



YOUR GENEROSITY AT WORK

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The Two Most Important Days in Quechua Benefit's Life

By Mike Safley

"The two most important days of your life are the day you are born and the day you realize what you were born to do." When I first read this thought-provoking quote, often mistakenly attributed to Mark Twain, my mind wandered to my own life and then to the life of Quechua Benefit, which turns 25 years old in 2021.

For Quechua Benefit the answer to the first question is easy. It was the day Don Julio Barreda, a world-famous alpaca breeder, asked me if there was anything that people in other countries could do to help the poor in his community, Macusani, a remote Andean village perched at 14,750 feet elevation, just below the icy mountaintops that melt into the Amazon River basin far below.

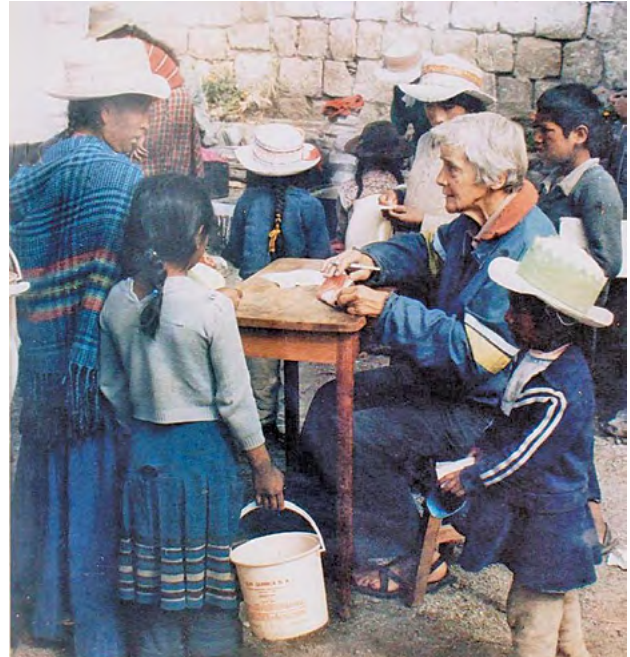
*The answer to the
second question
took more
thought.*

*"When did
Quechua Benefit
truly learn
what it was
supposed to do?"*

I think the second answer began to unfold the day I met Sister George Anthony Kayser or "Antonia," a Maryknoll nun from Brooklyn, New York, who lived in the 16th century church sacristy on the central plaza in the Colca Valley town of Yanque, Peru. Sister Antonia was dedicated to improving the life of the poorest Quechua women and children.

Sister Antonia's love encircled everyone she met, from the highest most powerful members of society to the least powerful poor single mothers standing in line at her door every morning for a bowl of hot soup. Those women lived in a very small sphere of love, so small they might not have felt it at all if not for the warm heart and soul of *Sister Antonia, who is remembered by many as the "Mother of the Colca Valley."*

Sister Antonia's primary insight, that substandard nutrition is at the center of local poverty, is why Quechua Benefit, with your support, has participated



Sister Antonia checks in women and children coming for breakfast.

in the creation of two community kitchens in the Colca Valley over the last four years, one in Ichupampa and another in Yanque. Both are close to Casa Chapi.

continued on page 2



Sister Antonia's work among the Quechua people greatly influenced Mike.

St. Paul's Sister Antonia Ichupampa Fundraiser Continues

After raising enough funds to supply Ichupampa residents with masks, St. Paul's United Church of Christ in Westminster, MD is moving forward with its next phase of giving to Ichupampa and Quechua Benefit. They have



begun a campaign with an 80/20 dual focus: 80% of donations will *subsidize the cost for meals* for the elderly at the Sister Antonia Kitchen. 20% will support the efforts for the future *Women's and Children's Community Center*.

Thank you, St. Paul's, for your love and commitment to the people of Ichupampa!



Elderly residents rely on the Madre Antonia Comedor daily for a hot meal.

The Two Most Important Days continued from pg. 1



It was a great day when Ichupampa's Sister Antonia Kitchen reopened!

The kitchens named in her honor are independently operated by the local community associations. *These new, modern buildings each have space for a Women's and Children's community center, and this is where the next chapter in Sister Antonia's legacy, with your help, will unfold.*

Quechua Benefit is exploring the opportunity to open **Women's and Children's Community Centers** in the existing Sister Antonia Kitchen buildings. They will be staffed by local women who are respected in the community and can be fierce advocates for the women and children, offering advice on topics such as pre- and post-natal care, anemia prevention, and making medical referrals. They may offer job training, and family planning advice, suggest employment opportunities, and provide adult education about family violence. All these needs can be addressed and prioritized in consultation with the women in the community. Local Quechua Benefit social workers, in partnership with the Church, the Peruvian Ministries of Health and Education, MINSA, the local mayors and private charities such as Vitamin Angels, Direct Relief and Vida Peru, can

implement programs that address the most pressing needs as defined by the community.



Young and old alike are welcome at the Sister Antonia Kitchen.

This Community Center model is in perfect alignment with Quechua Benefit's Three Programs. If successfully implemented, it will help all of us to work closely together, weaving threads of sustainability to **break the cycle of poverty** and make the world a better place for the wonderful Quechua people.

Read Mike's entire article at www.QuechuaBenefit.org/love-charity/two-days/

Staff Spotlight: Alejandro Tejeda

Alejandro Tejeda has been like the Energizer bunny during the pandemic, overcoming tremendous obstacles and never tiring in his efforts to serve Casa Chapi kids and their families.

When COVID-19 lockdown started, Alejandro expressed concern for Casa Chapi kids returning to their homes, where they struggle to have enough food during good times. Soon your generosity provided food and schoolbooks. Alejandro was delighted to see the kids and deliver help.

Quarantines were extended, yet the QB Peru Staff persevered. In July, Alejandro and QB nutritionist Claudia tested and treated kids for anemia and continued food deliveries. By August, Arequipa became the most COVID affected city in Peru.



Alejandro distributes masks, soap and information in Yanque.

With little thought for himself, Alejandro continued traveling to remote locations to support your Casa Chapi families.

It's clear that every one of your students matters to Alejandro. Janeth, whose home

has no radio, TV or internet, couldn't access virtual school. Alejandro found a way to help her.



Alejandro's concern for each student is evident.

"It was beautiful to see Janeth waiting for me!" exclaimed Alejandro, when he visited Janeth at her home. She had received your generous provision of food and anemia treatment, but her remote location made it impossible for her to participate in Casa Chapi's virtual learning. Alejandro spoke with her parents, and he found a way for Janeth to continue school.

Because of your generosity and Alejandro's commitment to the Quechua people, your Casa Chapi kids have not only received food, schoolbooks, cellphones to help with virtual learning, and clothing, but they have also felt your love.

Alejandro has also been key in QB's community mask campaigns throughout the Colca Valley. Your generous gifts provided more than 17,000 people with masks, soap, and information to fight the spread of COVID.

Thank you, Alejandro, for your dedication!

Yanque Sister Antonia Kitchen Opening Soon

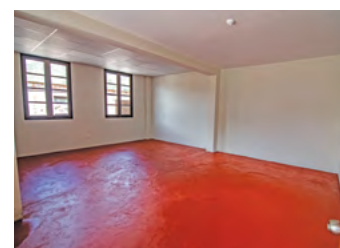
Since 2018 Quechua Benefit has planned to develop a community center in Yanque, where Sister Antonia operated her soup kitchen. Through partnerships with the local parish council, the community, and regional officials, this dream is becoming a reality.



Yanque's Sister Antonia Kitchen is ready to open!

This new Sister Antonia Kitchen, will serve residents hot meals daily, and rooms above the kitchen can become a Women's and Children's Community Center to provide an array of services to the community.

The center will sustain Sister Antonia's legacy and dedication to Yanque's poor.



With your help, this room will become a Women's and Children's Community Center.

**To donate text
CENTERS to 44-321**

AOA Shining Star: Beth Sheets

The Alpaca Owners Association annually awards the Shining Star Award to recognize and thank volunteers for their generous gift of time, energy, thought, and skill to benefit others.

Beth Sheets is the recipient of the 2021 AOA Shining Star Award. Beth and her husband Tim have supported Quechua Benefit and Casa Chapi for many years.

Congratulations, Beth!



In 2019, Beth joined the Quechua Benefit Peru Tour.

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- For Community Centers text CENTERS to 44-321

100% of your donations go directly to education, medical and economic programs in Peru.



Your high school girls enjoy studying together again at Casa Chapi's Arequipa campus.

Casa Chapi Girls Return to Arequipa

Since March of 2020 your Casa Chapi students have been studying at home. **Your generosity provided monthly food boxes, schoolbooks, clothes, internet and cellphones for virtual school**, but they have missed their teachers and friends. Now most high school girls and many younger girls who attend Casa Chapi in Chivay have returned to Casa Chapi's campus in Arequipa! ***They are***

very happy to return to a stable environment with better access to learning resources!

Peru's COVID restrictions continue, so not all Casa Chapi students can return to in-person learning. ***Your continuing support of our Casa Chapi families is needed!*** Please help us deliver monthly food boxes, schoolbooks, and internet for virtual learning.

Text CCHFamilies to 44-321 to provide COVID relief to your Casa Chapi families.