

Pathway to Jesus—Caminito de Jesus Santiago, Dominican Republic

Greetings from the Dominican
Republic in the name of our Lord and
Savior Jesus Christ!

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COVID-19

COVID is very real in the DR as well and has impacted the country on so many levels. Families in our school have been affected in various ways, primarily on a financial level. A couple of staff members have experienced the virus, but thankfully are doing much better now. There are presently a lot of concerns from the Department of Health and the Ministry of Education because of how this virus continues to affect the country. Amidst the craziness of this whole pandemic they also held the presidential elections and a new president started serving on August 16. A decision was made by the new government to start the school year virtually, as well as to take the necessary time to prepare everyone for that (teachers, students, and parents), so that it could be done more effectively.

VIRTUAL LEARNING

Public schools took the months of September and October to get ready and officially started classes on November 2. Since our staff started to get prepared back in August, we decided to start school on October 5. We used the month of October to review with the students and to evaluate them while getting everyone used to virtual learning and using platforms such as Zoom and Google Classroom.

To say it has been a challenge is an understatement, but I am beyond impressed with the dedication and hard work of our staff. It is amazing to see how much our teachers have learned in such a short period of time and now are effectively implementing the new skills and knowledge that has been learned. We even had a few teachers on staff who had to first learn how to use a computer before learning how to create documents, lead Zoom calls and maneuver Google Classroom and they have done just that.

Our staff works from the school each day, but the students receive their classes virtually. The teachers and teacher's aides spend their days planning lessons, recording videos, helping other teachers record videos, conducting Zoom classes, posting homework assignments on Google Classroom, grading assignments, keeping the parents and students informed in the What's App groups that were formed for each grade, among other things. They definitely keep very busy.

BEING A LIGHT AND BRINGING HOPE TO THE FAMILIES

This has also been a huge challenge for the students and their families. They have had to learn this whole new way of learning as well and parents have had to take on a more active role in their child's learning, which in reality is a positive thing, yet challenging for many. We have made it our mission this year to be an extra bright light in their lives and to bring hope when needed. Families have lost loved ones recently...parents have lost their jobs...students have to figure out the virtual learning on their own because parents are at work during the day. One by one, we are working with these families – bringing them comfort, sharing words of hope, and finding solutions so their children will not only have a successful year at school but everyone will be drawn more and more to the feet of Jesus.

MY ROLE THIS YEAR

I have a very active role and "physical" presence at Pathway this year. Apart from all my normal duties, I am working very closely with the Administrative staff and the Academic team to make sure everything runs smoothly. Part of my job is to supervise the teachers and to be an encouragement for them as they face daily challenges. Since classes are offered virtually I can participate in their Zoom calls, observe their Google Classrooms and the work they post there, and monitor their conversations with the parents via Whats App. It has been wonderful to be so involved again and to have this opportunity to help in this manner. I also recently added English teacher to my repertoire. Our 4th, 5th and 6th students must take English as a subject. Presently, our English teacher is out with Covid so I am stepping in until she gets back on her feet again. It has been fun to interact with the students and to get into the "classroom" again.

THE HERNANDEZ FAMILY

SHELLEY – I am so grateful my health has stayed good through this whole COVID-19. I really can't complain. I continue to follow my treatment plan and that has gone well. I don't even have to go to the hospital these days. They send a nurse to the house once a month to take my blood. That part has been nice. Back in September I had some of my yearly tests run (extensive blood work and bone marrow biopsy) and the result of those tests came back great. We are still waiting to get my yearly scans approved from the insurance company. The request was initially denied, so we are in an appeal process. Those are vital scans that help determine where I am at with the Multiple Myeloma, so hopefully we will win the appeal

GUILLE – Guille continues to live in the states and works at Smits Farm, as well as refs volleyball and basketball games. This past spring and summer were very slow for that since all athletics shut down because of Covid. But thankfully he was able to start that back up again in the Fall, since he really enjoys doing that.

SARAH – We have been on another journey with Sarah. She started to experience some symptoms back in May (swelled up hands, swelled up face, headaches, and joint pain). After doctor's visits and tests, they have diagnosed her with Lupus. The Lupus has traveled to her kidneys, so she is also working with a kidney specialist. Thankfully, it hasn't affected her kidney function yet. It is in the beginning stages there. It is a new adjustment for her, and she will be on medication indefinitely. I am thankful for the good team of doctors she has and am so grateful the medicine is helping. Trinity is doing remote learning this first semester, so she is at home taking classes, which she isn't completely happy about. She loves being on campus, but she gets it. I am kind of glad she is at home right now because I can keep an eye on her as her body adjusts to the medication, etc.

MARK – After struggling for a long time with a decision, Mark decided to take this year off from Trinity. He doesn't do well with remote learning and he is still trying to officially decide what he wants to do. I think we are going to pursue a few trades because he loves to work with his hands. I know he is going to miss playing volleyball with them, but hopefully we can get him connected with something this year (either basketball or volleyball). Meanwhile, he is working in the meat department at Walt's. That keeps him busy these days.

END OF YEAR GIVING

Today we embark on our Year-End Campaign. **We need to raise \$20,000 by December 31** to meet our budget. God has always provided in the past, we are praying for his provision again. Can you help us? Our other goal is to find 15 more sponsors for families that are struggling financially even more so because of Covid. Sponsoring a child is \$35 a month. Please contact Shelley directly about our sponsorship program.

Will you please consider giving an end year donation to the Pathway to Jesus school? Will you please consider partnering with us so we can continue to work towards the vision and mission the Pathway to Jesus school strives to reach? If you are able to give a financial gift of any size, it would truly be a blessing to the school staff, and the children who are receiving a quality, Christ-centered education at Pathway to Jesus, even in the midst of this pandemic.

Any donations that are received in the next couple of months will be designated strictly for general operations. We have a couple of options as how to make the donation:

Gifts can be made by mailing a check, payable to Reconciliation Church (memo: Pathway to Jesus), to:
Pathway to Jesus
c/o Reconciliation Church
833 E. 168th Street
South Holland, IL 60473

Gifts can be made via the following Pay Pal link in the opening email, on our Facebook page Pathway to Jesus or our webpage pathwaytojesusschool.com

PRAYER REQUESTS

Praise God for His continued faithfulness and provision

Pray for our academic team and the students as they face new challenges this year because of virtual learning

Pray that God will provide the funds needed for the 2020-2021 school year

Pray that the Pathway to Jesus school will continue to be a light in the community and to our students and their families

Donations to Pathway to Jesus—Pathway to Jesus, Reconciliation Christian Ref Church, 833 E 168th Street, South Holland, IL 60473
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