

# Alumni Testimonials

## David Marques

**Middle School Teacher (2005- 2006)**

I can't say enough good things about BECA and SJBS. I loved getting to know the families of my students, and in turn having them take care of me and my fellow volunteers as if we were their own. There was definitely a great family feel around the BECA program as well as at our school, which was created through a parent-led process. If you're simply looking to travel, work on your Spanish, and take it easy, I encourage you to look elsewhere out of respect for our students. If you're open to new beginnings and have a strong desire to serve others and get your world view in order, definitely check out BECA.

## Jonathan Giftos

**First Grade Teacher (2003-2004)**

I taught First Grade and co-facilitated a family literacy program. I greatly enjoyed my experience; the community is very strong, the accommodations are simple and authentic, and the work is very rewarding. Volunteering through BECA was probably the hardest thing I've ever done, but it's an experience I will never forget!

## Jasmine Roberts

**Kinder Teacher, Administrator (2005-2007)**

During my time at SJBS, I truly came to be part of the BECA family. I felt surrounded by support from my fellow team members, the community members, and the BECA administration and alumni. And of course, by the love that the little kids showered upon me daily! Throughout the year, I felt both challenged and empowered to contribute my talent and energy to the school, the community, and to BECA. I hold a special place in my heart for the children at SJBS and their families.



# BECA

**Bilingual Education for Central America**

418 E. 84 St. #5  
New York, NY 10028  
USA

+1 (646) 233-3436

[www.becaschools.org](http://www.becaschools.org)

If you would like to discuss short-term or long-term volunteer opportunities or request additional information about our efforts, please e-mail BECA Director Laurence Birdsey at [lbirdsey@becaschools.org](mailto:lbirdsey@becaschools.org) or call us at the phone number above.

BECA is a U.S. registered 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. All donations are tax deductible to the full extent of the law.



*Promoting  
Cultural Exchange*

*Providing Affordable  
Bilingual Education*



## BECA's Mission:

We are a **nonprofit organization** that promotes cultural exchange and affordable bilingual education for disadvantaged students. Our volunteer-driven school model creates an environment where Honduran students learn from dedicated volunteer teachers, and those volunteers learn from the community in which they are immersed.



## Our Volunteers

BECA recruits qualified and committed volunteers from top-tier institutions who have broad-ranging experience. They all share a deep commitment to service and their own learning. This year's volunteer acceptance rate was below 15%. Our rigorous, holistic, and selective interview process ensures our students receive a corps of excellent teachers year after year.

Once the BECA teaching team is assembled for the upcoming school year, all volunteers will attend a thorough 5-week training program on the ground in Honduras. This Summer Institute ensures that teachers will be prepared for the unique set of challenges they will face in the bilingual classroom.

BECA alumni now serve as Fulbright Scholars, World Bank employees, microfinance specialists, classroom teachers in U.S. inner cities, immigration advocates, college placement specialists for Hispanic youth, legal advocacy workers, and much more.

## Who We Are:

San Jeronimo Bilingual School (SJBS) is a community-managed non-profit school that aims to change the Honduran status quo. SJBS serves 202 socioeconomically diverse students in Cofradia, Cortés. A group of parents, the *Asociación de Padres Proeducación*, founded SJBS with BECA's help in 2004. They are responsible for the on-going administration and maintenance of the school.

BECA is SJBS's U.S. non-profit partner. We support SJBS by recruiting and training a qualified group of service-minded volunteers who commit to a year or more of service. BECA's



presence allows the school to keep tuition at a quarter of the cost of comparable schools and to provide a significant number of scholarships. At any given time, no less than 25% of the student body is on scholarship due to their low-income status. Our model is built on a partnership between Hondurans committed to high quality, progressive education and foreigners interested in an innovative approach to helping others. This collaboration results in a highly affordable bilingual education for our students and an authentic cultural immersion for our volunteers.

There are no handouts in our model. Families whose children receive scholarships contribute towards their child's education through completion of a monthly service requirement. This service not only enables them to feel a sense of pride in their contribution to their child's education, it also offers the opportunity to gain practical skills.

For less than \$37,000 a year, we positively impact the lives of 202 children, their families, and the BECA teachers that serve them. As a result of our success in Cofradia, BECA's Board has begun implementing a plan for expansion that will scale up our model. By the end of 2010 we aim to have BECA-trained teachers working at multiple schools and teaching hundreds more children.

Join the BECA team and help us plan for expansion by suggesting new partner sites, participating in a short-term social tourism visit, referring a potential teacher, or supporting to the expansion of our volunteer teacher training efforts.

## Get Involved:

There are many ways you can support BECA. A few suggestions follow:

- **Refer** a volunteer or **apply** to BECA yourself.
- **Arrange** a short-term "social tourism" or "service learning" visit with BECA for yourself and a group. During your week with us, you will work with our students and volunteers and get to know community members by living in a home-stay.



- **Donate**. Even small donations go a long way! If you don't have the resources to make a direct contribution, consider running a marathon, collecting school supplies, or holding a sale for us.
- **Mentor** a BECA volunteer teacher on teaching and pedagogy.
- **Suggest** a venue or innovative idea for an upcoming BECA fundraiser or event.
- **Help** us identify new partners or supporters.

Visit  
[www.becaschools.org](http://www.becaschools.org)