

June 2017

Dear Friends of Fundación Amistad:



Selected slides from FA's keynote presentation at the Ministry of Education conference.



La Guarderia graduation. Students with Stephen Johnson, Padre Yosvany, and Cardinal Ortega.

Last week, Fundación Amistad (FA) was able to contribute its ideas, its advocacy, and its financial support towards the education of Cuban youth across the spectrum – from pre-school to secondary education to post-graduate studies. Each opportunity was an affirmation of FA's mission of meaningful exchange between the American and Cuban people.

Conference on Secondary Education

UNESCO's leadership in Paris and Havana invited FA to participate in the first ever conference sponsored by the Ministry of Education on secondary education – 1 Taller Internacional de Secundaria Básica. Stephen Johnson, FA Board Member and Executive Vice President, gave the keynote presentation after the inaugural welcome by the Vice Minister of Education, on the topic of Trends In Education and Technology. The presentation acknowledged Cuba's achievements in literacy and health, and how this can now position Cuba to embrace the collaborative, problem-based learning environments of the 21st century. The talk inspired great dialogue among the 250 participants, and Stephen was later interviewed by Cuban television for an evening news report.

Much of the presentation drew from the findings of the New Media Consortium (NMC) in its global Horizon Report, and later in the week Stephen was joined by NMC's Executive Director, Eden Dahlstrom, for an interactive panel discussion in a break-out session on technology attended by over 100 participants.

Assistance to Cuban Post-Graduate Students

Later in the week, FA met with representatives of the United States Embassy in Cuba to discuss how FA can assist Cuban youth in meeting the financial costs related to attending U.S. universities for post-graduate study. Earlier this month FA was able to assist a young woman to obtain the needed assistance for her Masters program at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, and FA will continue to work with the Embassy on behalf of other exceptional Cuban students.

La Guarderia Graduation

Finally, on Friday, FA attended the graduation of the 2017 class of four-year-olds at La Guarderia operated by the Cathedral of Havana. Cardinal Jaime Ortega gave the graduates a spirited talk about their future, and in his talk noted the importance of FA's role and on-going support for the pre-school program. These schools, for the children of disadvantaged families largely led by single parents, provide much needed opportunities for growth and engagement. In the week following graduation, FA sponsors a teacher training program for the pre-school teachers focusing on innovation and creating collaborative learning environments.

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