



# 2017 Annual Report

Quality Education in the Dominican Republic

Yspaniola 



## A Letter From The Chairwoman Of The Board

### Dear friends and supporters of Yspaniola,

This year marks the fifth anniversary since we first opened the doors of our Learning Center in Batey Libertad. In the past five years, we have grown from serving 50 students in 2012 to serving 166 students in 2017. Our teaching staff has grown from two teachers in 2012 to four teachers in 2017, all of whom are talented and respected local leaders. We continue to monitor our students' progress and have found that students are reading at an earlier age and at a higher level each year. We are proud of our achievements, although there is still much work to be done. The recent arrival of our new Academic Director, Alejandra García Pérez, who brings a wealth of experience in the education sector, is a significant step in support of our commitment to bring high-quality literacy instruction to the students of Batey Libertad.

In this report, you will find more details about our Learning Center, as well as updates from our University Scholarship Program and Service-Learning Program, which remain robust components of our work in Batey Libertad and the Dominican Republic. Our three university scholar graduates are thriving professionally, and we are thrilled to have two of them – Mayra Rodríguez and Julio Louis – recently join the Yspaniola team. Seeing their work in action, as a gifted educator and our new Director of Operations, respectively, reminds us of the immense potential of our work, as those educated within the Learning Center and through our Scholarship Program become our newest leaders and change agents.

This year we are sad to say goodbye to our outgoing Executive Director, Ani Yanachkova, who served with Yspaniola over two years, through much transition and growth. Ani was responsible for building up our team of teachers and local staff, allowing for greater local leadership and ownership of our programs. She will be missed, but the impact of her leadership will continue to be felt in the years ahead.

Thank you to all of you who have continued to support us through many changes, challenges and growth within the organization. It is your commitment to our work that allows us to continue to move forward toward our vision of a more inclusive Dominican Republic, where all individuals have access to quality education and full citizenship.

With many thanks,

Cynthia So-Armah, MD, MPH  
Chairwoman of the Board

# Yspaniola's Vision

We believe in a Dominican Republic where all Dominicans have access to quality education and full citizenship. The economic and legal barriers which restrict educational access for children growing up in Dominican bateyes today will limit their future opportunities for employment and full participation in Dominican society as adults.

Yspaniola works to give the students of Batey Libertad the best start possible and to pave the way for academic success at all levels. We know that, given the right support, batey communities themselves hold the solutions to the challenges they face. In the future, we aim to expand our successful model of empowerment through education to other batey communities in the Dominican Republic.

## We Believe In...

### High-Quality Education

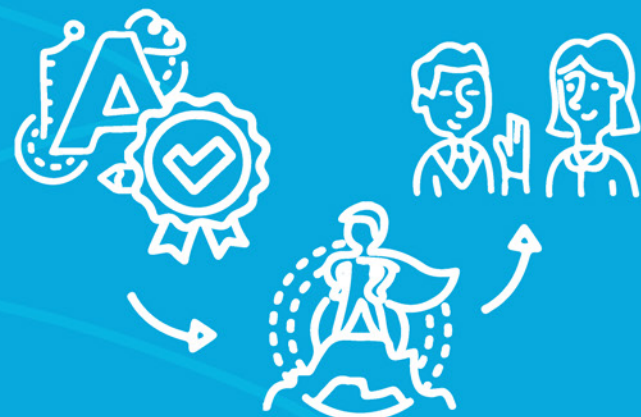
Providing high-quality literacy support for preschool to high school students in our Learning Center, giving them the skills and resources they need to succeed within the Dominican education system, and supporting talented older students to reach the highest levels of academic achievement with university scholarships.

### Local Leadership

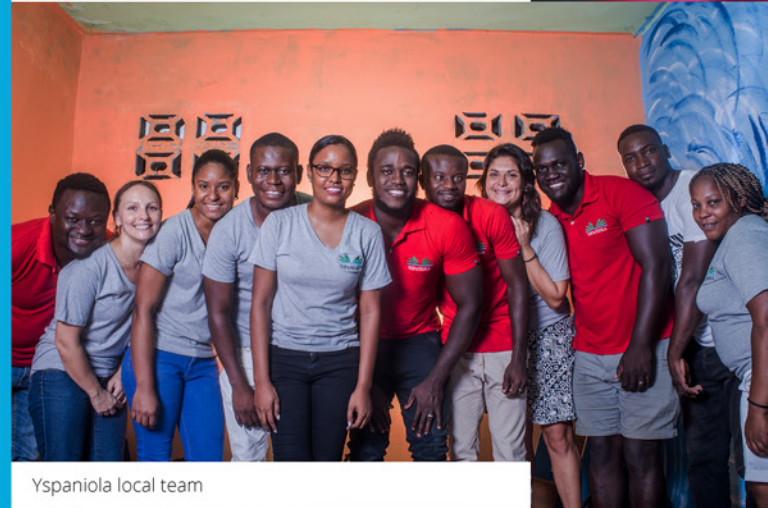
Building the capacity of our local staff and community members to become advocates and agents of change for themselves and the future of their community.

### Intercultural Partnerships

Cultivating intercultural knowledge and understanding, and developing a network of Yspaniola ambassadors in the United States and around the world.



Yamillet



Yspaniola local team



Julio Louis and Paul Eligene plan Pre-K construction

# The Batey Libertad Learning Center

During the 2016-17 academic year, our Learning Center served 166 students across nine classes. We increased instructional time across all classes and strengthened professional development for our teaching staff. Our pilot Pre-K class of 15 students was so successful that this year it has been permanently integrated into our early childhood education program, which includes three levels of classes serving students ages 4-7. In the year ahead, we will continue to focus on teacher training and early childhood education, as well as supporting our teachers to assume increased ownership of the Center's administrative functions.



Marisela reads with Isle

## This year, Yspaniola supporters made the following possible:

### Early Childhood Education Program

- An additional Pre-K class that provides for a lower teacher-to-student ratio
- Construction of our multi-functional outdoor learning space
- Instructional hours that were triple the previous year's hours for our Pre-K program
- The addition of a full-time Pre-K head teacher and a second bilingual (Spanish & Creole) Pre-K classroom assistant

### Batey Libertad Learning Center

- Teacher Ronaldo Charle was promoted to Learning Center Director
- Five assistant teachers in our Learning Center provided individualized support to students
- Students transitioning to high school received special classes
- Annual student report cards ensured students and parents were aware of student progress and encouraged parent engagement
- Highest student attendance rates in the Learning Center to date

- 1,000 hours of combined class time and reading hours
- 32 more full days of class offered than last year
- 10,000 meals served in our Food Program



María Josefina serves students a snack in our Food Program

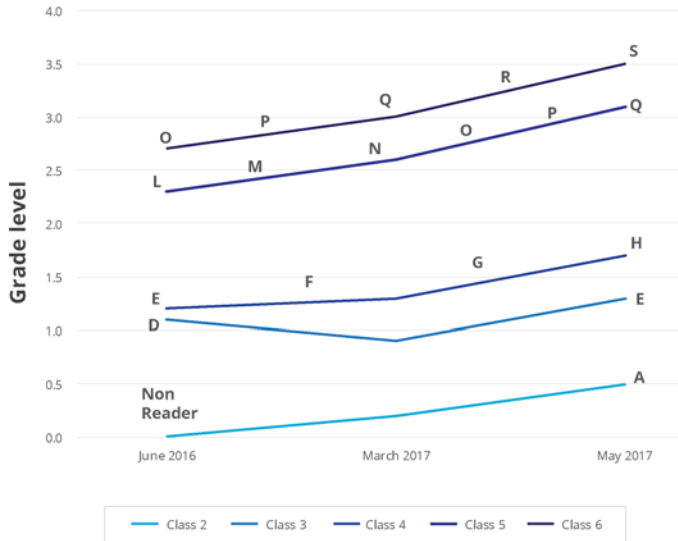


Class 3 enjoy a reading session

# Getting Results

## Average Student Reading Growth (A-Z Scores)

2016 - 2017



\*A data anomaly in June 2016 skewed class 3 results upward

The "Reading A-Z" leveled reading system is an internationally utilized program developed by experts in literacy. Texts are classified by reading level starting with "aa" (reading ready level) and ending with "z" (reading level equivalent to the end of 5th grade in the U.S.). This enables Yspaniola's teachers to monitor students' progress and set literacy goals. Data from student evaluations this year show the great impact your support has had in Batey Libertad.

All classes showed marked growth in reading comprehension. Students are progressing through the Reading A-Z Series faster than ever since the Learning Center's inception.

**aa-C** Early Emerging readers

**D-J** Emerging Readers

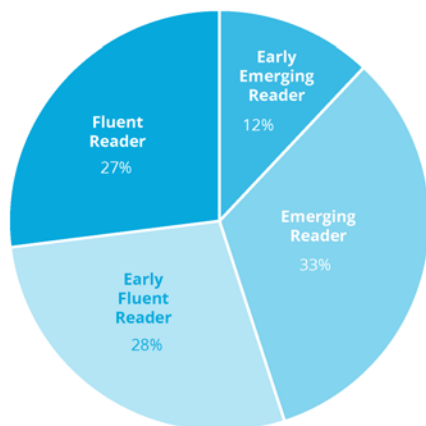
**K-P** Early Fluent Readers

**Q-Z** Fluent Readers

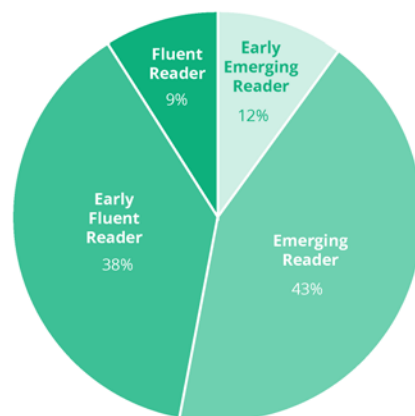
In 2014, Learning Center students began reading in approximately 4th grade. Today, they begin to read in approximately 2nd grade. Students in our preschool program receive an excellent head start, with results demonstrating significant improvement in letter recognition and phonemic awareness. However, much work remains to ensure high-quality education for our growing student population. The average Yspaniola reader today reads at a 2nd grade level, and most of our "fluent readers" read between a 4th and 5th grade level in United States terms, despite being high school-aged students.

*This year, over half of our reading students achieved early fluent or fluent reading levels.*

### 2016 - 2017



### 2015 - 2016



# University Scholarship Program

Yspaniola's University Scholarship Program supports talented students with funding for tuition, transportation, and living expenses, in addition to assistance with coursework and extracurricular activities.

We currently support four scholars, two returning scholars and two new scholars, who were selected in 2017 through a competitive selection process.

## Our New Scholars



### Sofía Jean

Sofía is looking forward to commencing her degree in Psychology at La Universidad Tecnológica de Santiago in January. At first, she felt nervous about applying for an Yspaniola scholarship, and she needed much encouragement from friends and family during the rigorous selection process. Sofía has grown up in Batey Libertad with her parents and six sisters, and she sees going to university as a big opportunity: "My Dad left his parents at home in Haiti when he was just 17 years old to come and work here... I've seen how hard my Dad has worked and my Mom has struggled to support us. In a future where I will be working, instead of them looking after me, I want to look after them."



### Daniel María Joseph

At just 17 years old, Daniel will begin studying for a degree in Natural Sciences at La Universidad Tecnológica de Santiago in January. Daniel lives in Batey Libertad with his five siblings, and he is also one of our two bilingual Pre-K assistants. He greatly enjoys his job with Yspaniola: "The best thing is when you're giving a class and you see the kids are really interested, and it fills you with pride." Daniel is excited to begin his university course, and has no worries about studying and working at the same time. "It's going to be a challenge, but a good one, because doing two things at once helps you to develop professionally, and to learn to control your stress." In the future, Daniel dreams of developing his own project to support others in Batey Libertad.

## Our Returning Scholars



### Ramón Leonardo Sánchez Gómez

Ramón completed his fourth year in medical school at La Universidad Tecnológica de Santiago, passing all his classes with flying colors. He recently began his fifth year in Moca at el Hospital Dr. Tobirio Bencosme where he is doing his medical residency. Outside of school, Ramón enjoys cross-country running and learning English.

**Pictured:** Ramón, (in white), and his family celebrate the beginning of his internado, along with Yspaniola Executive Director Aní Yanachkova and Director of Operations Julio Louis



### María Fernanda Liranzo Nunes

María Fernanda, better known as Dariana, is studying Primary Education at La Universidad Autónoma de Santo Domingo. On schedule to graduate in 2018, Dariana has begun to think about internships and future employment. This year, she achieved over 80% in almost all of her classes. Dariana enjoys spending her free time with her family in Batey Libertad.



Dominican Olympic medalist in Taekwondo, Luisito Pie, with Jacob Phillips and Camille Fontenelle



Yspaniola staff meet Minou Tavárez Mirabal, daughter of Minerva Mirabal

## A Special Thank You

Yspaniola could not have grown in the way we did over this past year without the dedication of our interns and Princeton in Latin America (PiLA) Fellows. They all worked extremely hard to support local staff in the classroom at our Learning Center and across our programs. We cannot thank you enough and wish you all the best for your bright futures!

*"As a Princeton in Latin America Fellow, I feel that I have not only acquired new skills, such as planning Service-Learning trips and learning Haitian Creole, but have deepened my understanding of bateyes and Dominican-Haitian relations. Through this experience I have gained insight on how to continue working in the nonprofit sector in a sustainable and community-oriented way." - Kayla Tamara Lemus*

# Yspaniola Service-Learning Program

Service-Learning trips are a vital part of Yspaniola's model. Visitors are welcomed with open arms by their host families and meaningful cross-border relationships are forged. Participants gain invaluable first-hand insight into batey life and build understanding of the challenges faced by many Dominican citizens in realizing their full citizenship rights. Participants often maintain close links with Yspaniola long after they visit, and many become valued, long-term supporters. This year we were pleased to extend a warm welcome to four service-learning groups, from Lincoln Sudbury High School, Yale University, University of Delaware, and Brookside Community Health Center.



Ale Canales from Yale University reads with class 3

*"The best part was the intercultural exchange activity with the girls in the batey. It was fun to be able to work with them and share part of our culture. I am thankful that they shared some of theirs as well."*

**- Yale University participant**

## Summer Camp



Summer Camp participants and volunteers

Yspaniola's annual summer camp provides an opportunity for students from the Batey to engage in two weeks of exciting activities, supported by local and international volunteers.

This year, all our camp directors and other leadership roles were filled by local Learning Center staff for the first time.

In addition, two exciting new subjects were available to our oldest campers: Photography, led by returning member of Lincoln Sudbury High School's Service Learning Trip, Paul Sarapas, and Public Speaking, taught by international volunteer Ariella Reyes.



# A Word From Our New Directors

Building a strong local leadership team has always been key to Yspaniola's model. This year, for the first time, all of our teachers and the Learning Center director are qualified teachers and Batey residents. We are also pleased to welcome two important new leaders to our team.

We were delighted that former Yspaniola scholarship graduate, Julio Louis, accepted a role as our new Director of Operations. In addition, with over 15 years of teaching experience, Alejandra García Pérez joins us as Academic Director.



"I am honored to join the fantastic team of educators at Yspaniola's Learning Center, whose passion for their work is inspiring. I am looking forward to working with them to further strengthen Yspaniola's curriculum development and support professional development needs of the team. Working towards these goals will help to further enhance students' reading comprehension and support their overall academic performance. I would like to thank all the donors whose support each year helps more deserving young students from Batey Libertad on their journey towards academic success."

**- Alejandra García Pérez**



"Of course, I am delighted to be back in my home community and contributing to the work of Yspaniola, which has provided invaluable support to many young people from Batey Libertad, myself included. As Director of Operations, I will support the growth of our University Scholarship program, and work closely with Yspaniola's youth committee to deepen their participation in Yspaniola's work. I also look forward to further developing the experiences we offer to visitors through our Service-Learning program. I have been lucky to meet many Yspaniola supporters over the years, and I hope you will remain alongside us as we strengthen our current programs and develop new ones to benefit the youth and community of Batey Libertad. Thank you!"

**- Julio Louis**



# Thank You To All Our Donors And Supporters

## **The Yspaniola Circle (\$10,000+)**

Anonymous Supporter  
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Edrington Americas  
Educating Latin American  
Adolescents  
The DiMaio Family  
The Magliocco Family  
Valley Presbyterian Church

## **The Learning Center Circle (\$2,000-\$9,999)**

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Trinity Lutheran Church  
Wardell Family Foundation

## **The Scholarship Circle (\$750-\$1,999)**

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Jeffrey and Bridget Wirth

## **The Batey Libertad Circle (\$200-\$749)**

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## **Volunteers & in-kind supporters**

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A Special Thank You to **Gaston Chiozza** of Gaston Chiozza Photography and Filmmaking for the beautiful photography featured in this report, and to all of the individuals from **Lincoln Sudbury High School, Yale University, University of Delaware, and Brookside Community Health Center** who came to visit us in Batey Libertad.



# Your Generosity Makes Our Work Possible!

## 2016 - 2017 Finances

From October 1, 2016 through September 30, 2017

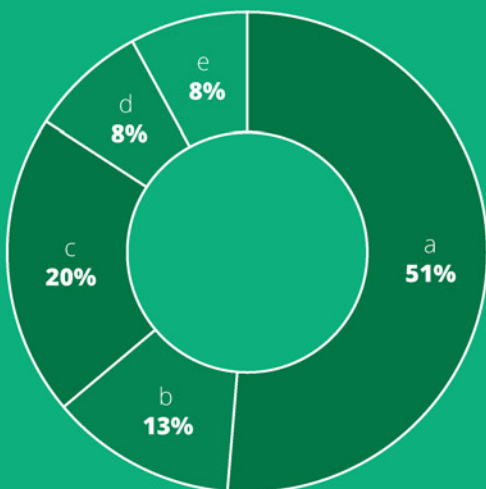
### Expenses

a) Batey Libertad Learning Center	\$114,251	51%
b) University Scholarship Program	\$27,908	13%
c) Service-Learning Trips, Summer Camp & Intern Program	\$45,207	20%
d) Administrative Costs	\$17,540	8%
e) Fundraising & Outreach	\$17,696	8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$222,602</b>	<b>100%</b>

### Income

Service-Learning Trips, & Internship Fees	\$45,847	20%
Foundation Grants	\$118,699	53%
Events & Corporations	\$11,653	5%
Donations	\$49,633	22%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$225,833</b>	<b>100%</b>

### 2016 - 2017 Expenses



Deifri and Yaquito





**We hope you enjoyed reading our Annual Report.**

We are most grateful for your support and would be pleased to hear from you if you have any questions or comments.

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