



# ACCESO INTERNATIONAL

## 2005 ANNUAL REPORT

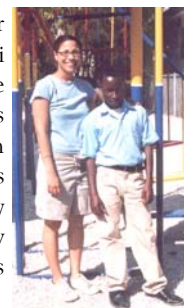
### PROJECT VISIT TO THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Between January 21 and February 1, 2005, a group of six volunteers (Lisette, Lisa, Kathleen, Roman, Jess and Christine) travelled to the DR. We visited the schools and library in and around Yamasa. The presentations held in our honour at Escuela Guasumita, Escuela Buenos Aires and Escuela Resoli were filled with enthusiasm, emotion, gratitude and pride. We were overwhelmed by the hospitality of the teachers and students, as well as by the official recognition that ACCESO received from the country's Secretary of State for Education. We attended the inauguration ceremony at Centro Educativo de Padre Arturo in San José de Ocoa for the playground, library and post-secondary bursary program that we financed in memory of Jill Frances Norwood, our former Co-Founder and Vice-President who passed away at the age of 28 in 2003. The celebration was well attended by students, staff, citizens, the media, and dignitaries including the Minister of Education and the Governor, who was representing the Dominican President. We spoke about JF and read her "Faith" poem. When we cut the ribbon, all 120 school children spontaneously burst through the gate and filled the playground with irresistible smiles and contagious laughs. They ran with such joy from the slide to the swings to the teeter-totters. It was also very meaningful to fill the memorial library with children's books. The celebrations in memory of JF were the highlight of our trip. We later visited Los Praditos (impoverished barrio in Santo Domingo) which is home to the children who attend the summer camp. Our post-secondary students hosted us on a tour of the Universidad Autonoma de Santo Domingo. Later, we were honoured to meet Dede Mirabal, in Salcedo, who kindly shared the story of her three "Mirabal Sisters" who were killed during the Trujillo dictatorship. It was a privilege to spend our last days with Lisette's hospitable relatives in her home village of San José de Pastrana, which is set in a spectacular mountainous and agricultural area near the north coast.



**Lisette Jimenez's Reflection:** On my trip to the DR with ACCESO, I had the opportunity to see first hand the necessities and plight of poor communities, of proud, respectful people who need and deserve a helping hand, and, at the schools we visited, of beautiful children with hope in their eyes for a better future. I also saw how ACCESO International has helped in keeping this hope alive, with the communities, with the parents of the students and especially with the students, with great big smiles, pencils and books in hand, ready to move forward. This realization was evident during our visit to Delvis' (medical student) rural home. His family proudly and generously hosted us at a lunch gathering. They served us sancocho (typical Dominican stew). They greeted us with smiles and offered us delicious home grown oranges and coconut water which we drank from the shell. Delvis gave us a tour of his land where they grow fruit to support the family. This trip reinforced the reason why I volunteer with ACCESO, and the great need for ACCESO's work. I hope to visit some of our other projects. Adelante!!

**Lisa Perry's Reflection:** I cherished the generosity of our friends and host families in Yamasa. I was happy to learn that our book donations to the Yamasa library are helpful for the countless youth studying there. Our visit to the bateys of Antonci and Guasumita, where Haitian immigrants live, was very meaningful. During our walk in these villages, I was struck by the extreme poverty. Too many homes are inadequate and often house numerous family members in very small quarters. I was very impressed with Marcial, the principal of Escuela Guasumita who was the first student that ACCESO sponsored in 1996. After he graduated, Marcial returned to his village to help by teaching the local children. We delighted in his students' recitals and in their excitement and smiles when we distributed school supplies, treats and stickers. We were very touched when the children presented us with flower bouquets. When we visited Marcial's mother's home, we noticed how proudly she displays her son's diplomas. Seeing this family pride, professional success and community service in Marcial's educational experience reinforced the profound impact that ACCESO has had on individuals, families and communities.



**Kathleen Pratt's Reflection:** Our visits to schools and with individual students that ACCESO supports were truly meaningful. Our visit to Ocoa to inaugurate the projects in JF Norwood's memory was certainly a highlight. I enjoyed meeting the two students who are being supported through JF's Memorial Fund. Yheimis is a bright young woman who is studying business administration; I was impressed with her plans to set up a drop-in centre for youth. Manuel Danilo is a responsible young man who is studying to be a teacher. I enjoyed the visit to his home where we met his wife and 6-month old daughter. The appreciation expressed by school staff and students, while overwhelming at times, gave us a sense of how necessary ACCESO's activities are and how much our support and solidarity are valued in the DR. For me, this experience demonstrated ACCESO's capacity and effectiveness in addressing the need for education at different levels. For some, it means ensuring basic needs are met so that students can learn. For others, it is the provision of school supplies (literally, putting a pencil in a student's hand) to enable participation. For the post-secondary students, it means social inclusion and making dreams come true. Above all, ACCESO gives its donors and its beneficiaries hope that a better world is possible.

## ACCESO INTERNATIONAL IS ...

An incorporated, not-for-profit, non-political, non-denominational and non-governmental, Ottawa-based, Canadian charitable organization which is completely volunteer operated. Its mandate is to promote greater access to all levels of education in Latin America and the Caribbean. ACCESO International was founded in 1996 by Dr. Christine Gervais who sought to address the disparity between her own educational opportunities and those of students in developing countries. She is now joined by over thirty volunteers who share her vision of educational equality. Together, they work to provide opportunities for socio-economically disadvantaged children, youth and women in Latin America and the Caribbean.

ACCESO International works with locally-based and Canadian affiliated organizations to provide support for marginalized children, youth and women so that they may study in their own country, in their own culture and in their own language. Through these endeavours, ACCESO International provides the means through which people can gain greater control over their lives and maintain hope for a brighter future for themselves, their families and their local communities.

ACCESO International was conceived not only as a charity but also as a meaningful solidarity. ACCESO International functions in a non-hierarchical way by focusing on equality, consensus building and collegiality among its members, counterparts and beneficiaries. The aim is to carry out our development work in collaboration with our students, partners and supporters so that together, we may create appropriate and relevant opportunities for learning and progress. ACCESO International's vision, the students' aspirations, the volunteers' dedication, the partners' cooperation and our donors' support have joined together in common cause for positive and lasting change. ACCESO International's founding principles of solidarity, equality, human rights, peace and social justice have enabled this collaboration to thrive in very successful and meaningful ways.



Since 1996 ACCESO has worked in 10 countries helping:

- ◆ 9 preschools
- ◆ 7 primary schools and 4 high schools
- ◆ 2 women's cooperatives
- ◆ 2 human rights workshops
- ◆ 2 vocational centres
- ◆ 2 orphanages
- ◆ 5 libraries and 6 homework centres
- ◆ 7 summer camps and 1 playground
- ◆ Over 300 primary students with bursaries
- ◆ Over 30 high school students with bursaries
- ◆ Over 75 post-secondary students with bursaries
- ◆ Over 85 immigrant children
- ◆ Over 3000 high school students
- ◆ Over 5000 primary students
- ◆ Over 350 preschool children
- ◆ Over 10 000 library patrons

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## PROJECT VISIT TO NICARAGUA by Christine Gervais

Under extreme heat, humidity and a combination of torrential rain and sunny skies, my visit to Nicaragua between May 21 and 25, 2005 was a powerfully rewarding experience. When I visited Escuela Para Todos (School For All), I was warmly welcomed by the students and staff. There was a sign that was prepared in Canada's official colours, red and white, that read "Bienvenida Christine." I enjoyed a very meaningful welcoming ceremony where students shared testimonies, expressed their gratitude, presented me with plaques, and shared concerns for their future and their hopes of our continued support. I shared about ACCESO International and I encouraged the students with their studies all the while reminding them that they deserved their access to education and that ACCESO International was proud to be part of their educational journey. After the official ceremony, I was able to visit the modestly equipped classrooms, as well as individual students to learn more about their struggles and dreams. I discovered that many of the physically challenged students had been disabled or dismembered during the war. The history of their injuries and their current educational efforts were a powerful reminder of Nicaragua's continued struggles with such a troubled past and its everlasting impact on individual lives. I also accompanied Martha, the director of the school, through a very poor barrio in district six of Managua where we stopped at homes to recruit students for Escuela Para Todos. The area was extremely poor with countless makeshift tin and wood homes. The endless view of these shed-like homes on both sides of a ravine struck every chord of injustice, poverty, unfairness, inequality, exploitation, displacement, despair and guilt within me. While I pondered the comparative comforts



and privileges that I knew awaited me back home in Canada, my mind was also drawn to the reason that Martha had brought me to this area; my admiration for her grew exponentially in that instant. Despite the tight and almost impossible budget with which the school operates, and the modest means upon which she herself lives, she continues to seek out the most marginalized individuals in the most difficult circumstances so that they can have access to education. I was indeed encouraged that through the school director's leadership, we were supporting the education of youth from this district. Similarly, the next day, we visited a drug and alcohol treatment centre where Martha was once again recruiting marginalized populations so that they could have access to the school. Several young men from this centre have since begun classes with Escuela Para Todos under our sponsorship. Despite the brevity of my visit, I gained great insight into the educational, socio-economic and political struggles of the Nicaraguan people. I am grateful for, proud of, and confident in ACCESO International's relationship of solidarity with Escuela Para Todos especially under Martha's direction.



## MESSAGE FROM THE FOUNDER



2005 was a very busy and productive year for travel, project visits, revenue, cooperation and policy development. A total of ten volunteers on six different occasions visited five countries (Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Mexico). As you will read in this report, these project visits were meaningful

and powerful experiences for our volunteers, local partners and recipients. We were delighted to establish a new project in Haiti, to relocate our support in Mexico, to expand our pre-school support in Guatemala through a major construction project and to enhance our human rights focus in Honduras through workshops for women. Under the guidance of our newly established Research Advisory Group, we developed very helpful policies on project management, ethical fund-raising, accounting, volunteer management and travel. These documents are enabling us to be more accountable to our students, partners, volunteers and donors.

Thanks to the generosity of foundations, individual donors, schools, community organizations and corporate sponsors and to the success of our Sounds & Tastes of the Americas event, 2005 was by far our most successful financial year thus far. We are very grateful for your support of our efforts to enhance the educational experiences of thousands of children, youth and women. Such generosity and solidarity are important sources of encouragement, inspiration and continuity.

Our volunteer collective consists of very dedicated individuals whose efforts help to make education an accessible, liberating, peaceful and successful journey for all. Our values and relations of collegiality, equality, solidarity, creativity, dignity and accountability with each other, with our counterparts and with our beneficiaries serve to strengthen our promotion of education in the contexts of very challenging human rights struggles.

I am always encouraged and energized by the devotion of relatives and by the enthusiasm of volunteers, friends and colleagues. I am very grateful for the privilege to collaborate with students, teachers, partner organizations, families, volunteers, foundations and donors in the creation of meaningful educational opportunities that instil hope, ambition and freedom.

I look forward to continuing and improving such meaningful collaborations and work in 2006 when we celebrate our 10th anniversary.

*Christine Gervais*



### 2005 VOLUNTEER COLLECTIVE

Mike Adamyk, Sarah Alderwick, Pablo Ayala, Juliana Bravo, Jamie Carmichael, Jessica Cave, Olga Chavez, France Lise Colin, Colleen Cotter, Jen Delaney, Mallorie Divert, Susan Dolan, Jocelyne Dubois, Millie Duval, Betsy Estevez-Darling, Jordan Fairbairn, Rosa Frias, Sandra Garrido, Chantal Gauthier, Christine Gervais, Maria de Guzman, Rachel Heft, Ineke Helby, Alana Henry, Soonsim Jeong, Lisette Jimenez, Natalia Johanson, Deb Johnston, Lynne Leblanc, Brian Lim, Brandy McDevitt, Roshanne Musa, Audrey Ning, Eleanor Norman, Kim Paradis, Denisia Pereira, Grant Perry, Lisa Perry, Veronica Piñero, Kathleen Pratt, Verónica Martínez-Solares, Graciela Sarasua, Jenn Spaans, Michele Valcour, Amy Wilmott, Vivian Valderrama



### 2005-2006 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Brandy McDevitt *Project Management*, Christine Gervais *President*, Eleanor Norman *Community Relations & Assistant Treasurer*, Grant Perry *Treasurer*, Kim Paradis *Operational Effectiveness & Secretary*, Natalia Johanson *Volunteer Coordination*, Rachel Heft *Fundraising*

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Volunteers and students with Dede Mirabal in the DR

## PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2005

In 2005, ACCESO International operated in nine countries supporting various projects from pre-school to post-secondary education.

**In Bolivia**, we continued to support the library, homework centre, day care, music room and post-secondary bursaries at Centro Integral WARMI in Cochabamba. By providing books, computer resources, educational materials, tutoring services, skills training and bursary support, we are helping to provide greater educational and employment opportunities for the marginalized children, youth and women at the centre. This year, we also engaged in a very meaningful dialogue with WARMI's staff to establish a series of women's human rights workshops and a supplementary bursary program for 2006. This initiative, funded by the Luke 4 Foundation and Mary's Pence, will provide 20 additional bursaries and workshops on human and legal rights that address community leadership and the prevention of violence and disease, including HIV/AIDS. This project will educate and empower underprivileged and underserved women, youth, children, indigenous people and displaced migrants through services in their own language and within their own cultural environment.



*"Dear ACCESO International, I would like to thank you for the school supplies. I have been using them for good use for the past month. The thing I enjoyed the most was the pencil case because of how I could put it in my binder. I would like to thank you once again. Sincerely, Elementary Student."*

**In Canada**, we partnered with the South-East Ottawa Centre for a Healthy Community to establish a new project entitled "Solidarity with Students: Making Education More Accessible for New Canadians." In August, kits of grade-appropriate school supplies were distributed to 65 students to help prepare them for their academic year. The project offsets the expenses of school supplies for New Canadian students from low-income families. The provision of educational materials helps students participate in, and benefit more fully from, their classes and homework. Gifts of supplies, packsacks and shoes allow the children and youth to attend school with greater dignity and confidence, and to experience greater social inclusion within the school environment.

**In the Dominican Republic**, we had a very meaningful year. We attended the inauguration of the playground, library and bursary program at Centro Educativo Padre Arturo in San José de Ocoa which we funded in memory of JF Norwood. We supported two young women and a young man who are studying at Universidad Autonoma de Santo Domingo, as well as a young man who is studying at Universidad Dominicana. We provided educational materials, student bursaries, chalkboards, desk repairs, water systems and outdoor classroom shelters for three primary schools near Yamasa: Escuela Guasumita in the batey of Guasumita, Escuela Basica Buenos Aires in Reparadero and Escuela Primaria Rural Doña Maria Petronila Rojas de Payano in the community of Resoli.



**In Guatemala**, we have partnered with Oneness Through Mission to support projects in Sacala, Tioxya and Guatemala City. We continued to support a pre-school classroom associated with a widowed women's weavers cooperative in the remote mountain Mayan village of Sacala. Our support of this project allows children to learn and play while their mothers are training and working at the cooperative. We also assisted with the development and opening of a preschool in the mountain village of Tioxya. In the two early childhood development classrooms at Camino Seguro that we helped to supply with resources and furniture in 2004, the children are thriving in a creative and colourful educational environment. Through very generous funding from the Luke 4 Foundation, we committed to supporting Camino Seguro's and Oneness Through Mission's joint construction of an early intervention centre which is located just beside the dump in Guatemala City. We are helping to fully equip (furniture and resources) 4 pre-school classrooms so that the young children, who usually harvest the dump alongside their parents, will have a safe, clean and stimulating educational alternative.



**In Haiti**, we established two education projects which are located in Verettes and in Gonaïves. In Verettes, we are providing educational supplies and education-oriented equipment for a homework centre that is part of a project entitled "Timoun Tèt Ansanm." This project offers literacy support to at-risk, impoverished and orphaned children. Activities include tutoring sessions, basic literacy and pre-school classes, as well as summer camps. In Gonaïves, we are providing educational supplies and a much needed meal program at a primary school: École Emmaus Centre St. Joseph which was severely damaged by a hurricane in 2004.



**In Honduras**, our projects in memory of human rights activist José Eduardo López have continued to provide educational materials and bursary assistance for an orphanage in La Flecha, an orphanage in El Progreso, a primary school in Buen Ejemplo, a home work centre in Los Laureles, a high school in El Progreso and a high school in La Lima.

Thanks to very generous funding from the Luke 4 Foundation, we established a series of weekly human rights workshops and skills training sessions for women in El Progreso. These workshops created and encouraged awareness, respect and entitlement of human rights for women by focusing on a culture of peace, personal development, civil rights and leadership. In 2006, the participants will be sharing their knowledge and skills with other women in their communities through focus groups and accompaniment projects. Based on a suggestion by the women in the workshops, we initiated a pen-pal exchange among the workshop participants and our volunteers. The communications have been mutually supportive and enhancing for all the women. The letters are filled with words of inspiration, sisterhood, friendship, solidarity, support, admiration and shared dreams.





In Mexico, we created a new partnership to enhance the basic level of education that children and youth already receive. Our support consists of providing supplies for reading rooms and creativity workshops in Ayutla (Guerrero), Leon (Guanajuato), San Luis Potosi (SLP) and Guadalajara (Jalisco), as well as for an educational playground project known as “La Casita” in San Luis Potosí. In the reading rooms, the children receive additional assistance in the after-school hours with reading and writing. In the creativity workshops, children have space for recreation, imagination and play. The activities are accompanied by a critical reflection process that focuses on gender, justice and on the preservation of peace and the environment. The formation process contributes to the children’s integral human growth.

In Nicaragua, we continued to sponsor Fundación Escuela Para Todos (School for All) in Managua which is a school that provides computer training to individuals who are unemployed, physically challenged, struggling to exit the sex trade, seeking to escape street gang life and/or trying to overcome substance abuse. The sponsored students obtain diplomas in Computer Programming, Computer Operator and Cash Register Computer Skills. Thanks to a substantial grant from the Luke 4 Foundation, we were able to support an additional 30 students this year. As a result, these students are able to overcome the obstacles of exploitation, discrimination, marginalization, displacement, unemployment and underemployment. Our bursary program with Escuela Para Todos is vital to the employment potential of marginalized individuals who are struggling with so many social, human rights and physical challenges. We congratulate the staff and students for their dedication and vision.



In Peru, we continued to celebrate the graduations of seven post-secondary level students and to share in their successful employment searches in the fields of nursing, education, nutrition and engineering. We also supported the costs associated with the final exam for one of our engineering students who was finally able to obtain his accreditation. We also provided bursaries to students who were preparing for their admission into university. We are proud of the dedication, responsibility and success of these students.

## PROJECT VISIT TO MEXICO by Brandy McDevitt

I, along with my husband Myles, had the opportunity to visit Mexico in November 2005. Besides vacation, we had the opportunity to meet with the Sisters Religiosas del Sagrado Corazón de Jesús, AR and to view their popular education programs which currently exist in the more marginalized areas of Ayutla, Leon, Guadalajara, and San Luis Potosi. Specifically we visited the projects in Leon and Guadalajara and had the chance to speak with women who help facilitate many of the popular education programs for children, which include after-school activities and summer programs which supplement their traditional learning, particularly in the areas of reading, writing and math. These local women, who work in collaboration with the Sisters, open up their homes and their hearts to help facilitate the programs for the children. We also witnessed training sessions for women on sewing, herbal medicines and handicrafts so that women will have the skills and confidence to actively participate in commerce and income generation for their families. As with many programs existing around the world, the impact and breadth of the programs are limited by funding, or lack thereof. Therefore, ACCESO International is pleased to be able to formally establish links and provide funding for these programs in Mexico. We look forward to working with the Sisters Religiosas del Sagrado Corazón de Jesús, AR and to ensuring more children and women continue to access their meaningful programs.



## PROJECT VISIT TO GUATEMALA by Christine Gervais

My visit to Guatemala (April 6-12, 2005) confirmed the significance of our endeavours and particularly the value of the pre-schools. The opportunities for education created for the Mayan children in remote mountain villages of Tioxya and Sacala were very much appreciated by the communities. One village leader named Javier explained to me that they were so pleased to receive a pre-school for the children because for over 500 years of colonization by the Spanish, the Mayan people were not allowed to be educated. This comment struck such a profound chord in me. I realized in that moment, that by supporting these pre-schools, we were not only adding smiles, laughter, colour and creativity to these children’s lives, but we were also helping to overcome centuries of neglect, discrimination and oppression. While I was in Guatemala City visiting the two kindergarten classrooms that we helped to finance in 2004, I noticed that the conditions at the Guatemala City dump



were unbelievably troubling. The pollution, stench and filth in the neighbourhood surrounding the dump were difficult to witness. The corresponding human struggles with dignity, self-worth and hope were disturbing and discouraging. I discovered that countless preschool aged children accompany their parents into the dump each day to salvage whatever they can to survive. In response to this reality, ACCESO International has collaborated with Camino Seguro and Oneness through Mission to furnish and supply a centre with four pre-school classrooms where these young children can find alternative, safe and healthy spaces to learn and play. The construction of the building is already underway and we will be traveling as a group to Guatemala in February 2006 to participate in the furnishing and set up of these early childhood education classrooms. Throughout my trip, I was impressed and inspired by the spectacular colours and spiritual depth of the Mayan culture, as well as by the resilience and resourcefulness of the Mayan people.

## PROJECT VISIT TO HONDURAS

**Reflection by Christine Gervais:** Between May 25th and June 2nd 2005, I traveled to Honduras to contribute to education workshops on women's human rights in El Progreso. During the workshops, I observed a group of courageous women who shared their struggles with violence, poverty, unemployment, underemployment and lack of education. Together, we addressed the local, national and international legal frameworks that guaranteed their rights as humans and as women. We shared about solidarity, support, resistance and resourcefulness. We planned education and awareness strategies. Through these very meaningful dialogues, we shared smiles, laughs and tears. Since then, at the women's request, we set up a very meaningful letter exchange between the women from the workshops and ACCESO International's volunteers. The long distance support and friendship has been a powerful experience for both groups. During the rest of the trip, I traveled with Grant, and our son Jordan to visit the orphanages, homework centres, primary school and two high schools that we began to sponsor in 2004. In these locations, we shared friendship, fair trade soccer balls, school supplies, excursions, food and hygiene products. One of our more memorable moments was when we brought the two high school students who are sponsored in memory of Eduardo Lopez to meet Eduardo's mother. It was a powerful moment that bridged over twenty years of grief and loss with a sense of hope for what Eduardo's human rights efforts strived so bravely to achieve: education and dignity. It was very worthwhile to observe the scope, depth and progress of our projects in Honduras.



**Reflection by Jordan Perry, 11 years old:** From the plane, Honduras looked rich in healthy mountain land. After we landed, I felt sad when I saw poor children, poor houses, dirty streets and old cars. On the first day, we visited an orphanage. We brought school supplies and a fair trade soccer ball. I met lots of friends and we played soccer. I felt very happy with one boy named Marvin; he is 10 years old. We played a lot together that week. He is a nice friend. When we drove around, we saw sugar cane and banana trees. We even drove through a river where there was no bridge. I saw lizards and iguanas too. We ate lots of beans and tortillas but my favourite food was the fresh mango. At the ruins of Copan, I had fun with many children that we brought from the orphanage. We ran up and down the ruins and we went on a moto taxi ride. Driving in the mountains was fun on the winding roads. It was very, very hot all week. One morning, we went to a "vaso de leche" project; it means 'glass of milk' and it's where children go every day for breakfast because there is no food at their house. I liked going to see a big water fall and to the coast where the Garifuna (Hondurans originally from Africa) live along the ocean. There I met boys who sold bread after school for money; they carried very heavy baskets of bread on their head. I bought some bread and it was very tasty. Later I visited a homework centre and a school in the mountains where we gave more school supplies and fair trade soccer balls. I played a spin top game called trompo. On our last day, we visited a boy named Carlitos, who was physically disabled; his home was very poor and he lived with his little brothers and sisters without their parents. Because of what I saw in Honduras, I want to make an Amigos Club to learn about our friends in other countries. I want to learn more Spanish and I want to raise more money so we can send more school supplies, clothes and food.

**Reflection by Grant Perry:** I was fortunate to have the opportunity to travel to Honduras with Christine and our son Jordan. We were able to view first hand ACCESO's projects and the people who benefit directly and indirectly from them. Although Honduras is a country with immense natural beauty and warm friendly people, it is crippled by inequities, corruption and lack of social benefits especially for the most destitute. This trip solidified for me the immense importance that ACCESO brings to these deserving people. We met strong, proud people, not in need of hand-outs, but who are searching for opportunities to improve their lives. I feel privileged to be able to provide those opportunities. While there, we were able to visit and spend time with many children in inadequately funded orphanages. The happiness and unconditional love that these children share so openly with us, strangers to their home, leaves one wondering, how can we help more? There must be a way.



**Reflection by Betsy Estevez-Darling** My trip to Honduras will always remain special in my heart as it helped me to understand that we must help women to overcome gender-based violence, in order to build a better world. I traveled to Honduras between November 10 to December 4, 2005 to conduct an evaluation of the women human rights workshops. My experience exceeded my expectations. I worked with the women and with the Hermanas Educadoras de Notre Dame in El Progreso; I also participated in disaster relief work because of a flooding emergency. Truly, this experience has enriched my knowledge of international development. Overall, the human rights training project achieved its objectives. Since it was the first of its kind for the participants, it represented a unique and innovative initiative that promoted women's rights in a rural area. It created awareness and understanding, and it increased the women's knowledge of their inalienable human rights. The participants gained greater self-confidence and raised their awareness of discrimination against women. They each developed a positive attitude towards solidarity with other women. While the women experienced some conflicts as they redefined and renegotiated their gender identities, their year long journey resulted in better and more equal family relationships. I support ACCESO International's grassroots approach to empowering women in Honduras because working directly with women is crucial to achieving lasting change. It is remarkable to witness the change in the women who have participated in the training. They quickly realized the important role that they themselves play in improving the treatment of other women and girls in their communities. I have the greatest admiration for these women for being able "to throw out their alphabet of submission and to walk with their heads raised." I will be always thankful to ACCESO International for giving me the opportunity to share laughs, tears and solidarity with all of these amazing women.



## SOUNDS & TASTES OF THE AMERICAS

On April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2005, ACCESO International presented its 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Sounds & Tastes of the Americas dinner, show and auction at the Ukrainian Hall in Ottawa. We welcomed over 300 guests and volunteers and we raised over \$30,000. It was an evening filled with amazing entertainment by Colores Andinos, Cristian Flores, Simon Bakalarz, Peru Mestizo, Caribbean Flag Dancers, Caporales de Bolivia, Churun Meru, Esmeraldas de Colombia, Mexico Lindo, Nicaragua Mia and Maria Hawkins. Guests were treated to an abundance of tasty cultural food that was served with the help of students from the K.E.Y. Club of Sir Robert Borden High School. Toni Francis was our emcee and Lawrence Greenspon was our auctioneer. The silent and live auctions showcased over 190 donated items. ACCESO is very grateful to all the donors, guests, entertainers and volunteers who helped to make our largest fundraiser such a great success!



### ACCESO INTERNATIONAL'S SPONSORS & SUPPORTERS

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## TREASURER'S DISCUSSION



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In 2005, ACCESO International's income before deferrals and endowments was \$121,830.56. Fortunately, this amount exceeded the organization's target of \$100,000. As a reflection of ACCESO International's commitment to accountability and responsible charitable business, over \$10,000 was raised and allocated to cover expenses incurred during the 2005 fiscal year. This practice ensures that non-restricted received donations are allocated directly to our education projects.

## ACCOUNTABILITY, AUTHENTICITY AND MODESTY

As a testament to our commitment to accountability, authenticity and simplicity, ACCESO International ensures that received donations are allocated directly to the education projects because operating costs (including administration, communications and travel) are covered by ACCESO International's founder, her supportive family, the generous volunteers, selected corporate sponsors, foundations and certain small-scale fund-raising activities. As an organization that is non-governmental and is completely volunteer-operated, ACCESO International is proud to maintain an authentic and modest foundation upon which to demonstrate its shared commitment to educational equality.

## AUDITORS' REPORT

To the Directors of ACCESO International

We have audited the statement of financial position of ACCESO International as at December 31, 2005 and the statements of operations and changes in net assets for the year then ended. These financial statements are the responsibility of management. Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audit.

Except as explained in the following paragraph, we conducted our audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform an audit to obtain reasonable assurance whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement. An audit includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. An audit also includes assessing the accounting principles used and significant estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall financial statement presentation.

In common with many charitable organizations, ACCESO International derives revenue from donations and fundraising, the completeness of which is not susceptible of satisfactory audit verification. Accordingly, our verification of these revenues was limited to the amounts recorded in the records of ACCESO International and we were not able to determine whether any adjustments might be necessary to donation and fundraising revenue, excess of revenue over expenses, current assets and net assets.

In our opinion, except for the effect of adjustments, if any, which we might have determined to be necessary had we been able to satisfy ourselves concerning the completeness of the donation and fundraising revenue referred to in the preceding paragraph, these financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of ACCESO International as at December 31, 2005 and the results of its operations and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian generally accepted accounting principles. As required by the Canada Corporations Act, we report that, in our opinion, these principles have been applied on a basis consistent with that of the preceding year.

*KPMG LLP*

Chartered Accountants

Ottawa, Canada  
March 17, 2006

## ACCESO INTERNATIONAL

Statement of Financial Position

December 31, 2005, with comparative figures for 2004

	2005	2004
<b>Assets</b>		
Current assets:		
Cash	\$ 91,484	\$ 63,649
Amounts receivable	762	-
Prepaid expenses	1,329	371
	93,575	64,020
Investments (market value - \$5,702)	5,808	-
	\$ 99,383	\$ 64,020
<b>Liabilities and Net Assets</b>		
Current liabilities:		
Accrued liabilities	\$ 2,000	\$ 1,413
Deferred revenue (note 2)	44,530	20,764
	46,530	22,177
Net assets:		
Endowment (note 4)	5,000	5,000
Unrestricted	47,853	36,843
	52,853	41,843
	\$ 99,383	\$ 64,020

Statement of Operations

Year ended December 31, 2005, with comparative figures for 2004

	2005	2004
Revenue:		
Donation	\$ 49,203	\$ 16,574
Sponsorship	607	1,242
Fundraising	39,424	29,398
Interest	100	4
	89,334	47,218
Expenses:		
Projects and scholarships	62,966	20,969
Fundraising	9,645	8,219
Administration	5,713	6,228
	78,324	35,416
Excess of revenue over expenses	\$ 11,010	\$ 11,802

Statement of Changes in Net Assets

Year ended December 31, 2005, with comparative figures for 2004

	Unrestricted	Endowment	Total 2005	Total 2004
Balance, beginning of year	\$ 36,843	\$ 5,000	\$ 41,843	\$ 25,041
Excess of revenue over expenses	11,010	-	11,010	11,802
Endowment contribution	-	-	-	5,000
Balance, end of year	\$ 47,853	\$ 5,000	\$ 52,853	\$ 41,843

## ACCESO INTERNATIONAL

Notes to Financial Statements

Year ended December 31, 2005

ACCESO International is a non-governmental charitable organization that promotes and enables greater access to education in Latin America and the Caribbean by providing bursary assistance to individuals, as well as supplies and books to schools, libraries and education centres. It was founded in 1996, and was incorporated as a not-for-profit organization under Part II of the Canada Corporations Act effective March 21, 2003.

### 1. Significant accounting policies:

#### (a) Revenue recognition:

Donation and fundraising revenue is recognized when received or receivable if the amount to be received can be reasonably estimated and collection is reasonably assured.

Investment revenue is recorded when earned.

Restricted donations are deferred and recognized in the year in which the related expense occurs.

#### (b) Endowment:

Endowment contributions are recorded as a direct increase in net assets when received.

#### (c) Use of estimates:

The preparation of financial statements in conformity with Canadian generally accepted accounting principles requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities and disclosure of contingent assets and liabilities at the date of the financial statements and the reported amounts of revenues and expenses during the year. Actual results could differ from these estimates. These estimates are reviewed annually and as adjustments become necessary, they are reported in the year in which they become known.

#### (d) Contributed goods and services:

ACCESO receives an indeterminate number of volunteer hours and donors contribute goods and services each year to assist ACCESO in carrying out its charitable activities. Because of the difficulty of determining their fair value, these goods and services are not recognized in these financial statements.

### 2. Deferred revenue:

	2005	2004
Luke 4 Foundation	\$ 42,204	\$ 20,264
Mary's Pence	2,326	-
Haiti	-	500
	\$ 44,530	\$ 20,764

### 3. Long-term investment:

The long-term investment is comprised of a bond with a maturity date beyond the next fiscal year.

### 4. Endowment:

The JoAnna Townsend Endowment Fund was established during the year for the purpose of supporting projects in Guatemala. Investment income earned is restricted to the above purpose and is deferred until the related expense is incurred. The endowment principal is required to be maintained.

### 5. Fair value of financial assets and financial liabilities:

The carrying values of cash, amounts receivable and accrued liabilities approximate their fair market values.

The fair value of investments is disclosed in the statement of financial position.

### 6. Statement of cash flows:

A statement of cash flows has not been presented as it would not provide additional meaningful information.