

YMCA OBSERVATORY, International Edition

-Published by the Young Men's Christian Association / YMCA of the Republic of Argentina.

- December 2016, Year XII, No. 31

This publication is sent by e-mail and included in the Internet site: [www.ymca.org.ar](http://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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- **FORUM FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' RIGHTS**

Argentina's YMCA is strongly committed to the indigenous peoples of our country. Annually, young volunteers develop the mission of accompanying Wichi community in Dragones, province of Salta, located in the north. By mid-year, in June, it develops at its metropolitan venues the Forum for Indigenous Peoples' Rights tending to raise awareness of the problems of those that suffer oppression and oblivion. It turns into an amazing educational experience.

- **WORLD YOUTH DAY**

The young leader *Franco Ibarrola* of Argentine YMCA took part in the World Youth Day in Krakow, by the end of July. He was received by Polish YMCA and had the support from the European Alliance of YMCAs. This day gathered a multitude of youngsters and was honoured by the presence of Pope Francis. Krakow's YMCA exhibited a series of amplified photographs that referred Argentina's YMCA relationship with the Holy Father when he was Archbishop of Buenos Aires. Some days before and after this experience in Poland, Franco Ibarrola carried out a traineeship in Spain's YMCA.

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

On September 22 and 23 the Fifteenth National Congress on Values, Critical Thought and Social Network organized by Argentina's YMCA took place. Its title was: *"EDUCATION: THE CHALLENGE OF AN INTEGRAL AND SYSTEMIC CHANGE"*. The subject agenda, particularly sensitive, was duly complied with. It included considering the importance of generating an educational system with a federal approach, the need to drive the equality of educational opportunities to fight poverty and exclusion, the scarcity of university graduates in hard sciences, the education and its contribution to social peace and the unavoidable teacher training for educational quality, the professional hierarchical organization and the building of citizenship. Five hundred attendants gathered at "San Austin" auditorium rented to the Universidad Católica Argentina and thirty-two (32) opinion leaders of public and private life of our country were lecturers, always taking care of the diverse and plural perspective of approaches. It was declared of cultural interest by the Government of the City of Buenos Aires and by the Province of Entre Ríos. State agencies, universities, professional councils and other high-level institutions sponsored the Congress.

- ***INTER-RELIGIOUS FORUM IN BUENOS AIRES***

Argentine YMCA's secretary general, Norberto Rodríguez, was invited to participate as panellist in work groups on the subject: "Inter-religious dialogue in educational agenda". Call came from the Directorate for Religious Institutions of the Government of the City of Buenos Aires and took place on August 10 and 11 at the local Legislature. It entails recognition for YMCA's preaching and work on this burning subject.

- ***MAGAZINE of YMCA'S UNIVERSITY COALITION***

This publication in its 2016 edition included an article written by the Argentine YMCA's secretary general and secretary of YMCA's Foundation, Norberto Rodríguez.

- ***MEETING WITH UNICEF***

On August 30, *Florence Bauer, UNICEF's Director in Argentina, was invited and received in a lunch by YMCA's members of the Board of Directors and secretary general.* Historically, there is a cooperation relationship between the United Nations Children's Fund and YMCA of Argentina. It was a very nurturing meeting that allowed comparing programmes underway and deep hopes of contributing to a more equitable society, within the frame of values that favour life, particularly of children and teenagers.

- ***FORUM IN THE VATICAN***

Argentine YMCA was invited to the "First Meeting of America in dialogue: our Common House" held in the City of the Vatican on September 7 and 8. It was held at the Institutum Patristium Agustinianum and 18 American countries took part of this dialogue. Norberto Rodríguez was called to represent Argentina's YMCA in this meeting organized by the Organization of American States (OAS) and the Inter-religious Dialogue of the Republic of Argentina, sponsored by the Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue. This initiative was strongly supported by Pope Francis who received the participants when the meeting concluded, greeted each one of them and prayed for the success of this proposal that strengthens dialogue culture and human meeting. Reflection on the encyclical "Laudato Si" was the basis of the meeting with a view to the commitment entailed by taking care of our common house, that is to say our Planet. Important participants and lecturers gave prestige to the meeting. Among them, the vice president of Honduras, Lorena Herrera, the president of the InterAmerican Court of Human Rights, Roberto de Figueiredo Caldas, the president of the Constitutional Chamber of the Supreme Court of Justice of Chile, Sergio Muñoz, the president of the Supreme Court of Justice, Ricardo Lorenzetti, the ambassador of Chile to the Holy See, Mariano Fernandez Amunategui, the ambassador of Paraguay to OAS, Elisa Ruiz Díaz, the president of the First Chamber of the Supreme Court of Justice of Mexico, Alfredo Gutiérrez Ortiz Mena, the Secretary of the Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue, Angel Ayuso Guixot, the ambassador of Guatemala to OAS, Gabriel Aguilera Peralta, Adalberto Rodríguez Giavarini, former Argentine Chancellor, Ana M. Bidegain, professor of religious studies of Florida International University and Hussein Rashid of the Columbia University. The invitation received by Argentine YMCA implies recognition for its commitment and work both in the inter-religious and inter-cultural field. It acts from its lay, non-denominational, open, respectful and plural perspective.

- ***EXCHANGE OF LEADERS WITH LATIN AMERICAN YMCAs***

During 2016 and just at the beginning of the southern summer season, YMCA of Argentina received and shall receive young leaders of Brazil, Colombia, Peru and Uruguay. In turn, it sent its own leaders to Brazil and Uruguay.

- ***PRESIDENT OF SPAIN's YMCA IN ARGENTINA***

On December 5, Argentina YMCA's members of the Board of Directors and secretary general welcomed José M. de las Casas, president of YMCA of Spain, who visited our country together with his wife Mariló. It was a very pleasant lunch during which the relationship between the YMCAs of both sides of the Atlantic strengthened with an Ibero-American vision. The, José M. de las Casas met with YMCA's secretary general, Norberto Rodríguez, who was accompanied by Mario Cenci, Leadership and Communications manager. We welcomed his presence.

- ***115<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF ARGENTINE YMCA***

In May 2017, Argentine YMCA shall be celebrating its 115<sup>th</sup> anniversary. A programme referring to this emblematic date includes a wide range of activities to be carried out in all fields of the institutional work. A publication is expected that shall reflect the opinion on YMCA of the main opinion leaders of our country, both from the political environment and the cultural, religious, trade-union, educational and civil society spheres.

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