



June 2008

## IGNITING FLAMES OF HOPE

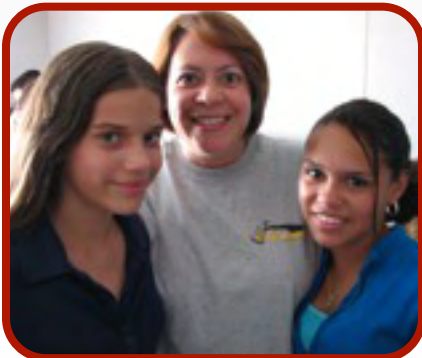
*'And I myself will be a wall of fire around it,' declares the LORD, 'and I will be its glory within.'*  
Zechariah 2:5



*I can't believe that another school year is ending for the Firewall after school program. My wife Janeth is the key component in that program and I asked her to share some thoughts on what it is like to be a tutor, mentor, counselor, and second mommy to the hundreds of young people we have worked with over the last four years.*



I still remember 4 years ago how we started working with teens with their homework and projects. It is so amazing to be able to look at some of these teens that we help on a daily basis making excellent grades and getting recognized in school for good academic performance. This year we even have three who are graduating and I really don't have words to express my gratitude to God for this opportunity. I know with all my heart that all this would not be possible without the support and the prayers of so many of you that believe in what we do. We are here to make a difference "one child at a time" with a great deal of patience, perseverance, and love for a generation who gets constantly bombarded with negative media and a corrupt society.



My job is far from easy. I have to be the motivator, the support, and the magician who finds innovative ways to get these teens to finish their work. On a typical day I can feel the pressure and the stress of finding the right words of encouragement to teach these young people what it means to obtain a high school diploma, to stay in school, to choose a good career that will help them overcome their economic struggles. Some days I feel I have failed when I hear them telling me they are thinking of dropping out of school. My heart immediately stops and I pray a quick prayer to find the right words to say and to help them move on. Other days, I feel I have reached the mountaintop and finished the race that God has given me. On those days, these teens come in and tell me that they made it to the honor roll, or that



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the school is awarding them for the “Most Improved,” or they share with me what they want to do when they go to college.

This month I have had the honor to see one of my first students to enroll in the after school program graduating and moving on to registering for college. I was just thinking of this teen because he was so shy and had some difficulties with the English language. Today, I see him with so many friends at our building, and how he is involved in the youth and even helps us tutor other teens. I saw his mom recently and she expressed her gratitude to us for helping her son not only in academics, but to become a fine outgoing young man. It is times like these when I feel that the work we do here is not in vain, and that we cannot give up on giving these teens a positive environment where they can grow up and be good citizens in our society. I have so many stories to tell, but this time I am only allowed to write one page.

When people ask me what I do or to describe my job, I tell them that it is hard to define because my work affects so many areas in the life of the children I teach. I tried to explain that in the 4 days a week that the student is with us, we try to teach them about love, understanding, self- esteem, and how to deal with the many problems they have to face on a daily basis. It is when these concepts start sinking into the child’s mind that we start making a difference in their academic performance. Many of them cannot function properly at school because of their situation at home. They have so many things to worry about in and out of school that the latter becomes the least of their priorities in life. This is where I see the most difficulty in what we do. We can spend three hours trying to review math concepts, but if their minds are on their problems and if they don’t believe that they can change and become better students, our job is nearly impossible.



### **Miss Byondi**

When I first started working at Firewall, I did not think that I would stay the whole year. As I became accustomed to tutoring the kids, and did not hear from other jobs that I had applied for, I took it as God’s will for me. The first few weeks were unsettling because I was trying to get use to my new environment. As the weeks went by, I really enjoyed working at Firewall.

I can see why the kids love this place. Firewall is such a good influence on the students. Mrs. Janeth and the rest of the Firewall staff are always there for them no matter what the problem or the need. Firewall Ministries is very beneficial to the kids of Palma Nova. I feel so blessed to have been a part of this school year staff at Firewall.

### **Firewall Keeps Growing**

The Park Management has generously donated an 1800 square foot modular building for our use. It is located just behind our current facility. We expect to utilize this building during the summer for all kinds of youth activities and as a recreation center for next school year.

### **Thank You**

We would like to thank all of you who financially support and pray for this ministry. May God bless you for all that you do for His Kingdom



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