

YMCA OBSERVATORY, International Edition

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This publication is sent by e-mail and included in the Internet site: www.ymca.org.ar, intends to share, in short, information and ideas with the broad international world of the Young Men's Christian Association /YMCA. Only ten subjects have been selected to be shared.

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- **ARGENTINE YMCA IN SPAIN, BELAURS AND ARMENIA**

Alfonsina Gómez, young volunteer of Rosario's YMCA -the recovery of which after bankruptcy was assumed by Argentina's YMCA in 2004- took part in October of an excellent traineeship in Spain's YMCA and in the Seminar "Inclusive Christianity", organized by the European YMCA Alliance in Belarus. Afterwards, Alfonsina went to Armenia to make progress in exploring cooperation actions with that country's YMCA.

- **XIII NATIONAL CONGRESS ON VALUES, CRITICAL THOUGHT AND SOCIAL NETWORK**

The XIII National Congress on Values, Critical Thought and Social Fabric, organized by Argentine YMCA was a meeting point that made intense debate easier, in a respectful and plural environment, on a subject of paramount importance for the nation: "Thirty years of democracy and debts to federalism". Over four hundred participants met on September 25 and 26 at the "San Agustín" Auditorium of the Universidad Católica Argentina. Approaching federalism, with its weaknesses weighing it down, implied an immersion in our history and the acknowledgement of the challenge to finally achieve and thus genuinely crystallize the declarations of the National Constitution. YMCA, as usually, made sure that the conceptual diversity reflected in the opinions and stances of the many qualified guest speakers. Once again it could be confirmed that the whole society aspires to be summoned to dialogue experiences. People are tired of sterile confrontation. Congress conclusions show critiques again, most of them addressed to the political leadership that is not satisfactorily responding to the severe problems Argentina is undergoing. It also posed the need of a more vigorous role of the civil society which should leave aside its proclivity to delegate in excess its duties to the political leadership, which should be controlled too. A 142-page book summarizing everything that happened in the congress has already been published.

- **COMMITMENT TO THE PALESTINIAN YMCA**

Argentine YMCA ratifies its deep commitment to Palestine's YMCA and the Palestinian people. Within this framework, the six-month traineeship in the Holy Land of a young volunteer was carried out. Romina Sarmiento lived this experience to the fullest and shared it with Argentina's YMCA. In 2015 we expect to receive in Buenos Aires the Eastern Jerusalem YMCA's secretary general. In October, Argentine YMCA's secretary general, Norberto Rodríguez, visited Eastern Jerusalem and met with YMCA's directors. Furthermore, in 2014 we will take part again in the programme "Journey for Justice".

- **PROFESSIONAL TRAINEESHIPS 2015**

Argentine YMCA has defined the five international traineeships of its professionals. They will be carried out in the United States of America, México, Perú and Finland. Other destinations are still under analysis process.

- **MÉXICO**

Argentina's YMCA is pleased by the strengthening of the relations with the sister YMCA of México. During the current year an Argentine YMCA's professional carried out a fruitful traineeship in Mexico. In turn, for several months Argentina received two Mexican trainees. Undoubtedly new experiences entailing mutual learning and enrichment in terms of YMCA's mission shall be generated.

- **ARGENTINA, SPAIN, ITALY AND PORTUGAL**

The YMCAs of these four countries have prepared a four-party cooperation protocol including contents open to different options and also focussed on the exchange of experiences, programmes, professionals and leaders. It also contemplates activities related to the service and resource generation; for instance tourism.

- **COURTYARD (ATRIO) OF THE GENTILES**

The Courtyard (Atrio) of the Gentiles is a Vatican dialogue initiative that Pope Francis drives and strengthens. It was carried out in Argentina in November and YMCA was part of the Advisory Council of this experience held in Buenos Aires and Córdoba. It was attended by Cardinal Gianfranco Ravasi, president of the Pontifical Council for Culture. In Buenos Aires the activities, to which YMCA contributed, too, its organizational logistics, were held in the Colon Theatre and in the schools of Law and Economic Sciences of the Universidad de Buenos Aires. Subjects like, for example "Borges and his importance" were addressed and debates held on the concept of Social and Citizenship Responsibility. It was a high-impact activity attended by important national and international opinion leaders from the culture, religion, economy, sociology and education fields. Among the prominent foreign participants, besides Cardinal Ravasi, Juan J. Almagro, from the Universidad Complutense de Madrid y Alcalá de Henares and Stefano Zamagni, from the Universidad de Bolonia, stood out.

- **II FEDERAL MEETING OF YMCA'S LEADERS**

The II FEDERAL MEETING OF YMCA'S LEADERS -a space reserved for teenagers and young people-, was held on November 22, 23 and 24 at Rosario's YMCA. Forty participants from the city of Buenos Aires and the Provinces of Buenos Aires (Escobar, La Matanza and Monte Hermoso), Entre Ríos (Concordia and La Paz), Salta and Santa Fe (Rosario) dealt with as focal subject: "Argentina of the Third Centenary: Federal, diverse and inclusive". The object of the Meeting was to contribute to the education of young people within the framework of YMCA's values: love, justice, peace and solidarity, oriented to the building of citizenship in federal format. For our institution, young people are the future but also the present. The education of leaders is one of YMCA's charismas and bases on the promotion of active volunteer work in pursuit of social transformation.

- **NEW PRIZE RECEIVED BY ARGENTINA'S YMCA**

On November 27, at the Auditorium of the School of Economic Sciences of the Universidad de Buenos Aires, within the framework of the Courtyard (Atrio) of the Gentiles, the Young Men's Christian Association / YMCA was awarded the "Solidarity Entrepreneur" price, in the "NGO-Culture" category. The Prize was granted by the Social Ecumenical Forum and received by the secretary general, Norberto Rodríguez. As a family, YMCA shares the satisfaction of this new

distinction that acts as trigger towards new commitments, always within the context of promoting values and focussing the institutional actions on reality, no matter how complex it may be.

- **SOLIDARITY WITH LIBERIA'S AND SIERRA LEONE'S YMCAs**

Faced with the appeal made on October by the World Wide Alliance of YMCAs, Argentina's YMCA immediately responded positively. Ebola's drama, affecting particularly Liberia and Sierra Leone, challenges us to express active solidarity with both sister YMCAs.
