

La Majada Nutritional Program
By Darell Garth, El Ayudante's Special Projects Reporter



José Rafael Acosta Reyes



Juan José Brand Urbina

This information was gathered from José Rafael Acosta Reyes (12 year-old sixth-grader) and Juan José Brand Urbina (11 year-old sixth-grader).

When I spoke to these kids they were cleaning the school yard. I asked them their thoughts on the nutritional program that was being sponsored through El Ayudante. The boys answered, "It is good because they give us food in a very nice manner." When asked whether they liked the food, they replied, "Yes, we love the food!" Then the little kids got excited and started to pour out lots of comments about the food. I could barely follow them. They exclaimed, "They give food to us everyday! Some of the foods that they give us are spaghetti, eggs, pasta, rice and beans, cereal, porridge with soymilk, ground soy meat, potatoes, and sometimes tortillas." When the little kids slowed down a little, Juan José said, "But out of all of these our favorite dish is chicken...yeah, fried chicken." So I curiously asked why? José Rafael responded, "See, at home chicken is a very special dish which is only served if we have special visitors on weekends. When this happens my parents kill one of our own chickens and cook it for lunch."

Later on I asked the kids what their lives would be like if the nutritional program were canceled. To this José Rafael replied, "If they stopped feeding us we would be sad because sometimes after school we go home and there is nothing to eat because our parents are very poor."

I also had a chance to meet third and fourth grade teacher Mr. Fausto Felipe Méndez, a 28 year old inhabitant of La Majada. During recess, Mr. Fausto and I sat down and dialogued. I made good use of this opportunity to ask him a few questions about the nutritional program. When asked what his feelings were towards the nutritional program, Mr. Fausto smiled and replied, "Well, I think the nutritional program is very important because it provides nutrition to hungry children. By running the nutritional program you not only help the kids, but you also help their parents because there are many kids that do not have breakfast before coming to school. In this manner the kids can come to class and at the same time get something to eat." Keeping up our conversation, I posted the following question: "How has the program changed things at the school?" Mr. Fausto said, "the program itself had changed because initially (about 2 years ago) the only dish that the program was able to provide the kids was rice and beans. But then last year a team of American missionaries came to La Majada and helped out with the program. Thanks to them, the program is not limited to feeding just rice and beans, but now many other foods have been added for a more balanced diet." Finally to finish our conversation I asked Mr. Fausto if he thought that the kids were pleased and he said, "Humph! As a matter of fact they are. They *are* happy!"



