

Spirit of Wellness

A Community leader, local princesses, and our dedicated volunteers — all champions of change.

Together, they've helped grow something beautiful from the ground up.

Rooted in Service, Growing in Impact: Spirit of Wellness Recognized by GAD Manglaralto

August 2025!

Growth doesn't always look like grand gestures. Sometimes, it looks like showing up every week, delivering food, washing dishes, leading with love, and quietly building something that lasts.

Spirit of Wellness was recently honored by **GAD Manglaralto**, the local parish government, for our contributions to the well-being of the communities where we serve.

It's a recognition that speaks not only to the visible outcomes—hot meals served, educational resources delivered, infrastructure improved—but also to the quiet dedication behind the scenes.

This journey began with simple acts of care: preparing lunch for seniors during the pandemic, organizing food distributions for families, mentoring youth, creating new spaces

for learning. One by one, these seeds took root. Over time, they've grown into strong, interwoven programs that now support hundreds of individuals in the region.

To see this work publicly recognized by local leaders is both humbling and encouraging. It affirms what we've always believed: **change grows from the ground up, and the most lasting growth takes time.**

This recognition belongs to every volunteer who has rolled up their sleeves, every partner who has collaborated on solutions, and every community member who has trusted us to walk beside them.

From tiny seeds, mighty trees.

Thank you, GAD Manglaralto, for seeing the forest we've been patiently tending all along.

Dreams + Resources = Success

In case you were wondering: In Ecuador, GAD stands for *Gobiernos Autonomos Descentralizados*, which translates to Decentralized Autonomous Governments. These are the local government units responsible for managing their own resources and territories, including land use. They operate at various levels, including provincial, cantonal (municipal), and parish levels. "Manglaralto GAD" refers to the Government of Manglaralto, a coastal town in Ecuador.

Years apart. Same heart.
Carrie Ann has always shown up — now, she leads the way.

From Seeds to Strong Branches: Carrie Ann's Story

At Spirit of Wellness, we've always believed in the power of planting small seeds—acts of kindness, shared meals, mentoring conversations—that, over time, grow into something mighty.

Carrie Ann is living proof.

At just 14, she was one of the original volunteers who helped launch the Olón Senior Lunch during the early days of the pandemic. In an effort to serve her community, Carrie Ann was in the kitchen—washing dishes, organizing ingredients, even helping coordinate other volunteers. She learned every role, observed every detail, and stayed humble through it all.

Today, Carrie Ann has stepped into a leadership role as the new **Manager of the Olón Senior Lunch Program**, sponsored by Spirit of Wellness. In just two months time, she's conducted a volunteer review, streamlined the workflow, implemented improvements, and inspired new donations from the community.

But her growth doesn't stop there. She helps mentor the next generation of youth volunteers, some of whom once came to the Senior Lunch as guests, seated next to their grandparents. Now, they serve food, clean tables, and offer smiles with pride.

From guest to volunteer. From volunteer to leader.

Carrie Ann reminds us what's possible when young people are nurtured and empowered.

They are **the very trees growing from seeds planted years ago.**

Spotlight on What's Next: The Academy

A New Season of Growth Begins

We've been tending another seed behind the scenes for quite some time—the **Spirit of Wellness Leadership & Skills Academy**.

This month, a major milestone arrives: our container classroom and equipment landed in Ecuador, ready for installation.

This isn't just a building. It's a beginning.

A beginning for young adults who want to gain hands-on technical training.

A beginning for entrepreneurs with business dreams but no access to education.

A beginning for community members who want to build a better life—right where they are.

From this container, we'll teach entrepreneurship, computer literacy, English for employment, welding, sewing, cooking, and more. Each workshop will be a seed. Each student a gardener of their own future.

And just like Carrie Ann, we believe many of these students will not only grow into their own success but will one day become the ones who nurture the next generation.

What grows from your gift?
Bags full of food. A team ready to serve. A community that never feels forgotten.

Help Us Keep Growing

If the stories in this newsletter moved you, and you believe in planting seeds for long-term change, we invite you to be part of our growing circle of supporters.

Your contribution—big or small—helps us sustain meals for seniors, offer practical education, and invest in local leadership.

Together, we nourish, we teach, and we grow.

I want to be part of the team. My donation matters.

At the Foodbank, they wait, they smile, they are seen.
Thanks to helping hands like yours, even the smallest seeds of kindness grow into comfort and care.

In today's world, there's no shortage of causes close to home—and we understand that your giving decisions matter. But something remarkable happens when you direct your support to a place like rural Ecuador, where every dollar stretches farther and the impact is

immediate and visible. Your gift doesn't just feed seniors or fund youth education—it creates real, lasting change that you can feel good about.

And here's the truth: **giving feels good.** It connects you to something bigger than yourself. It brings a sense of purpose, perspective, and pride. When you help lift up a community that may never have another opportunity without your support, **you become part of a story of transformation that reflects your values and your legacy.**

At Spirit of Wellness, we build programs that are sustainable, community-led, and transparent—so you can trust that your generosity is planting seeds that grow. And what you receive in return is something money can't buy: the knowledge that you made a difference.

Until next time, take care and remember, every act of kindness counts. No act is too small.

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