

Eleanore's Project: Peru 2017

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The story of the Java backs arrival in Lima last month is complex. After Amanda carefully shipped them to Hope Haven in Sioux Falls, SD and I confirmed their arrival in early January...the crew there forgot to put them on the container! Together with 25 units of foam-in-place. I discovered this in Lima on March 13 at the warehouse. We were counting on the Java backs and FIPS not only for our two weeks there, but for a years' worth of seating supplies to be used by our colleagues at Yancana Huasy. I was a bit panicked, how to get the stuff to Peru quickly without breaking the bank?

After a few days of intense international phone calls it fell into place. Hope Haven drove the 11 boxes to Minneapolis to the home of Barb, OT professor at St Catherine University. She and 7 students were flying to Peru on March 18 on Delta airlines. Barb had a contact who knew a vice president at Delta. After being given the weight and sizes of boxes he authorized the 8 St. Kate's people to take the boxes as extra luggage on the flight free of charge. Meanwhile I obtained a letter from Yancana Huasy designed to get the materials through customs at the airport duty free. It all worked! Here were the boxes the day after they arrived.



Abdel came in a few days later for a small caster problem. His dad had spray painted the WC black to cover up the pink and it looked just great!

Here are some of the kids and teens who received Java backs while we were in Lima:



We saw Diana Marcela, who has CP, 6 years ago. Now she is 13 and spends hours at home alone because her mother works, her sister is a student and Diana cannot go to school. She has learned to move herself with her feet in her outgrown WC so she was set up with a hemi height frame, Java back and contoured cushion.



Alison has spina bifida and is very independent so she was excited to be able to propel her own chair. In the background is her mother, and Betsy our OT/ATP from Florida. In the left foreground is Jazmin, Yancana Huasy PT, and Jaime, Yancana Huasy OT intern. During the entire week Betsy worked with our Yancana Huasy colleagues doing intensive training and mentoring with the less experienced ones.

I did Ivan's WC, with two students from St. Kates. You never saw anyone so happy to move himself! His chest is really rotated and he is quite collapsed into kyphosis. So his lower body is longer in relation to his upper body and we struggled to get the back support right for him. I wound up using a short Java back, which is not really low on him. The good news is that like all these kids, Ivan's mother is doing postural care with him at night. After only three weeks he has adjusted to sleeping supine and supported instead of in fetal position. So we are hoping that he will be straightening out a bit in the coming months.





Marcos has Duchenne muscular dystrophy, and quite a lateral scoliosis. The Java deep back worked great for him. His family was glad to be able to remove it for folding the chair to go in taxis and so on when they take him to school.

Milagros has spina bifida and was ready to go in her new WC, as you can see.



Rodrigo has spina bifida and is active with good WC skills. His old chair was falling apart with broken welds on the back canes and did not offer him the support he needed and the Java back gave him. It made his propulsion more efficient.



Emely is 17, has CP and global delays with a delightful smile. Her father is widowed and her primary caregiver. He arrived late and was very apologetic, telling us about the traffic and that he does his best to be both mother and father but it is a lot to do. In the first photo she looks worried but you can see her personality in the final picture with her dad and her WC team.

Last but not definitely not least – we had to cancel our trip to Nasca because of unpredictable weather and flooding that might have stranded us. Not to mention the Global Studies office at St. Kate’s being very worried about the students’ welfare. So we used extra time in the second Lima week to jump start a major sorting and organization project which they never have time to do. There were boxes of seat cushions, hardware and accessories that were inaccessible and thus unusable. We sorted and inventoried and Rufino built shelves to accommodate the new organization.



Here is part of the results – all the remaining Java backs are organized and accessible with hardware in a bin above. Note the label – it says “Espaldares JAVA”!

