

Liberation Theology Lives On in South Quito



Quito, May 23 (teleSUR-RHC)-- Italian Priest Jose Carollo was a follower of liberation theology when he arrived in Ecuador in 1949 and dedicated his life to serving the poorest residents of southern Quito.

"It hurt him, other people's pain. Poverty hurt him. He felt hurt by injustice, inequity. In Ecuador there are cities that are tremendously unequal, like Quito," Director of the *Tierra Nueva* Foundation Gloria Davila told teleSUR English. "In the northern part of the city you had everything, but in the south there was nothing. This is where the migrants came to, farmers of rural areas to build their homes out of recycled materials."

Abandoned and forgotten, south Quito lacked infrastructure and basic services, a void which Father Carollo sought to fill through his foundation, *Tierra Nueva*. "It was like he was the mayor. He worked to build homes, health clinics, churches, even universities. He was known as 'the builder of south.' He has more than 200 projects in Ecuador, and all with a very big spiritual vision," Davila added.

Seeking to empower and give dignity to the residents of south Quito, Father Carollo created programs for orphans, children and adults with disabilities, and senior citizens, among other groups, seeking to give them medical and psychological care, as well as the tools to empower themselves. There are 62 senior citizens who come to one of the centers daily for activities and medical attention.

One of the largest projects left by Father Carollo is the hospital which carries his name. Using state of the art equipment, the hospital offers care in 33 specialties. Functioning next to the hospital is a program for young people at-risk, where they are able to participate in group therapy sessions and receive training to become leaders in sexual health awareness and drug prevention programs.

"We work based on the principals of liberation theology. Father Carollo always vouched for young people, he supported youth religious programs which is the process I come from," said Elena Garcia, a psychologist of the program.

The legacy of Father Carollo and the scope of his work lives on 10 years after his death through the *Tierra Nueva* Foundation, carrying on the principles of liberation theology through those projects in solidarity with and empowering the poor.

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