



YSPANIOLA

2018 Newsletter

Dear friend of Yspaniola,

On behalf of the entire Yspaniola team, I extend a heartfelt thank you for your support over the past year. Our work in the vibrant community of Batey Libertad is made possible by your generosity.

After serving as Yspaniola's Director of Development since 2017, I was excited to transition into the role of Executive Director in August of this year. It is an honor to be part of such a dedicated team!

This newsletter contains programmatic updates and information about recent changes we've made. It's replacing our usual annual report, but watch out for the 10th Anniversary Special Edition coming out in 2019!

We are proud to share that during the 2017-18 academic year we produced some of our best academic results yet! There have also been challenges, including the arrival of the full school day, which has obliged us to adapt our teaching model and find new ways to support our students on their academic journeys. Please read on for more updates!

Thank you so much for believing in the students and community of Batey Libertad.

Amy Porter
Executive Director



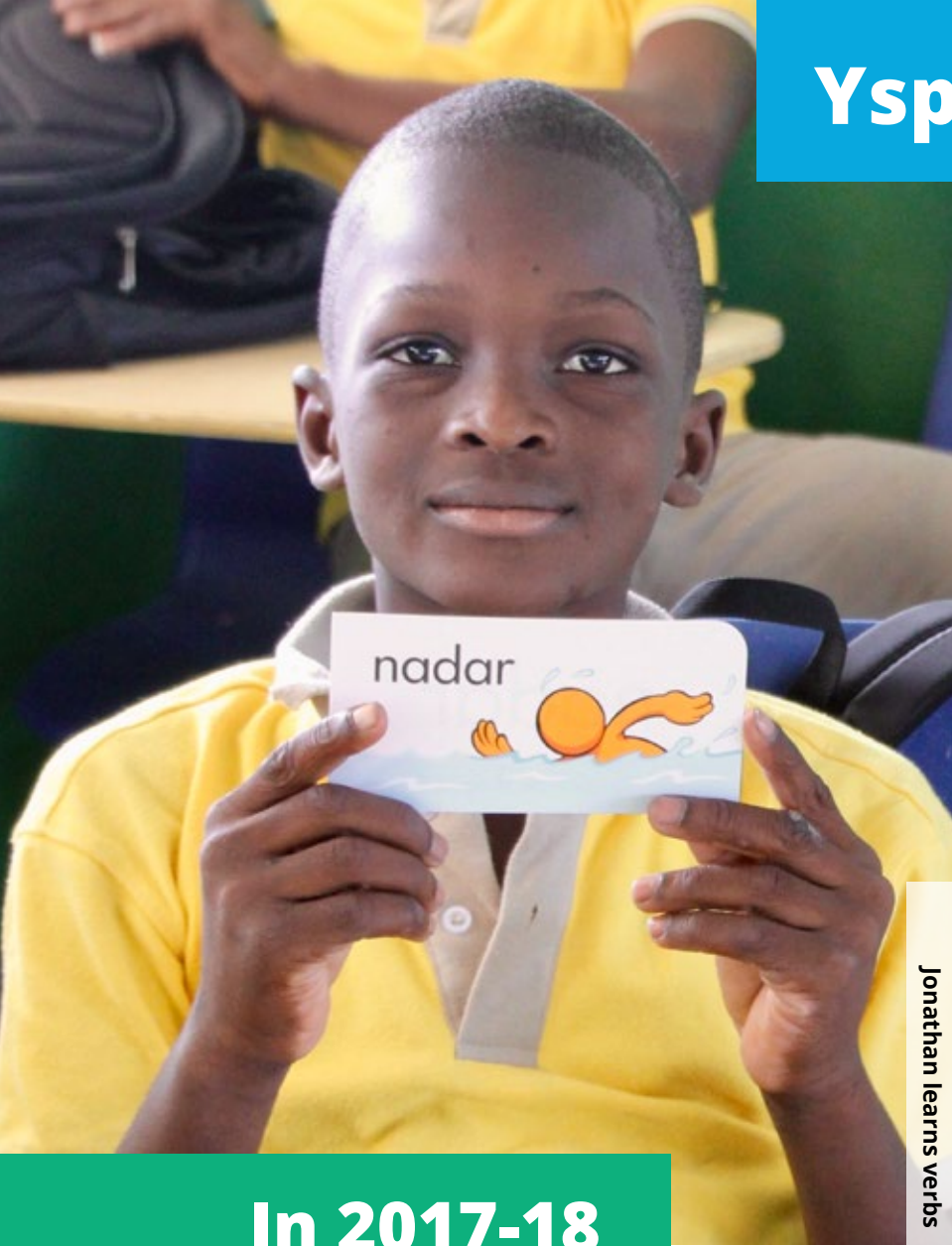
Students Surpass Reading Targets!



**New Challenges:
Welcoming the Full School Day**



**Safeguarding Students' Education
with Documentation**



Jonathan learns verbs

Student Reading Levels Soar!

Yspaniola uses the Reading A-Z system to measure student progress. This graph displays the results of reading evaluations conducted in October 2017 and May 2018. The bottom letters represent the lowest reading level in each class, and the top letters represent the highest.

Many of our students achieve basic reading skills late in their schooling process. We are incredibly proud that today, there are 12 students reading at level Z. This is the most we've ever had!

In 2017-18

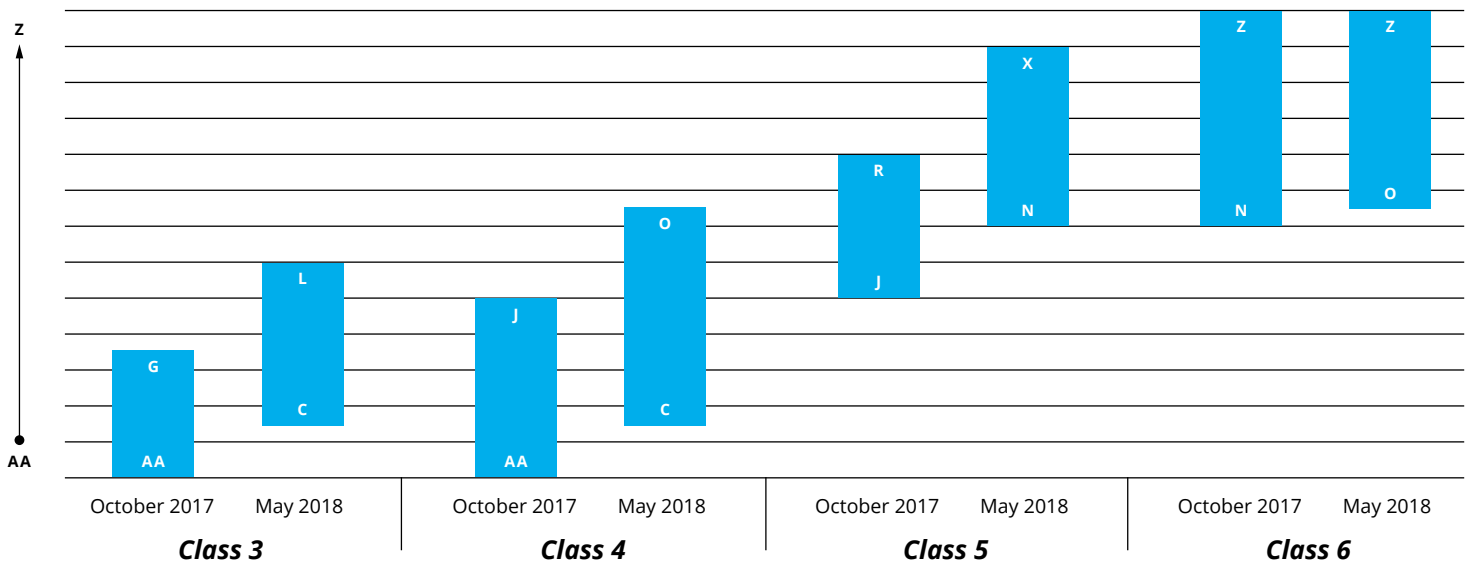
- We achieved our highest-ever attendance level with an **average of 81%**!
- We added furniture, educational materials, and **over 100 new books** to our Learning Center and Preschool libraries.
- Students outperformed our goal of improving two reading levels: **average growth was 3.5 levels.**
- University scholar **Ramón Sánchez Gómez** graduated as a doctor in July 2018!
- We welcomed participants on Experiential Service-Learning trips with Brookside Community Health Center, Lincoln-Sudbury Regional High School, St. John's University, and Yale University, plus interns, volunteers, and other visitors. **Thank you!**
- Yspaniola's Operations Director, **Julio Louis**, was selected for a competitive internship program and spent four months working with youth organization IREX in New Orleans, Louisiana.

Daniel

Mayra

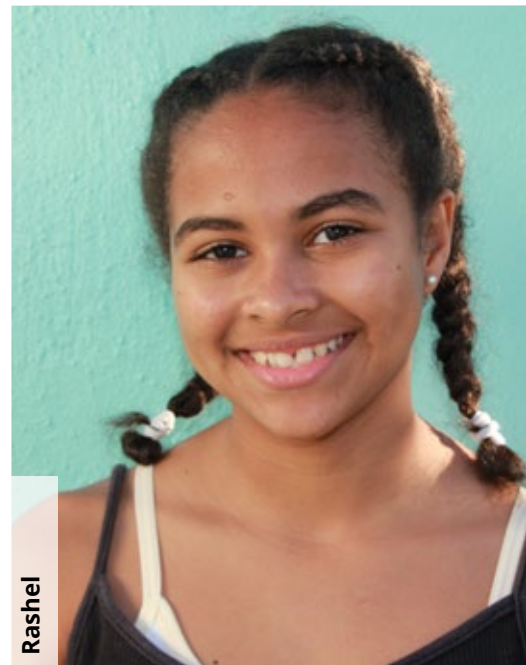
Year in Review

Student Reading Level Gains: October 2017 - May 2018



Our seventh university scholar, **Daniel**, began his degree in Psychology this year. "My personality has changed a lot," he reflects. "I used to be shy, but now I am active in my classes... All the professors know me!... The more I participate in class, the more I contribute, and the more I learn!" We also continue to support scholars María Fernanda, who is studying Primary Education, and Sofia, who is studying Psychology.


Rashel, (13), enjoys mentoring 9-year-old Yuleisy: "I don't like the program—I love it! When she starts reading, I am filled with joy. To help a kid learn to read is so wonderful. You feel great!"



Rashel



This year, grant funding enabled us to fully renovate our library. Teacher and Library Coordinator, **Mayra**, was delighted. "I was excited to buy books! I always heard students saying 'I've already read that one' or 'I know this one!' Now, we have a wider variety of books that interest the students so they can continue to expand their knowledge through reading."



Josecito in class 4

The Intersection of Education and Human Rights

Dominicans of Haitian descent face deep-rooted, systemic obstacles to full civic participation and comprehensive education. Legislative changes since 2013 have heightened the insecurity that many students experience due to the perpetual threat of deportation and their inability to enroll in higher education without legal identity documents.

In May 2018, Yspaniola launched a pilot program to help students from Batey Libertad who were born in the Dominican Republic but have had their citizenship denied. Thanks to generous donations and our hard-working local team, 35 children obtained documentation that re-confirms their right to reside in the country!

Our Most Loved Program Expands!

Reading Hour has always been the activity that students, volunteers, and visitors love most. This year, we've added an extra weekly session! We aim to cultivate a culture of reading for pleasure and provide our students with a welcoming space to explore their literary interests through group reading activities, interactive games, and songs.



“Tanda Extendida”: Arrival of the Full School Day

The Dominican government mandated the implementation of the full school day (*tanda extendida*) in 2016. This change finally reached the Batey Libertad public school in August 2018.

We welcome this step to improve the quality of education provided by the Dominican public school system. However, the local public school still lacks the resources and space to effectively deliver a full day of classes.

In response to the implementation of the full school day, Yspaniola has launched a pilot project through which we teach our literacy-focused curriculum in the public school four days a week. In the Learning Center, we offer after-school classes, tutoring, and a *Pequeños Lectores* (Little Readers) initiative that provides older students with the opportunity to serve as tutors and mentors to younger peers.

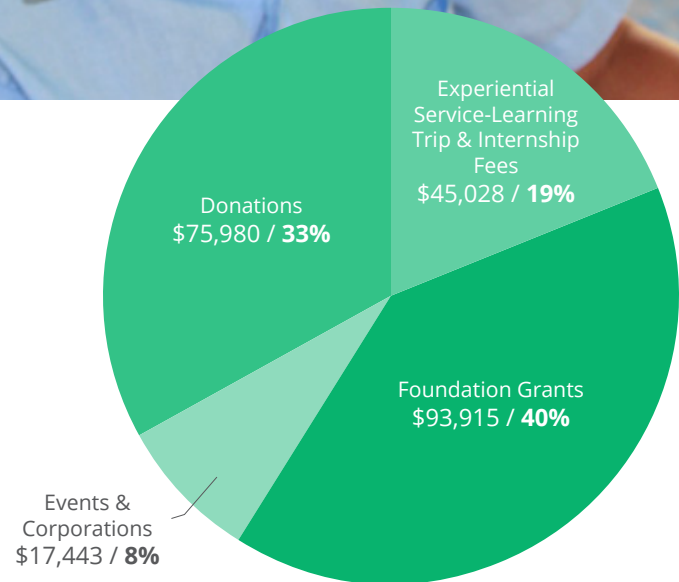
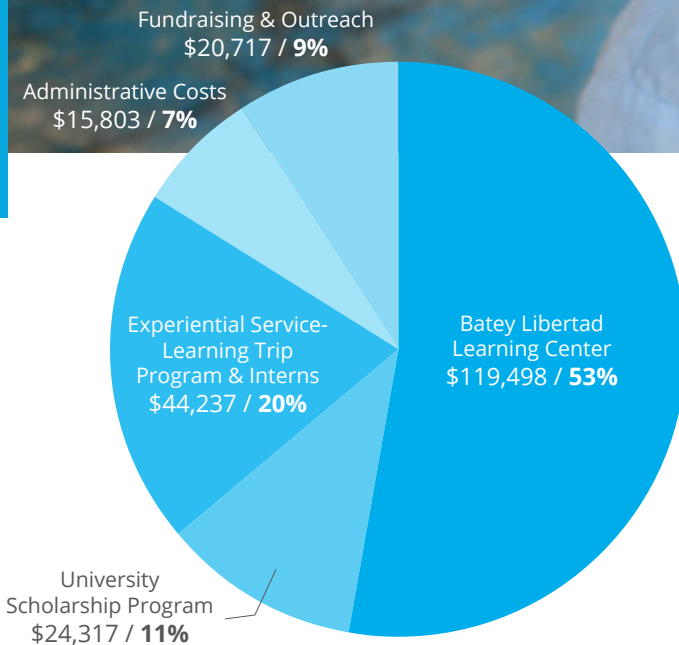
Welcome, Kinder Students!

Each morning, our enthusiastic new class of four-year-olds files into the Preschool! The majority of our 18 Kinder students predominantly speak Haitian Creole at home and Spanish as their second language. We aim to help our youngest learners develop their Spanish-language and literacy skills at an early age, laying the foundation for a successful start to their education. Our Preschool team also runs two weekly Reading Hour sessions and provides after-school tutoring for students who are in pre-primary or first grade at the public school.

2017-18 Financial Overview

Expenses \$224,572

Income \$232,366



2019: Yspaniola's 10th Anniversary

Since Yspaniola's official inception in 2009, we have achieved many important goals. With a modest annual budget, we have developed a core staff of trained local professionals. This investment has led to impressive levels of student success. We hope that you will continue to accompany us as we celebrate this milestone!

Don't forget! Our annual **Match Campaign** will run from December 26 to January 2! Every donation up to a total of \$20,000 will be matched by three generous donors. No amount is too small—thanks to your participation last year, we raised almost \$47,000! Please consider making a gift over the holidays to help sustain our work in 2019.

To donate, visit www.yspaniola.org/match2018
December 26 – January 2.

Checks payable to "Yspaniola" can also be mailed to:

Yspaniola Inc.
% Cynthia So-Armah
47 Seaverns Ave #5
Jamaica Plain, MA 02130

Thank you!

Get in touch!

info@yspaniola.org | www.yspaniola.org

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