

# COTAH NEWS

Saminay-El Legado supported by the Asahel and Thankful Putnam Education Fund

## Corona Virus Closes Saminay

On March 16th, following a government mandate to close schools in Ecuador, including private schools, Saminay students were sent home for two weeks. The government will reevaluate the situation at the end of March to determine how to proceed.

Saminay students have no internet connection in their homes. Teachers are trying to determine how to keep them learning so they can pass their final year-end evaluations. They have printed off packets of materials to be picked up at the school.

Animals too have to be cared for during this time. The government issues us a special traveling permits to those involved in agriculture. milking the cows and the milk is sold to a collecting station a few kilometers

## New Classrooms For Saminay



New Classroom Building  
*Funded by Aptive Enviornmental*

On November 11, more than fifty Aptive volunteers joined with students and parents of Saminay-El Legado to participate in Aptive's third humanitarian trip to Ecuador. The purpose of the expedition was to finish the construction of the new secondary classroom building funded by Aptive. The school was designed by a local engineer Santiago Quiranza, and architect Andrea Fierro of Construcq. The classroom building is now complete and the students and teachers have moved in.

The new building has six classrooms and a large atrium. It provides private spaces for classroom instruction and also a common space for collaborative learning and group meetings. One of the classrooms is a science lab equipped with sinks and water. In combination with two older existing buildings, it will meet the school's classroom needs indefinitely.

## Saminay Signs 30K Grant with Prefectura

On December 9, 2019 Saminay signed a new agreement with the Prefectura, a local government agency, for a grant of thirty thousand dollars. Saminay will provide \$9,000



in matching funds. This grant will allow the school to buy more equipment for the cheese plant to expand its capacity. The new equipment includes a 1,000 liter refrigeration tank, equipment to create a cold storage room, and various types of equipment for packaging.

Another part of the agreement involves helping local farmers. Saminay will conduct workshops for the participants. These workshops will teach farmers how to improve the quality of their milk. As the quality of milk improves, the school will begin to buy from them at a fair market price. This will give Saminay with more milk for processing in the cheese plant. and it will provide local farmers with additional farming expertise and a fair price for their milk.

## Rainy Work for Aptive Volunteers

The Aptive trip in November was a wet one. Have you ever heard of Wellington boots? All the volunteers had to buy themselves a pair so their feet would stay dry. (A bargain at \$10 a pair.) The volunteers shouldered on despite the rain. They plastered the whole building inside and out, put in walkways and installed windows. They also had to scrape down the cement floors inside, 4,316.33 square feet!!!! A daunting job! We are so grateful for each volunteer who came down to Ecuador to help the school!!!



Scraping the concrete floors



Mixing plaster for the walls



Building the brick paths



## Local Farmers Attend School Workshop

In January local farmers attended a workshop at the school to learn more about how they can participate in the milk project initiated by Saminay and the Prefectura. The first workshop included information about good milking practices and the analysis of the quality of their milk. There will be three other workshops. One about the health of the dairy cows, another about nutrition, and a final class about improving the genetics of their cows, or breeding practices.

In order to participate they must invest in a 40-liter stainless steel milking can. They pay for it out of their milk earnings.

Notice the women in the photo. On many small family farms the women are responsible for caring for and milking the family cows. They are looking for ways they can increase the profit for their work. COTAH is hoping this new initiative will help.



## Tandana Master Gardeners Come to Saminay

In February an expert group of 16 gardeners from Tandana ([tandanafoundation.org](http://tandanafoundation.org)) came to help us landscape the new classroom building at Saminay.



They worked side by side with parent volunteers and students. Armed with years of gardening experience, they spent several days at the school placing sod and planting flowers and ground covers around the new classroom building and along the walkways. What a great improvement!



Beautifying the school wasn't all they did. They also had opportunities to spend time with parents and students sharing some cultural activities. One of these was making *helda de paila*, a special Ecuadorian ice cream made in a large metal bowl set inside another bowl filled with ice.



Volunteers also shared a *pamba mesa* with the parents and families. This is a traditional community meal. It is spread out on a colorful cloth laid on the ground and everyone contributes food. A bit like our potluck dinners.

## Two Students Receive University Scholarships



### Edison Panama 2019

Scholarship student at San Francisco  
University, Quito



### Alejandro Panama 2019

Scholarship student at San Francisco  
University, Quito

Special thanks to the Asahel and  
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## Peek Inside Our New Classrooms



**Children of the Andes Humanitarian** is a U.S.  
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