

# Viewpoint

## The power of a promise

BY IAN O'BRIEN

In rural Bolivia, children often hike for hours to attend school in a dilapidated wooden structure with a thatched roof. When it rains outside, it rains inside. There are no doors or glass in the windows to keep out rats and spiders.

And these students are the lucky ones. Others have no classroom at all.

Joey Temali, an 8th-grader at Highland Park Middle School, wants to change that. "I was in Bolivia and I saw the schools and the horrible conditions they were in," he said.

In 2009 Joey toured Bolivia with his family while on a volunteer trip for Mano a Mano, a nonprofit organization in St. Paul whose mission is to create partnerships with Bolivian villages to improve health and increase economic security. Joey's father was in Bolivia at the request of Segundo Velasquez, who founded Mano a Mano with his wife Joan. After visiting schools built by Mano a Mano, Joey (then age 9) told Jose Velasquez, the director of one of Mano a Mano's Bolivian counterpart organizations, "I want to build a school." And according to Joey, "I haven't broken my promise yet."

The need for education in rural Bolivia is profound. One in five children never go to school; three in five drop out of school by the 3rd grade. School conditions are a big factor. In Bolivia, the second poorest nation in the Western hemisphere, education is woefully inadequate. Teachers, many of whom are from wealthier urban centers, generally refuse to stay in rural schools longer than a year because of the conditions.

Mano a Mano has begun to address the problem by building 47 schools in rural Bolivia. Each school costs about \$35,000. Temali is determined to raise the full amount for another new school. He began by writing to the principals of 12 schools in the Twin Cities that have Spanish immersion language programs.

His first response came in late February from the International Spanish Language Academy in Minnetonka. Guillermo Maldonado, a 5th-grade teacher at ISLA, said his class ran a fundraiser that netted more than \$700.

Joey decided to see if he could be as successful with a fundraiser at Highland Park Middle School. Liz Hathaway-Castelán, a humanities teacher in the Spanish immersion program there, volunteered to have her advisory class run the event. "It seemed like a wonderful thing to do," she said. "Kids to kids is a great way to get students involved."

First, Joey presented his project to school staff members. Next, he and 8th-grader Maggie Cudahy and 7th-grader Ray Dow presented the idea to students. The kids were shown a video of conditions in the village of Jatun Kasa and were told that the class that brought in the most money over a two-week period would earn a party.

Joey's goal was to raise \$1,000 at Highland Park. After two weeks, the students had raised \$1,282. Including a matching gift from an anonymous donor, the total came to \$1,782.

Highland Park principal Charlene Hoff attributes much of the fundraiser's success to Joey's leadership. "What made it successful was Joey's enthusiasm and his connection to that part of the world," she said. "Because he had that personal connection, we had it, too."

Dana Dallavalle, Mano a Mano's point person on the project, was also impressed with Joey. "He blew the 2013 annual Spring Gala (a Mano a Mano event held at Mendakota Country Club) out of the water," she said. "Joey is a passionate, well-spoken, intelligent young kid with the highest aspirations. We're excited to have him on board."

Dallavalle and the Temali family are now creating a kit that others can use to throw their own fundraisers. The project has been dubbed Niño a Niño. In addition to running another fundraiser at ISLA and Highland Park during this school year, the Temali family plans to extend the project to Highland Park Senior High, the Adams Elementary Spanish Immersion Magnet and St. Catherine University.

Joey's mother, Laura, is optimistic that her son's promise to build a school in Bolivia will be kept. "It just keeps growing on its own now," she said.

Those who are interested in joining Niño a Niño are invited to contact Dallavalle at [dana@manoamano.org](mailto:dana@manoamano.org).



## Inbox

### The mass of transit on Snelling

The city has plans for streetcars, bus rapid transit and regular bus service to use Snelling Avenue. Reduced on-street parking for businesses will happen because of the city's plans for corner bumpouts and transit stations. Considering those people who can't take mass transit to work, just where do they think all the cars will go? Down Cretin, Cleveland, Fairview, Hamline or Lexington? I bet the folks on those avenues will welcome the increased traffic.

Gary Fischbach  
Highland Park

### The Vintage fails to impress

The artist's rendering of the The Vintage shows a rather modern structure and bland street-level concept ("Snelling-Selby plan comes into focus," *Villager*, August 28). I wonder if Whole Foods could occupy a smaller space on the second floor or first floor backside to make way for an array of small retail shops and eateries, etc. I'm sure the argument against doing so is affordability. All the same, I had hoped project partners Associated Bank, Ryan Companies, Excelsior Group and Whole Foods would have put more emphasis on St. Paul charm and less on size and luxury. At the very least, I hope they'll choose a more modern name.

Paul Wehrwein  
Snelling-Hamline

### Preserve a piece of Ford plant

Why should all of Ford Motor Company's Twin Cities Assembly Plant be demolished? We have a gem of architecture on the banks of the Mississippi River. This gem is at the northwest corner of the assembly plant, a building designed by renowned architect Albert Kahn, who designed many Ford Motor Company buildings, including the Ford Rotunda at the 1934 Chicago World's Fair. This part of the assembly plant should be saved and used as an anchor, monument or cornerstone of a future development.

The idea of creating a small museum of Ford history in the Twin Cities has been floated. There once was a small museum in the front area of the Ford building when the main entrance faced Mississippi River Boulevard. This corner was also a sales and show room during the late 1920s.

Ford has a long history in the Twin Cities. Its first assembly and sales building was in Minneapolis, near present-day Target Field. There even was a Ford sales building in St.

Paul near the state Capitol on University Avenue. The Twin Cities Assembly Plant was built in 1923-24. Ford produced 7 million vehicles there from 1925-2011 (except for the years 1933 and 1934). Some part of it should be saved to honor Ford's long presence in the area.

The local Ford representative has said that Ford Motor Company is receptive to saving some part of the structure, but we must come up with a plan to get this done. Let's try to preserve something that has been a part of St. Paul and Twin Cities history for 85 years.

Bruce Nelson  
Roseville

Thomas Murray  
Highland Park

### Getting along on 2 wheels or 4

The *Villager* ran a letter from a rightfully aggrieved motorist whose window was spat on and door scratched by a belligerent bicyclist (*Inbox*, August 14). Shame on him! Unfortunately, the letter writer gives herself away as an ill-informed, equally belligerent driver. She wanted this bicyclist in the bike lane or bike path. There is no bike lane or bike path on that stretch of Pelham Boulevard. It is a heavily beat-up road where a bicyclist needs to ride away from the curb to avoid parked cars and have maneuvering room for cracks, heaves and potholes. A bicyclist needs to be in the traffic lane to turn left onto Otis Avenue at the four-way stop sign.

Minnesota statutes 169.18 and 169.222 clearly list where and how a bicyclist can legally ride. Under certain circumstances, a rider may take a full traffic lane if it is necessary for his or her safety or an upcoming turn. The driver does not get to tell the bicyclist whether he or she thinks it is safe or not. It is at the bicyclist's discretion.

I am curious: How close did the driver come to the bicyclist to set him off? The statute states that you need to give at least 3 feet of clearance. Did she blare her horn to express her anger? Both of these actions are breaking the law. She admits she pulled out into oncoming traffic and had to cut back in to avoid a head-on collision. Wow! That is dangerous.

By the way, how did this 200-pound rider on his bike force this 2,500-pound vehicle to get out of his way? How much time would have been lost if she had just calmed down? None. They ended up at the stop sign together.

Bob Brereton  
Macalester-Groveland