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## Despite the Current Environment Reaching U Remains More Committed Than Ever

Facing this unprecedented scenario of a crisis of globalized proportions we, at Reaching U, are bound to face significant challenges. We are fortunate enough to say that many of our long-time contributors are continuing to show their support, but we know that these hard times are going to make us work very hard to achieve our fundraising goals for this year.

As many of us are coming to realize, the proven frailty of the previously accepted paradigms reinforces the need for stressing the importance of strong values, and especially the value of investing our time and energy into the care and support of the less privileged.

Reaching U faces this crisis by reinforcing the core values that we believe in, values that we have shared since we created this organization and are stated in our mission. **Those values of course call for an increased care for others, commitment and sharing, so we thank you for continuing to show your support!**

## Reaching U Awarded Around US\$112,000 in Grants for 2009

After a thorough grant selection process, with participants from Uruguay and the US, 12 projects were selected. This year some changes were introduced to the selection process and all volunteers were invited to take part of it. Participants were organized in different committees, which analyzed several projects and presented their recommendations to Reaching U's project selection committee for the final decision. It was enriching to include more people, ideas and perspectives, and give all volunteers a chance to really learn about many of the projects.

The selected projects were the following:

- **Uruguayan Family Planning Association:** training on sexual and reproductive healthcare for teachers and students in different areas of the country.
- **Casa Lunas:** training on developing "kitchen gardens" for young mothers. These gardens will be used for the center's consumption and outside commercialization.
- **Ceprodih:** refurbishing of a new home for mothers and children who are victims of domestic violence.
- **Gurisaes Project:** meal service for the children and youngsters attending the center.
- **Fransida:** psychological and educational support for HIV patients and their families.
- **Álvarez-Caldeyro Barcia Foundation:** operating expenses of the Breast Milk Bank, and hearing and vision program for premature babies at the Pereira Rossell Hospital.
- **Liceo Jubilar:** scholarships and job training workshops for high school students.
- **La Esperanza:** psychological and educational workshops for teenagers living precariously in the Aeroparque area.
- **Madres de la Cruz:** after-school educational and psychological support



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for children living in the center's neighborhood.

- **Providencia Center:** training of a multidisciplinary team that evaluates and diagnoses the learning difficulties of all the schoolchildren attending the center.
- **Caif Juan XXIII:** this organization will be supported by Reaching U for the first time and it focuses on the dental health of the mothers of the children attending this learning center.
- **Senderos de Vida (Pathways of Life):** assists teenage mothers. It seeks to avoid recurring pregnancies, improve the health of the mothers and their babies, and helps them acquire study and work habits and improve their self-confidence.

For more details on these organizations and their projects please visit us on the web at [www.reachingu.org](http://www.reachingu.org).

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## Welcome Changes in our Board of Directors

We are glad to share with you the recent changes that took place in our Board of Directors, which undoubtedly will lead us to grow and improve as an organization.

We welcome four new members to our Board: Mr. Ideal Zanelli, Mr. Aramis Cordal, Mr. Ricardo Salmon and Mr. Jose Silveira and thank them for assuming this commitment in this challenging year. Additionally, these are the Board's officers for this year:

President: Robert Weisz  
Vicepresident: Nelson Fraiman  
Treasurer: Pilar Mercader  
Secretary: Fernanda Guliak

Ines Bonicelli will continue to serve as Executive Director.

We thank all those who served in previous terms and congratulate and wish the newcomers good luck in their new roles!

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## Your Help is Still Needed for our December 2008 Semi-Annual Campaign!

Thanks to all of our friends who have sent in their contributions. We are half way to reaching our goal. In these times of economic frailty, investing time and energy into the care and support of the less privileged is vital. In 2008 we were able to help 300 women to find jobs and a more dignified future, 1,700 children and teenagers to receive education and support to keep attending school, and 650 newborn babies in their first health care. We invite you to visit our [web page](#) and keep supporting the 21% of Uruguayans living under the poverty line.

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## AUPF: Another Project Supported by Reaching U Gets National Recognition!

For the past several years Reaching U has been supporting a number of initiatives led by the Uruguayan Family Planning Association (AUPF) aimed at educating the community in sexual and reproductive health. To achieve a multiplier impact, the initiative has focused on educating educators and community leaders. With Reaching U's support, and in conjunction with ANEP and CODICEN (Uruguay's education authorities), AUPF has been delivering education to preschool public teachers (CAIF centers), primary and secondary



Teachers at one of the training sessions

school teachers, education students, and parents.

Sexual and reproductive problems are particularly severe in rural areas, where lack of communication between family and children in sexual matters coexist with ignorance and strong prejudice. In response to this reality, AUPF has focused AUPF's educational initiatives in the interior of the country. More than 100 teachers and over 100 education students in their last year received training in Lavalleja, Colonia, Maldonado, Costa de Oro, and Florida last year. Considering that each teacher is in charge of about 30 kids at school, these activities could reach more than 4,000 children.

This year Reaching U is financing three new AUPF projects that will extend the sexual education initiatives to three other departments: Salto, Treinta y Tres, and San Jose. As credit for the quality of these organized activities, **Sandra Misol, psychologist in AUPF, and coordinator for these projects, was selected by ANEP (National Administration of Public Education) to prepare the materials for a long distance course financed by United Nations** that will prepare teachers at a national level (primary, secondary, and technical education) in sexual health and education issues.

We congratulate Sandra and feel proud once again for selecting and financing projects that become points of reference in the Uruguayan community!

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## New York Board Members Motivated by their Visit to Fundalca

At the end of 2008 several members of our Board of Directors and New York and Uruguay teams visited the Alvarez-Caldeyro Barcia Foundation (Fundalca) at the Pereira Rossell Hospital. The visiting group was hosted by Fundalca representatives and the doctors responsible for the Milk Bank, and the Retinopathy and Deafness Screening programs; all supported by Reaching U.



Reaching U visitors and Dr. Panizza at Fundalca

The medical professionals presented the progress and achievements of the Retinopathy and Deafness projects. Dr. Panizza, founder and director of Uruguay's first Milk Bank, offered an overview of this project: its history, its growth and impact, an update on the progress made, and a tour of all the facilities. The tour was extremely helpful since it allowed the visitors to observe how the Milk Bank is working and realize what still needs to be done so that the bank can continue to operate efficiently.

It was particularly gratifying for the Reaching U team to learn that three of the Fundalca projects supported by Reaching U have now become high priority for the government's Health Ministry.

We would like to thank all of you since your help allowed Reaching U to assist these projects, and **encourage you to also stop by one of the projects we support when visiting Uruguay!** You can contact us at [reachinguuguay@reachingu.org](mailto:reachinguuguay@reachingu.org) and we'll make the arrangements.

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## Other News

### Thanks to Mikele Aboitiz and Maria Michelena for your private drives!

Every year, several Reaching U members and friends carry out private drives and generously decline birthday presents, wedding and Christmas gifts, and ask for a donation for Reaching U instead! This year, Mikele Aboitiz, a Board Member and long time contributor, did it for her birthday in December. We also received an important donation from INGENIA, a Uruguayan financial consulting company that decided to send a donation to Reaching U instead of distributing corporate year-end gifts. Maria Michelena, owner and CEO of INGENIA knew about Reaching U, saw our institutional video at a Reaching U event in Miami, and decided that her clients would be more excited to hear



Participants at Miami's Golf Tournament

about INGENIA's donation to a worthy cause than to receive another "2009 Calendar". If any of you would like to do something similar, please get in touch with us at [ibonicelli@reachingu.org](mailto:ibonicelli@reachingu.org).

**Golfing and having fun in Miami while helping Reaching U.** Last December a group of Uruguayan and Argentine friends got together to participate in the "Calcuta Golf Tournament" in Miami. The tournament was followed by a barbecue for family and friends of the players, who donated a significant percentage of the funds raised to Reaching U. The tournament winners were Matías Beyhaut (individual) and Nicolás Stanham and Nicolás Coubrough (teams). Thanks to all the players and their families, as well as all the volunteers that helped organized the event, for participating and helping Reaching U raise US\$ 1,500.

**Reaching U Uruguay team got together last December to plan 2009's activities and raise some cash.** Reaching U Uruguay team got together to review 2008's activity and plan 2009's. While at the meeting one of the team members suggested the group take a picture, donate some cash to Reaching U, and post the picture and event on Facebook, encouraging other people to do the same at their own year-end meetings. You can check it out at [Reaching U's Facebook page](#).

**Alberto Bergeret donated gift baskets and toys** during the holidays for the children and teenage mothers who attend the Senderos de Vida center in Rivera. "Tata" company offered special discounts for this initiative.

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## Interview with Florencia Martinelli

*Florencia Martinelli is a Teacher of English, at present teaching in-company English for business. She lives in Montevideo and has been part of Reaching U's Uruguay team since 2003.*

### **How did you hear about and become involved with Reaching U?**

I first heard about Reaching U in March 2003. Ines Bonicelli and Ana Ines Balsa had started this project and I found it very interesting and motivating. My second child Luca was almost a year old and I found that it was the right time to start doing something for the community. Thanks to Reaching U I've had the opportunity to meet different people who share the same goal of helping those in need. It is great just knowing that we can really make a difference in people's lives.



Florencia with her husband Martin, and their children: Luca, Agustina and Catalina

### **What has been your experience with Reaching U?**


Working for Reaching U has been a very enriching experience. We started the group in Uruguay and at first it was a bit difficult to coordinate efforts between our group and the US group. We are the link between the organizations that need our help and the fundraising group in the States. Looking back now it's amazing to see how Reaching U has evolved and become a much more professional entity. As Reaching U has evolved so have many of the organizations that we've been supporting throughout these years and this is very gratifying.

### **What are Reaching U Uruguay's team priorities for 2009?**

The group in Uruguay plays a key role in Reaching U's concept as we are in constant contact with the organizations. It is Reaching U's top priority to assure the donors that their money is well invested and the group in Uruguay is committed to that. Our priority for 2009 is to improve the follow-up process of the organizations in our portfolio. We're starting to work on the idea of coordinating pro bono auditing services for the organizations we support. I believe it's a great idea as we would be contributing not only with the organizations we already know but also promoting social responsibility in corporations.

### **Do you have any feedback or suggestions?**

The greatest difficulty we face working in Uruguay is to transmit the reality we



see in the organizations that apply for our support. I would suggest all the ones involved in Reaching U to take the time to visit the organizations as sometimes words are not enough.