

I. Assistance from “Headquarters”

Assistance from the Path To Shine “Headquarters” has been invaluable. We could not have launched the program without it. Not only did headquarters provide us with the necessary operational details to get us off the ground, but they provided the personal contact (Deacon Lesley-Ann Drake) to keep us going.

2. Handbook

Detailed organization is important to launching any program. The Handbook provided the groundwork and framework for successful organization. The forms necessary to legally and safely enroll the children saved us untold hours of work. The detail regarding curriculum suggestions was so helpful. This Handbook, in my opinion, reflects the work of people who have been very thorough and successful in launching an after-school program.

3. Training

Again the magnificent organization of the Path To Shine Program is reflected in the training organized and carried out by its Director. Sensitizing individuals to the culture surrounding participants in the program is crucial to its success. Not only did the training superbly address cultural concerns, it motivated participants to want to engage in the program. Participants were encouraged throughout the training to comment and raise questions which not only put us at ease but helped solidify the application of the content being presented.

4. On-going Support

The support of the Director of the Path To Shine Program is on-going. LesleyAnn has not only remained in touch with our program but she participated in its operation for the first few weeks to get us off the ground. This participation and support was invaluable to our success and our morale. Not only has our program been the recipient of excellent on-site training, but we continue to receive material support as well. Books and supplies were sorely needed to get us off the ground and many of these resources were contributed to us by the Director. LesleyAnn cautioned us not to spend money on books; between the contributions of Path To Shine and the members of our combined congregations, we presently have a library of over 300 children’s books. To witness the excitement of the children when they seek out and check out books to take home is so rewarding.

Recruiting and holding excellent volunteers to work with the children is a key to our success. We try our best to have things organized so their work is maximally effective. A weekly proposed schedule, a list of which children will work with which tutor, and a host of handout sheets they may use with their children if they wish and there is time to do so appears to be helpful. In addition, games, books and consumable supplies are organized for ready use by the tutors. Each tutor is provided a small pencil box full of supplies which includes pencils, crayons, scissors, glue, ruler, etc.

Music is an important part of our program. Pastor Zane accompanies the children on his guitar. By now the children are singing familiar children’s songs with gusto. Perhaps the most difficult task for us is getting the forms filled out for each of the children. Since most of the

parents speak a Mayan dialect and not English the two volunteers who speak Spanish are invaluable. Follow up phone calls to the parents of children who are absent are important. In general lots of work and lots of prayer goes into our program to make it viable and successful.