

YOUR GENEROSITY AT WORK

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The Evil Whale *by Isaac Alex Huayhuacuri Mamani*



Isaac was a small, shy, 6th grade boy when he first met Mike.

My name is Isaac. I was born in Lari on the edge of the deepest canyon in the world, surrounded by five fire-breathing volcanos, next to a lagoon in the highlands of Peru. When I walked outside in the morning the giant condors circled above, searching the countryside for their first meal of the day. The thing I remember most about being little was being hungry, just like the condors.

One day my father told me I was going to live in a new place. A school called Casa Chapi. He said my sisters and my brother would have more to eat when I was gone.

I remember the first day at my new home. The nurse put me on a scale that had a stick to measure my height. She adjusted the scale, and then she laughed at me, saying, "You are really little."

Then I went out to play "futball," and they chose up sides. I was picked last. When I stole the ball from Wilfredo, the biggest kid at Casa Chapi, he shoved me down. From then on, I avoided Wilfredo. I was small and ran fast, but he was big and tough.

At first school was hard. I spoke Quechua at home, and I knew very little Spanish. I was supposed to be in the 6th grade, but I had to start in the 5th grade. **I determined that I would learn as quickly as possible.**

Tio (Uncle) Mike came to Casa Chapi with his friend Richard, who spoke Spanish. They asked me,

"Do you like Casa Chapi?"

Tio Mike is tall, and he made me nervous. "Yes," I said, "I like it very much."

I told him I liked egg fried rice and never being hungry, but what I liked most was the class about values. He seemed surprised and asked me if I had learned values at my school in Lari. I said, "No."

"What value do you like best?" he asked.

I replied, "The one about helping others."

Tio didn't ask me about the bad things at Casa Chapi. But I didn't like the arguments during football practice, kids talking back to the teachers, and the big kids bullying the little kids. And I missed my father and mother.

Then Mr. Richard asked me a strange question. "Isaac," he said, "if you were put in charge of Casa Chapi tomorrow is there anything that you would change?"

continued on page 2



Isaac, his younger brother Christian, and twin sisters Lizbeth and Judith in 2013 before Isaac began school at Casa Chapi.

The Evil Whale continued from page 1

I said, “Yes, I would improve it.”

Tio Mike paused for a moment and sat back in his chair. Mr. Richard asked, “How would you do that?”

I replied, “I would make it bigger so more kids could come.”

After I was at Casa Chapi for about six months, the teacher announced a contest to write a story about the towns where we were born. I remembered the legend my father told me about the evil whale that once lived in the lagoon near Lari. I decided to tell that story.

A volcano destroyed the old town of Lari, so the ancient people created a new town. It is much farther from the volcano in a beautiful place with green pastures and eucalyptus trees. But there was an evil whale living in the lagoon that used to swallow the people of the town when they went to get water.

After a while the campesinos [peasants] held a meeting, and everyone decided to move away from Lari. But a brave little boy stood up at the meeting and said, “Wait! Don’t leave. I will kill the whale.” The people laughed at him, but they respected his courage.

Then the most wonderful thing happened. The boy went to the lagoon with two knives that he had hidden under his poncho. He shouted, “Show yourself to me, you evil beast!” The whale instantly rose up and swallowed the tiny boy, but this was all part of his plan. Once inside the whale’s stomach, the boy took out his knives and stabbed the whale. And he killed the whale.

Then the boy died. He became the hero of Lari.

(See Isaac’s entire story at QuechuaBenefit.org/Isaac)

My story was chosen as the best one in Casa Chapi! I was even more surprised when **my story won first place** for all twenty schools in the Colca Valley. The trophy I won was taller than me!

Later the teacher told me she had entered my story in the regional writing contest for schools throughout the province. She said, “The winners will go to Arequipa to receive their awards.” I was excited, but after a while I forgot it because I knew the kids in Arequipa were smarter than the highland children.

Then the impossible happened. I won second place in the contest with all the schools in the province! Everyone was so happy, but I was afraid to go. I heard that Arequipa was a huge city, and I had never been there.

When I went to Arequipa for my prize, I was frozen with fear that I might get lost and never see my mother or father again. I was so happy to return home to Casa Chapi.

Just before my 6th grade graduation Padre Marcos, whose father knew my father, came with Tio Alejandro to ask me if I would like to go to high school in Arequipa. I was afraid, but my father told me if I could graduate from this important private Catholic school named Don Bosco it would be good for our family. If I did well it might even help my brother and twin sisters in the future.



Lizbeth and Judith have completed 7th grade living in at the Casa Chapi Girls’ House.

Tio Alejandro said, “You have to pass a test to get into Don Bosco.” **Maybe I would fail the test and not have to go away, I thought. But I passed the test.** In March I began attending school and living at Don Bosco. I didn’t know anyone there when I started, and some of the city kids laughed at me and shouted, “Isaac is a campesino,” because I was from the highlands.

I decided to become invisible and disappear into my books and schoolwork. I started doing well in classes as my mind worked quicker. My father visited and told me that he hoped I would become an engineer, and maybe my brother

who went school at Casa Chapi in Chivay would become a mechanic. I studied even harder.

The next year three more boys from Casa Chapi came to Don Bosco. I was glad to see them, even Wilfredo, who became my friend, and my best friend Gilberto who always protected me. And best of all, my brother Christian came.

*Casa Chapi
changed my life.
I know it can change
my brother's and sisters'
lives, too.*

Early in 2019, my last year at Don Bosco, Gilberto got kicked out of Don Bosco for fighting. I still worry about him. He helped me a lot; I'm not afraid anymore and I quit worrying about being little. It also helped that I grew one foot.

When I went home to Lari for summer vacation, I was sad to find out my old friends were getting drunk. The neighbor girl that I went to grade school with had a baby. She doesn't even know who the father is.

That visit made me concerned for my twin sisters, Lizbeth and Judith, who were moving to Casa Chapi's girls' home in Arequipa to begin high school. I talked to my mother, and she said, "The girls' home is safe, but you must take extra care of them."

I decided on a plan. A plan to help my brother and sisters, make my mother happy and my father proud. I decided to take the test for admission to SENATI, a famous technical institute for engineers. I am good at math, and I passed the test. **I have been accepted at SENATI!**

When I go to SENATI, I can also



Today, Isaac and his family appreciate the love and kindness of generous people who have helped their dreams come true.

work during my vacations on construction jobs to earn money to help pay for my brother and sisters to go to university.

*Today I better understand
the value I learned about
helping others.
Maybe in the future
I can help more kids from Lari
go to Casa Chapi.*

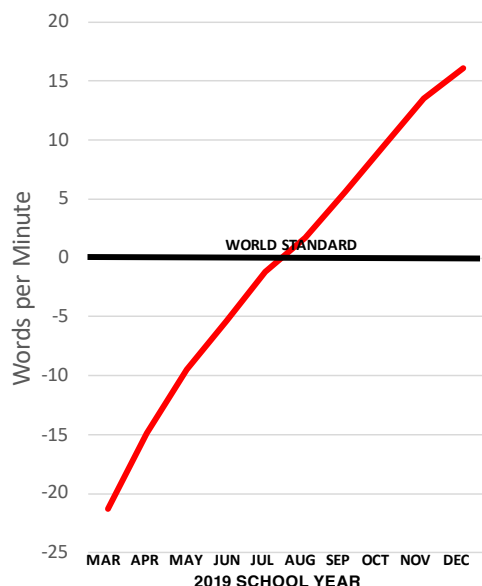
My mother wants my sisters to become doctors. My father will be so happy if all his children can become professionals. These are my parents' dreams. Now those are my dreams, too.

I can help them stay in school, and I won't have to worry about their future. They will learn how to be strong and confident. Not like the kids in Lari who don't know what to do with their lives.

Tio Mike and Mr. Richard heard me when I answered their question about how I would improve Casa Chapi. I think about the new four-room school building, the new library and the casita for 15 kids. The new girls' home in Arequipa where my sisters live while they go to the Jesuit high school nearby.

I think about all the benefactors that support Quechua Benefit and Casa Chapi. They are people I don't know from places I don't know. But they are helping kids like me. To them I say thank you for making it possible for me to go to college.

Casa Chapi 2019 Reading Scores

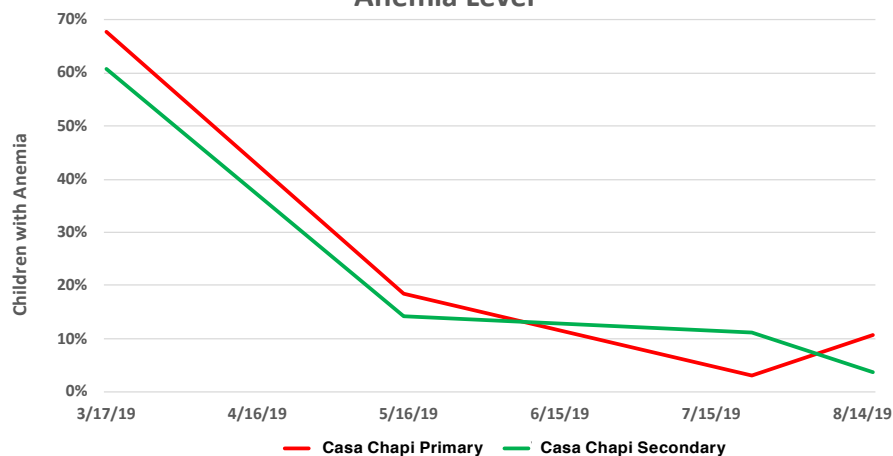


Each year Casa Chapi students, who come from homes where there are no books and no opportunities to read, make great strides in reading. Over summer break they lose more than 20% of their previous year's reading ability, but *by the end of the school year Casa Chapi's average reading score is above the world standard.*

Using Benchmark's *Learn to Read* program, **66% of our sixth graders are reading above the world standard.** Only 10% of highland kids continue schooling after sixth grade, more than 90% of Casa Chapi students will go on to secondary education.

Your generosity is making a difference in every area of Casa Chapi kids' lives.

Anemia Level



In March, after their summer break, nearly 70% of returning students had anemia. 100% of the new kids from the highlands were anemic.

Regular testing and effective treatment made it possible to eliminate anemia among our students by the end of the school year!

Quechua Benefit's protocol begins with treating the root cause of anemia: intestinal parasites. Following treatment for parasites, students receive iron supplements and multivitamins to raise and keep their iron levels healthy.

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