years, Faro has been organizing and testing out various recycling systems. While Faro has participated and hosted a number of recycling initiatives over the years, the majority focused on reusing old materials in personal, creative, crafty ways. We wanted to take part in a larger scale, sustainable program that would expand our impact. We have found a local company that brings us giant storage bags and then retrieves them when they are full. They will pay 2 pesos (about 5 cents) for each pound. Then, they compact the plastic into large bales and send them to a recycling plant in the capital where to be broken down and recycled into new materials. This has been a great way to educate our students on how individuals can participate within the large scale recycling process. They created and installed home collection bins to make collection a part of their everyday routine and held a community clean-up day in the surrounding community. It's also a good opportunity to teach them about finances as they keep track of the money that we get paid. While it is not much, the kids debated and decided where the money would best serve. This past year we chose to replenish some of our most loved art and school supply stock while we waited on the next sets of donations to arrive. In all, we collected nearly 800 pounds of plastic! Our kids have been evaluating this year's efforts and have already begun making plans and improvements for next year!

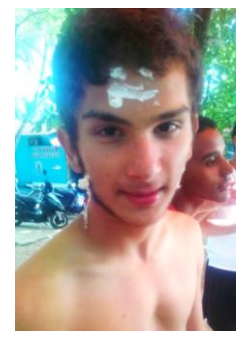
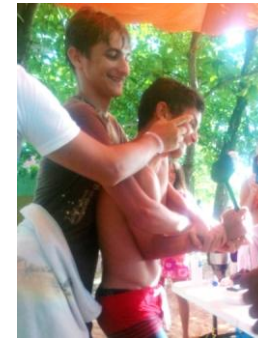




# Departing Students

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Faro's second graduate, **Juan Carlos Montalvo Cabrera**, was an active participant in Jovens C+ (an extracurricular club geared towards empowering youth to become active and conscious participants within their communities) and held a strong academic record throughout his educational career. He enjoys playing guitar and soccer, reading, and surfing. In the coming year he is looking forward to participating in a foreign exchange program to Canada, learning to cook, and improving his third language, French. Although he has no set opinions on a future career, he says he wants to attend college in North America and wants "to impact our world by changing the way people think about each other" and "to help those in need."



**James Hadley Garcia**, an 11th grader, will be moving with his mother and sister to finish high-school in Miami. His mother was one of the original founders of Faro and is proud that both of her children had the opportunity to grow up in their native culture yet are fully prepared to join their family in the United States. He will be finishing high school in the U.S. and, after graduation, would like to study electrical engineering and programming, as well as piano and composition. He would like to help others by composing music for people to enjoy or writing computer programs that help other musicians.

# Public ESL Classes

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This past semester we planned to offer four different English classes open to the public. Although our initial interest was in adults, the timing was difficult due to work hours and consistency. However, we had a large crowd of kids of all ages. One of the difficulties was sorting through the number of different age and ability ranges, but by the end of the semester we had developed 3 strong consistent groups. We had about twelve beginners ages 6 – 11, eight intermediate students ages 12 – 15, and 4 intermediate students age 16 – 18. The most important aspect of this experience was building relationships with new kids and learning how to better approach classes in the future.

## Our observations:

- 1) Our youngest learners (Grades 1-3) really needed more basic literacy skills than anything, so we are going to offer classes that focus on a broader range of language and literacy development.
- 2) Our beginner group (Grades 4-6), is going to focus on two types of instruction. a) tutoring help: to build off of the English homework they are already exposed to in the public school. b) develop auditory recognition and verbal usage rather than focusing on the written usage.
- 3) Our Middle and High School groups should be combined to have a larger pool of participants to participate verbally.
- 4) Our adult classes should be offered in conjunction with businesses in and around the community as professional development opportunities. This would aid in participation by removing the conflict with working hours. It would also allow us to focus upon specific contexts so that what they are learning in class is directly applicable to their work.





# Transitando/Fine Arts & Community Activism

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Transitando is a group of college-age Dominicans who study various forms of visual and performing arts in our capital, Santo Domingo. They study in art areas such as dance, theater, music, sculpture, painting, drawing, cinematography, and photography. They are dedicated to using their interests and skills to encourage unity, social activism, and cultural appreciation through the arts. This past year, we were able to cover their transport, room, and board through fundraising, but the majority of their time and efforts were volunteered. We are hoping to honor their dedication in the future with a small work stipend. This will also provide the opportunity for those dependent upon a paycheck to continue to be involved. Following is a description of our partnership during the 2015-2016 school year.







For three weeks Faro hosted half-day summer camps for a group of 25 kids ages 6-16. They studied art history, cultural movements, drawing, theater, music, ballet, modern dance, and hip-hop. This was a great experience for both campers and counselors. Campers worked towards a final presentation for their parents where they performed and discussed all that they had learned. They showed amazing team work, confidence, and self-discipline. For many of the counselors, this was their first experience to create and implement their own program. It was a great work/study experience as it required them to assume various leadership responsibilities. They were truly grateful for the professional experience and raved about the renewed sense of purpose they took from it. Faro is proud to be providing the opportunity and resources for Dominican young adults to cultivate and invest in their country; it demonstrates the importance of taking responsibility for your community and creating positive change from within.







*These weekend camps were developed to encourage a more positive relationship between the local police and the community.* We used activities based in their respective art areas to discuss topics such as the duties of the police, our rights and responsibilities as civic members, and transportation laws and safety. First, the counselors, kids, and police painted a mural showing children running into the open arms of the officer. This was meant to reinforce the idea that the purpose of the police is to serve and protect the public. The second phase was to learn about traffic safety and construct a Christmas tree for the station out of old motorcycle parts. The kids decorated traffic signs to be the ornaments and played games to learn and practice their significance.







The painters came twice a month to give drawing and painting workshops on Saturdays and Sundays. We had a group of about 40 kids from the surrounding community participate. In this culture, pencils and paper are often seen as an expensive, luxury item. Because of this, kids are hesitant to experiment and try things on their own.

At the beginning, our kids spent the majority of class time staring at their blank piece of paper. They constantly worried about "drawing it wrong" and "messaging-up". Once they started, they would quickly give up and get frustrated rather than persisting and learning from the experience. We worked on giving them basic skills, confidence, and the resources to explore their creativity in a new way.

We see an extension of this hesitancy and poor self-efficacy in the larger academic culture. Being correct is valued much more than trying. Students are encouraged to copy from the board, copy from the book, and copy from each other rather than participate in activities that allow them to think for themselves. Math work should be erased because it makes the final product look sloppy. It doesn't matter who does your project as long as it looks good. There is no accountability and little encouragement for kids to do things on their own, mess up, and then do better next time. We hope to be one small step in the right direction in correcting this ideology.







This is a partnership formed between students from Faro and the Cabreran public high school to work towards defining a community center in Cabrera. The community center would be available for a variety of classes from fine arts to career prep and be open to both students and the public. The idea would be to have one centralized location to house student led organizations, professional development classes, and any other project volunteers wished to offer. Our students along with other community members formed dance, instrumental, vocal, and painting clubs. Together, they orchestrated a large scale production to officially request the space from the town. The performance was over two hours long and they collected more than 180 signatures in favor of the project. While the city commissioner gave his approval to use and restore the old building, bureaucracy and red tape have since held up the process. We are still looking for a way to make this dream feasible in a central, highly visible location.

