

# University of Life Beyond Academics

## Mission

To offer holistic care—mind, body and spirit—for all children enrolled in the academic program and to offer them justice, dignity and healing.

## Background

University of Life is on a 3.5-acre plot located in the favela (Brazilian slum) of Aqua Fria, a densely populated, poverty stricken settlement approximately 6 miles from the city center of Fortaleza in northeastern Brazil. Basic utilities are inadequate and at best, malfunctioning. 80% of sewage is untreated and more than 65% of garbage is deposited in open spaces or thrown in waterways. In fact, garbage collection is one of the main activities of the poorest children in the community. Homes are small, privacy rare and living space shared by adults, children and extended family. Unemployment, violence, drug and alcohol abuse, physical and sexual abuse and promiscuity also impact the emotional and spiritual lives of children growing up in favelas.

## Our Response

Children, especially those who face extreme poverty and violence, first need to feel safe before they can begin to learn. Our staff members work to restore the trust lost by the public school system and create a safe place where our students can find stability and routine in an otherwise chaotic world. We know that humans are emotional, spiritual and physical beings and these needs cannot be ignored if our students are to succeed. To meet these needs, the University of Life developed a holistic approach to education that includes:

### Physical

- One well-balanced meal per day and unlimited access to clean water
- New, clean t-shirts that serve as a school uniform
- Health, hygiene and nutrition education
- Periodic physical exams
- Physical therapy, as needed
- First aid; assistance in and encouragement for obtaining further treatment
- Safe place to play, including a covered gym for use during the rainy season
- Physical education curriculum, including dance and drama
- Sports coaching and opportunities for local, regional and national competitions

### Emotional

- Trained, supportive staff available for one-on-one meetings and lay counseling for students and parents.
- Contract with local graduate school for psychological diagnosis & counseling
- A structured day with consistency and clear expectations
- Small class sizes for individualized attention and a safe learning environment
- Communicative staff affords continuity of care from year to year

To learn more about program activities, please contact:

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The Channel is a registered 501(c)(3) non-profit organization established in 1995. We are a Christian developmental organization with over 25 years of experience working with impoverished children and communities in Brazil.

Our vision is to train and equip the future leaders of Brazil by creating a pathway out of poverty for children through quality education and training. Our project in Fortaleza is CBC (Channel to Brazil for Christ) University of Life and is a non-sectarian institution open to children of any color, race or religion.

The Channel is funded by contributions from individuals and groups who passionately believe that by working together we can improve the lives of children living in poverty, one child at a time.





### Mental

- A small library, including a reference section, organized by grade level
- Fully integrated information technology curriculum, which supports general classroom work and the development of critical thinking skills, logic puzzles and problem solving
- Access to computers and the Internet
- Instruction in the arts—music, dance and theater

### Spiritual

- Spiritual support available from staff
- Prayer, Bible teaching and opportunities for outreach
- Weekly chapel services for students
- Weekly evening services open to the community
- Mentoring from staff and peer-mentoring
- Lay spiritual counseling for students and parents and connections to local churches for more comprehensive care

### Staff Wellness

- Debriefing sessions and frequent team meetings
- Annual retreat for staff bonding and renewal
- Training on teaching methods and curriculum creation
- Loving, cohesive staff for daily support



### **Future Goals**

We recognize that the holistic care is necessary for each child as they pursue their education. Therefore, our future goals are to maintain the same quality of care as our enrolment grows. We need to:

- Keep up current facilities and increase our physical structures corresponding to the program growth
- Continue to provide quality, comprehensive care
- Maintain a safe, comfortable environment, including security in and around the campus
- Hire a special needs teacher for children with emotional distress to minimize pressure on staff
- Continue to offer debriefing, retreat, training, leadership development and team meetings for staff

### **How can I help?**

These are a few concrete ways that University of Life would benefit from your assistance:

- Donate funds to support the basic operating costs of the development and maintenance of facilities as the program grows
- Donate funds to support increased kitchen capacity, including another refrigerator and freezer, more water fountains, more tables and benches for seating and increased food supply
- Support another cook. It costs \$700 per month to employ a full-time cook for the food program
- Travel to Brazil to help build more facilities, including more kitchen space and seating for children, another bathroom facility, a special needs and counseling center and more classrooms
- Contribute to providing an ongoing fund for staff wellness programs
- Support a staff member. It requires \$850 - \$900 per month to employ a teacher (\$10,200 – \$10,800/year).
- Travel to Brazil to offer teacher training, special needs assessments and training, offer a seminar on physical activities or the arts, or any other special skill you would like to share