

AECS FOUNDER: Barbara Mosley de Souza
President: Kelly Cristina de Araújo
Administrator: Isabel Maria Fernandes da Silva



(from Isabel) REPORT – 2022 to 2023...

Celebrating the 25th anniversary of the Association was of utmost importance to us. We are sure that the NGO-AECS has changed and transformed the lives of many people in the Canal do Anil community. The programs developed sought to promote the dignity of the people’s humanity. Acting in a community with varied needs has never been easy, but we always believed in the transformative actions of our association and in the potential of our children, young people, and adults. All achievements sought were only possible because we have a committed Board of Directors and the partnership of the United Church of

Christ and United Methodist Church. We want you to know that you have made and continue to make a difference—Thank you! Over the years it was possible to perceive the transformations in the lives of people and their families. Through the concrete actions of our NGO, today many professionals working in the area of health and education, received financial support for their education to become: educators, nursing technicians, nurses, oral health technicians, and teachers among other professions. The programs developed so far have been able to improve the difficult reality experienced daily by our children, adolescents, young people and adults in the FAVELA (shanty town).

AECS is considered a reference for SOCIAL work, being recognized by private institutions and municipal and state public authorities.



PICTURES: < AECS community center
 < Children’s ballet class
 < Theatre of 2 generations
 > Children’s theatre
 > Elderly caregiver course





PICTURES:

- < > Health Educator course in Canal do Anil
- > Music class
- > University prep class
- < Children's book fair

Returning with the programs after 2 years of pandemic was important, because this period left negative marks on

the lives of many people in the community. It was gratifying to see the smiles on the faces of the children and adolescents as they returned to dance classes, theater, music, sports, etc. The course for the caregivers of the elderly, health educators, and English, began in the second semester, brought new perspectives for the training of people in the community. The services offered in the physiotherapy sector, in the areas of psychology, psychotherapy, and nutrition, are essential for a better quality of life for the population.

As a legacy of our 26-year commitment to this community completed in May 2022, AECS decided to support another Social Project led by women, transmitting all the



experience gained over the years of empowering woman. **Business Women Collective** is a semi rural community Caxias initiative of a group of women which develops professional training activities through courses: Health Educators, maintenance of home electrical equipmmt, Cooking, Confectionery baking, Dance Workshops with Ballet for Babies and Children, Library with Reading and Storytelling. This program's activities have received support from the NGO since 2021, when the work began. The activities developed are the same as those of our AECS, becoming an extension of our work, benefiting a greater number of people.

At this moment there is a need to build a communy center for the project, because the current space is rented and is too small, for the growing number of participants in the programs making it difficult to expand the activities. It is obvious how much the Project was able to return HOPE in the lives of the participants, since the community receives few resources from the government. A major part of the population is made up of salaried workers. For this reason we believe that continuing the project's programs is fundamental to train qualified women for the labor market.



Favela Vertical Collective is another initiative of a group of young people which develops activities in the area of education and technology. This

project worked intensely during the first months of the Pandemic, using space provided in our NGO building. Currently the project receives financial support of a partnership acquired by AECS, for the continuation of the project.



Having the doors of the Association open to the population during all these years contributed to changing the reality of the Anil community as well as the surrounding area. We are ABSOLUTELY SURE that all the achievements were only possible because a group of women students of the health education course came together with the community after the flood in 1996 that affected the community of the Canal do Anil. This group of people believed it was possible to overcome a TRAGEDY and turn it into VICTORY!

ISABEL MARIA FERNANDES DA SILVA



**Insist, Persist,
never GIVE UP!**

(from Barb) Dear Partners in Mission,

2022 has passed with all its challenges, and as the new year begins, we pray for Peace and unity among us, so that we can make a better and safer world for our children and grandchildren and following generations. With this thought in mind, I want to give you a brief description of what I found upon my return to our mission site in the the shanty town in Rio de Janeiro on Dec. 31 of 2021.

I found an area that was unrecognizable to me - this shanty town and all the surrounding area, once woods, is now crowded with many new homes on unpaved roads plus shabbily built high apartment type buildings with 5 and 6 floors and inadequate sewers and no infrastructure. The shanty town population had tripled! This physical shanty town I had worked in for 30 some years was unrecognizable to me—but not so with many of the people who had lived there before and had been part of my life and work, now men and women who had been children treated in our clinic were now parents themselves.

But the lives of these people had not become better, to the contrary, more complicated and actually dangerous. The pandemic and politics had slowed the process down completely. I found the area completely abandoned by the city government! In spite of the new City Health Clinic I wrote about in last newsletter, the health system has not improved. When our NGO ran the clinic we were responsible for 15 to 18,000 patients. Today's new clinic 50,000!!! Internet and modern technology have made life more complicated for so many of the dwellers of this community, especially the elderly. Though I have been invited to participate in many discussions of the clinic's efforts to improve services, the help from the authorities is absent. I repeat: it is an abandoned area leaving it open to gang interference. Because of the increased population and failing health system for the poorer population, I felt an even greater need for health education classes.

So at age 91 upon my return to WI, I decided to return to Brasil as a volunteer Health Education Mission Personnel for 1st Congregational Church of River Falls WI with the approval of the Rev. Franz Rigert, Conference Minister, Wisconsin Conference of the United Church of Christ, thus making it possible for me to renew my permanent residence in Brasil. Bringing some of Gus's ashes with me, I returned in June.

One of my challenges was Caxias, a semi rural community about 1 1/2 hours from our NGO. The story of this group Bel has explained above--these amazing women and their dreams! It is a different time in history, a different generation, but we believe, just as empowering women in Anil led to building an NGO and a community center, this is also possible in



Caxias, and it's always the aim of our mission to empower women!!!

With a grateful heart for your continued support and as our partners in mission, you join us in the hope for the future of our projects as we continue to empower women in a country that is beginning to recognize their value!

God bless you and thank you,

PICTURES: Poster for Health Educators class and the rural community of Caxias.

BARB DE SOUZA



PICTURES:

Above - Health Educator course in Caxias

< Reading incentive program

Below – Ballet classes for children and babies





Land purchased for Caxias' Community Center. The men of the town are building it, and the women are holding fundraisers for building materials.

(from Sue) Please contact Sue below for:

- Address corrections:** If your address was incorrect, or if you wish to be removed from this mailing list.
- Email address ADD or CHANGE:** To save money on mailing costs and to get the newsletters to you faster, please add your email address to our mailing list. Send email address changes to Sue.
- Donations to the BRAZILIAN FUND: The current needs:**

- **Building materials to complete building the Community Center in Caxias, estimated at \$5000 (US dollars).**
- **PT (Physical Therapy) program is always in need of additional funding, as it is not supported by the city. Barb fractured her pelvis several months ago, and can testify to the importance of this program for the Canal do Anil residents. PT is not offered at the City Health Clinic, so it's vitally important to the shanty town community! Another Physical Therapist is needed to meet demand.**
- **The students in both of the current Health Educator classes are being trained as teachers, so they can teach others after they graduate and "multiply" the knowledge applied in their neighborhoods. Extra funding is needed to multiply these Health Courses with either books for each student or a good printer to print these copies at the AECS office. (Printer cost \$800)**
- **Please make checks out to "Brazilian Fund" and send it to Sue's address (as Barb is currently living in Brazil). NOTE: For individuals needing an official tax deductible receipt, please make the check out to "First Congregational Church of River Falls" and note "Brazilian Fund" in the memo.**

Website: <https://ongaecsrj.wixsite.com/site> The text is in Portuguese, but you can use Google Translate to change it to English. Great pictures!

Barb's book is available on Amazon: **"WHEN SLEEPING WOMEN AWAKE, MOUNTAINS WILL MOVE" by Barbara Mosley de Souza**

THANK YOU for all your support of Barb's health ministry in Brazil, and God bless you!

Sue Christopher
W3901 750th Ave
Spring Valley, WI 54767-8910
651-323-7547 call or text
Sue54767@gmail.com

Barb de Souza
620 W Walnut St
River Falls, WI 54022 USA
*barbgus@hotmail.com

***Please note that Barb's USA cell phone is not available in Brazil. The best way to reach her is through WhatsApp or email.**