

The mission of **Aprender y Crecer** (Learning & Growing) is to improve educational and life opportunities for students by forming partnerships with public elementary schools where Price Charities provides school supplies and materials so that principals, teachers, parents and students can focus on quality teaching and learning.

Aprender y Crecer was created in 2006 by Price Charities, an non-profit organization of the founders of PriceSmart membership shopping clubs, Sol and Robert Price, and has become its principal corporate social responsibility program in Central America and the Dominican Republic.

Aprender y Crecer continues growing in the region and to date benefits a population of more than **41,000 students** and more than **1,900 teachers** in **89 elementary schools** in Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Panama, and the Dominican Republic.



COSTA RICA Reading Friday!



Escuela Maurilio Soto Alfaro in Alajuela has implemented an innovative strategy to promote reading and the artistic participation of students. Each week they do what they call "Reading Friday." Teachers and their students choose a book or a specific story to work with in class for a month through summaries, conceptual maps, reviews, etc. There is a schedule for the whole year set up by the school's Reading Committee when each class presents the story of the book to rest of the students in the school. Parents are in charge of making the scenery and costumes and are invited to watch the play and admire the students. Excellent initiative!

Blanca Aracely Miranda is an example of tenacity and positive attitude. She is an 18-year-old girl who has a four-year-old son. They both attend Escuela Hacienda Florencia. She had to interrupt her studies for a while, but last year she was very determined not only to take her child to kindergarten, but also to complete her own elementary studies. She had to face many challenges and with the support of her teachers in the school and the materials donated by Aprender y Crecer she was able to finish the fifth grade at the top of her class. Now she attends sixth grade in the mornings and helps as a kindergarten assistant in the afternoons at the school.

EL SALVADOR Positive attitude for success!



GUATEMALA Hope and joy in Guatemala!

Teachers and students from schools in Guatemala expressed their words of joy for continuing with the Aprender y Crecer Program.

“For us teachers the benefit of Aprender y Crecer is a great opportunity to develop expand our classes in a more creative way without the frustration of not being able to help students at least with their basic supplies. The work day is so rewarding when children are happy in the classrooms because they all have their school supplies to work in groups or individually,” were the words of a teacher from Escuela El Maguey referring to the donation received. One student from fourth grade said, “My father didn’t have a job and we didn’t know what we were going to do to buy the supplies. Thank you for helping us with the supplies that are so nice and special.”



HONDURAS Motivation and initiative



At Escuela Jose Trinidad Reyes, a rural school in the community of Linaca, Honduras, Aprender y Crecer planted a seed in fertile soil. In 2010 this school, like other schools in the program, received a collection of 720 story books. The difference was that they have never had a library. That same year a mother and grade teacher participated in a workshop and follow-up meetings organized by Aprender y Crecer and directed toward librarians. This was enough motivation to have this school look for outside support and they are already taking big steps in organizing their own school library. Keep it up!

NICARAGUA A new world!

With the books and educational games that were donated to the schools in the Aprender y Crecer Program, teachers, students and parents from schools that did not have a library before were motivated to find a space in the school to start a library. Those that already had a space were excited to stimulate their libraries creatively. This initiative has motivated students to find a dynamic, academic and entertaining space to make their learning more interesting. Also, parents have been motivated to make themselves part of a school project by being teacher’s assistants in the use of library. A first grade teacher from Escuela San Isidro de Bola remarked, “All the books and games that were brought to us are so beautiful, they are like a new world for all of us.”



PANAMA Reading ideas!



As a way of promoting the reading of the books donated by Aprender y Crecer among the students, Escuela Simon Bolivar is planning a variety of activities each month. In April, every Wednesday is Family Day for reading. Parents are invited to come to school to read a story to their child's class. Some parents, under their own initiative, have brought things related to the reading while others give out chocolates or little gifts to motivate the children. Once they read the book parents sign a mural called "Reading with my Family," where their participation is certified in the classroom. In May teachers will exchange classrooms to read to other students, and in June they will have special guests come and read. Great ideas to expand the imagination with books!

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC Great use of school supplies!

During this school year, all schools participating in the Aprender y Crecer Program have been able to achieve more success because everyone in the school has the opportunity of producing what they learn with the donated school supplies. In February, the national heritage month for the Dominican Republic, students were very motivated to present their essays, projects and plays about the country's independence. Teachers were able to assign those presentations and reports because the schools already had all the materials the students needed to make them. Schools were able to carry out an enthusiastic demonstration of Dominican identity and values.

