

Dear friends,

Our Annual Picnic is coming up soon. Please let us know if you are attending. See attached Picnic flyer for more information. Also, a special announcement for all former Camp Matecumbe residents, SAVE THE DATE for a very special breakfast on Saturday, June 8th at Camp Matecumbe. This is a special opportunity to enjoy a day of fun at the former Camp Matecumbe. Stay tune for more information.

Love,

Carmencita Romanach

***The official Pedro Pan Newsletter of Operation Pedro Pan
Group Inc.***

OPERATION PEDRO PAN GROUP, INC. (OPPG)

A National Charitable Organization

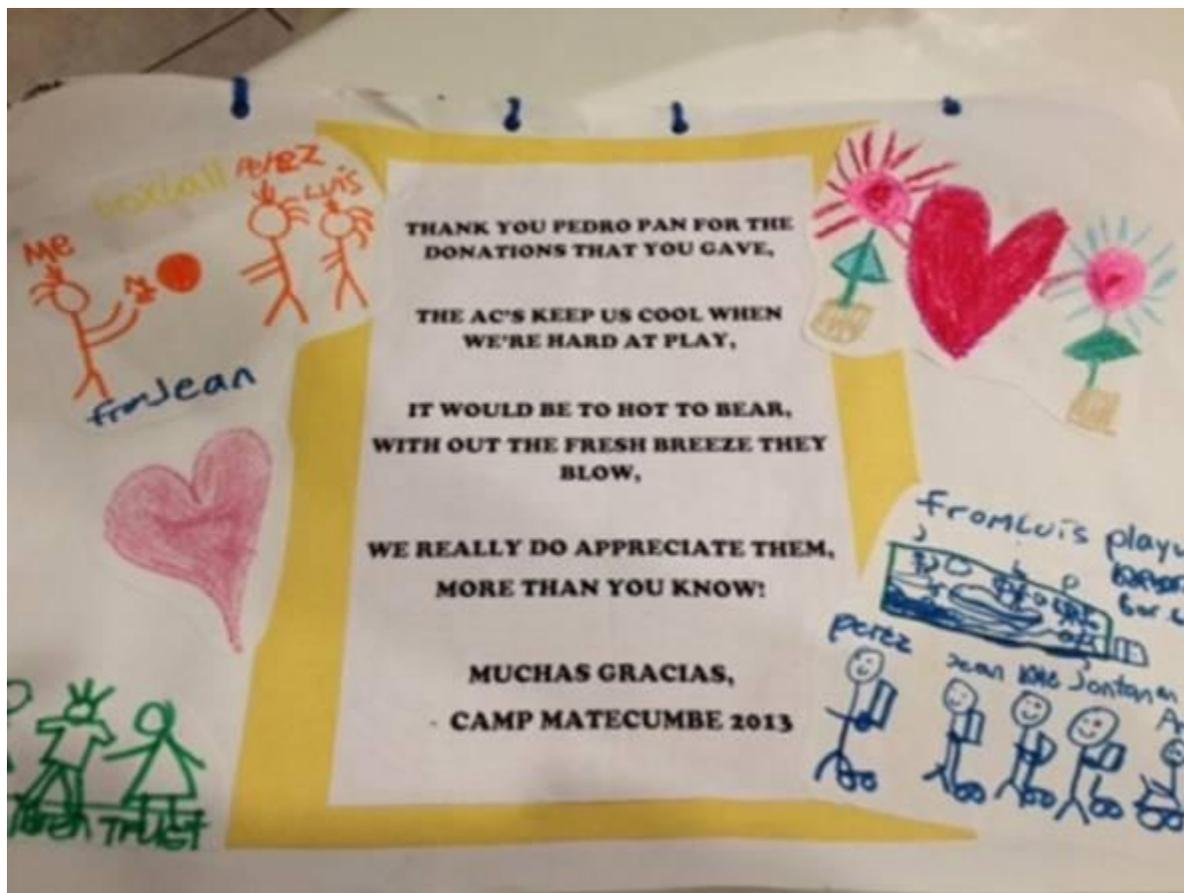
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March 6, 2013

Pedro Pan News



A LESSON OF LOVE

by Maria De La Milera

On February 21, 2013, Operation Pedro Pan Group Inc. (OPPG) Board of Directors was invited to a recognition event at the Park that was home to many of our Pedro Pans during the early 1960's, Camp Matecumbe. The reason for such recognition was the contribution OPPG had made to the Park dedicated to the purchase of air conditioning units for the children who are currently using the Park as their after-school program. The Gym, which is where they conduct most of their activities, was lacking this resource and children were experiencing many uncomfortable situations especially during the summer months.

Seven members of the Board agreed to meet there, at 5:30 pm on a Thursday night, to meet with the children and their parents who wanted to let us know how much they appreciated our efforts. One of our Pedro Pans participating that night, Juan, had stayed at Matecumbe when he first arrived from Cuba, which made the visit extra special.

When we first arrived we were met by the Camp administrators and program coordinators who made us feel right at home; we were shown the many improvements taking place at the park and posters about the Pedro Pan exodus and Camp Matecumbe's history were displayed. Once the program started, approximately thirty children came out of their activities room and performed for us, singing "You Are my Sunshine." Every one of them in their limitations, made a real effort to perform and the song sounded nicer by the minute. After they finished their song, they brought paintings and paper flowers they had made for us. OPPG was also presented with a beautiful plaque, a duplicate of which is displayed by the Office in the Gym.

We went to Camp Matecumbe to let the children know we cared; we left Camp Matecumbe receiving more than we could have hoped for. We learned of the beautiful and wonderful work a group of individuals are doing to make these children's lives better and to teach them how to function in a world they might not understand so well.

Our appreciation goes to everyone involved in this great program, the Park officials and, especially, the children. Thank you for allowing us to experience such a wonderful Lesson of Love.



OPPG met with international visitors from France's Department of "Protection sociale, travail e employ" at the request of the United States Department of State's International Visitors Leadership Program.

By: José Antonio Amaro Reyes

On January 23, 2013, OPPGI President Carmencita Romanach and Carmen Valdivia, Director and Chairperson of the History Committee, met with Madjid Bourabaa, Senior Consultant, and attorney Maryvonne Malisianou, both of France's Department "Protection sociale, travail e employ" at the request of the United States Department of State's International Visitors Leadership Program. Both were touring the United States to study equal opportunity, ending discrimination and promoting universal civil law rights. After leaving Miami, they headed for Des Moines, Iowa, where they met with the President of the State Senate, the state's Director of Human Rights, and other state officials.

While visiting Miami, they sought to get a better understanding of the Cuban experience in the U.S. and share insights on how the Cuban community fought against discrimination in South Florida in the 1960's to become some of the most influential leaders in the region today. They were particularly interested in the Pedro Pan

experience as it relates to the issues of cultural assimilation, social adaption and integration, professional formation, and rise to positions of leadership in the various professions. They were so very pleased with the outcome of the meeting that they wrote to the OPPG days later expressing a strong desire to remain in touch for future interaction.

Save the Date

Attention all Matecumberos!!!

Saturday

June 8th, 2013

Camp Matecumbe Breakfast

We are pleased to announce that
we will be holding our June
monthly breakfast
at Camp Matecumbe

We know this will be a very special opportunity for many
of our Pedro Pan brothers that were former residents
at Camp Matecumbe

During the breakfast we want to acknowledge
and congratulate
the first Camp Matecumbe HS graduating class
(class of 1963)

If you were a former Camp Matecumbe resident,
please send us your scanned picture of the 60s
and we will prepare a button for you
to proudly wear it at
Camp Matecumbe Breakfast
(before May 25)

Stories about Msgr. Bryan O. Walsh

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The following stories were shared by Dermot O'Brien (Monsignor's nephew) during our 2011 OPPG Conference.

The stories shared by Dermot let us peak into the private family life of our beloved Monsignor and are real jewels to cherish for all Pedro Pan. We want to thank the Walsh family for generously sharing him with us once again!

TONY WALSH (Monsignor's younger brother):

Bryan was the eldest of the family, I am the youngest. All the mischief was contained in my sisters and me; he was a model son and never put a foot wrong. My mother had a lovely story about the occasion he took her to Paris. She was very excited as she had studied French as a girl and this was her first flight. Of course she was quite nervous too. After take-off she searched her handbag for the Rosary beads but instead of comforting words all she heard was "It's too late for that now. We are 20,000 feet in the air" I recalled his words many years later when we travelled with him to Mexico City. Coming in to land he happened to mention that this would be a scary time due to the terrain around the Airport and the temperament of the crew.

Of course, we landed safely and he went on to enjoy many more flights all over the world. I have no doubt it was his faith and trust in the Lord that saw him through the many adventurous challenges he took on.

PHYL WALSH (Monsignor Walsh's sister in law) Married to Tony Walsh

Bryan loved moveable objects like boats, planes, automobiles and even bicycles. He learned to pilot a plane as a teenager and made great use of that skill during his years in Florida. On one of our holidays with him he persuaded me to board a light aircraft and take a tour of South Florida. Of his prowess as a pilot there was no doubt but taking his hands off the joystick to point out places of interest below was one of the most frightening, never to be forgotten experiences of my life.

When he retired and we holidayed with him on his houseboat I watched him cast off from jetties, man oeuvre through locks and berth in difficult situations, admiring his discipline and strength. On one occasion he even allowed me to take the helm and steer his lovely craft down the Shannon River. Sweet memories.

Jennie (Monsignor's niece)

My uncle Bryan was a tall man and as a young shy girl, I remember I was terrified to talk to him. Despite this, I have wonderful memories of our family holidays in Miami and spending Christmas with him in Ireland. Like my brother Peter, some of my memories include feeling under the weather but most of these were due to travel sickness through a trip in an aero plane or in a boat. He warned me plenty of times about not sitting below deck but of course, I didn't listen. One of my greatest memories was having Bryan come to Australia to officiate at my wedding to Paul. The day before the wedding, Bryan asked Paul if he would like him to hear his confession and Paul replied that that was not necessary as "I don't sin". Bryan laughed and tapping him on the head replied "I wish they were more of us like you". To me, this epitomizes that no matter what your beliefs or values may be; Bryan was always respectful of them. And he would be glad to know that over the years I have become a better traveler.

Future Events Calendar:

Saturday, March 16, 2013 at 11 AM - Picnic

Place: Kendall Indian Hammock Park, 12395 SW 79th St, Miami, FI, Shelter # 1

Saturday, April 13, 2013 at 10 AM - Election Breakfast

Place: Las Vegas Restaurant, 11500 NW 41st. St., Doral, FI

Saturday, June 8, 2013 at 10 AM - Camp Matecumbe Breakfast

Place: Camp Matecumbe, 13841 SW 120 St., Miami, FI

Saturday, July 20, 2013 at 10 AM- Breakfast

Place: Las Vegas Restaurant, 11500 NW 41st. St., Doral, FI

Saturday, August 17, 2013 at 10 AM- Breakfast

Place: Las Vegas Restaurant, 11500 NW 41st. St., Doral, FI

Saturday, September 21, 2013 at 10 AM-Breakfast

Place: Las Vegas Restaurant, 11500 NW 41st. St., Doral, FI

Saturday, October 19, 2013 at 10 AM-Breakfast

Place: Las Vegas Restaurant, 11500 NW 41st. St., Doral, FI

Saturday, November 16, 2013 at 10 AM- Annual Thanksgiving Gala

Place: TBA

Saturday, December 21st, 2013 at 10 AM- Christmas Breakfast

Place: Las Vegas Restaurant, 11500 NW 41st. St., Doral, FI

Operation Pedro Pan Group, Inc

A National Charitable Organization of the former Children of Pedro Pan

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