

Meet Ydekel Capellán: A remarkable young man who flourished against all odds



Ydekel is a role model for many youth in his community.

This is the story of a young man, Ydekel Capellán, who was born in the Maria Auxiliadora barrio in the Dominican Republic, a neighbourhood that houses people with very low income, where poverty is so marked it forces many to get involved in illicit activities just to survive. Ydekel comes from a very dysfunctional family, a mother and father who struggled to live surrounded by many needs, who after many years of discord and violence decided to separate, leaving the mother alone to support the family.

Ydekel is the third of five siblings. His oldest brother left school to work at the garbage dump to help his mother. Tragically he was run over by a garbage truck and died. His second brother was very disruptive as well and got into many fights. During one of those fights with another youth, he threw a rock hitting a woman who later died in hospital, thus landing him in prison for a year. Once out, he became involved with drugs and later was killed by police.

As a five year old, Ydekel started attending TEARS El Camino School. Many problems arose at the school due to his upbringing, his behaviour and lack of respect, to the point that they threatened to expel him many times. At the end of grade 4 he was no longer allowed to remain at the El Camino School, so was forced to attend public school. At this point, he realized the need for change in his life. At the age of 9 he joined a youth center where he developed mentally and intellectually, and was allowed to return to school. He became more responsible in his studies, helped around the house more, and tried to find ways to earn money to help support his family by selling cakes on the street. He continued to excel in his community, became involved with the youth and helped wherever he could.

It was through his effort and good behavior that he was named to represent the youth of La Vega in Santo Domingo, landing him a scholarship at a private institution to finish high school. Today, Ydekel is attending university, working at the El Camino School, leading a seventh grade youth group, is part of the youth leadership in his church and is a real entrepreneur, always thinking about ways to help himself and others financially. Fortunately there were many in his community who believed that he could change and grow up to be a responsible person. It was their patience and mentorship that changed a wild young child into a responsible, well-respected man. It is a moving story, one that ended well. But like Ydekel, there are many children in Maria Auxiliadora that cannot attend school and who go hungry because of financial strains in their families. Without mentoring and leadership, young adults will get lost in the shuffle, lose hope, and face a bleak future. It is through your donations and support that we are able to bring some hope to this community and support promising youth like Ydekel. Education is key to this endeavour.