

Jóvenes Adelante Sprinting Toward Sustainable Growth

Energy and optimism filled the room at JA's recent 2019 Annual General Meeting. Speaking to a crowded gathering, outgoing President Sue Leonard shared highlights of the past year. Starting with the numbers, the meeting learned that Jóvenes Adelante has already supported more than 176 students through to achieving university degrees; currently, 79 more are enrolled, and JA is poised to accept 25 new students this year. Sue concluding that, "After 18 years of laying down a solid foundation, Jóvenes Adelante has clearly hit its stride."

As the incoming President Don Krim assumed his title, he celebrated Sue's many years of service with Jóvenes Adelante and thanked her for mentoring him into his new role. He and Sue also thanked retiring board members Tom Hall and John Hunger, and welcomed JA's new Treasurer, Herbert Miller, and – officially -- the new Director of Mentor Programs, Nora Weaver, to the board.

Executive Director Angelica Argüelles and Student Selection Process Coordinator Dulce Cerritos then provided an overview of this year's recruitment statistics, and the board's Co-VP of Student Programs, Jorge Philippe, updated the meeting on the job success of 2018 graduating class and introduced several current students and graduates who were in attendance. Student Relations Coordinator Saray Martínez provided an introduction to the 26 students who joined the Jóvenes family in 2018.

Each presentation reaffirmed that the years of effort spent honing the JA model have paid off. A hand-picked team of skilled staff now runs a busy office, providing the individualized support to students that maximizes their opportunity to be successful. Simultaneously, student mentors and JA's team of trained psychologists contribute to maintaining the negligible student drop-out rate. Over the past year, there has been a deliberate focus on systems development, including the introduction of software solutions designed to streamline accounting (in three currencies!) and to improve donor management.

Incoming President Don Krim told the meeting, "I think I'm the luckiest President ever to assume this role – Jóvenes has never been stronger!" He explained that -- with an excellent reputation and a strong balance sheet – JA is transitioning into expansion mode. "We are sprinting toward sustainable growth -- we are ready to extend our reach."



Don revealed JA's 2019-2020 plans, explaining that while maintaining an annual intake of at least 25 university students per year, JA will also begin testing the feasibility of expanding its

footprint. Under consideration are three new target groups: students who need assistance to complete “prepa” (high school); students choosing two-year technical or vocational training programs; and graduates aiming to do pursue Masters’ degrees.

This year, the staff team will expand to embrace additional responsibilities around coordination of students’ English language acquisition efforts, providing support to the mentor team and increasing JA’s social media presence. Don cautioned, “We know we have to manage growth and capacity in delicate balance, without diminishing - in fact by continuing to improve - the quality of our program.”

Jóvenes Adelante unlocks a radically expansive future for SMA youth by easing financial barriers to higher education and by intentionally nurturing their life skills and leadership abilities. For information, to join our mailing list or to become a sponsor or volunteer, visit our website www.jovenes.adelante.org, call 415-150-0030 or email info@jovenesadelante.org.