



## 2003: Opening a New Way

### INVITED BEYOND BOUNDARIES AND BORDERS



**"A friend heard about you on TV, so I wanted to go and learn about what you do."**

explains Carla Herrera who is the Founder and former Director of the Mexican organization El Centro de Estudios para Invidentes [The Center of Studies for the Blind] (CEIAC for short), now President of their Board of Directors. "[FlashSonar] is a great tool for a blind person. You have a very easy and fun way of teaching it. When a blind person starts to use their cane, it seems like things work against you; you need to work your way through things. Your system really makes the blind person feel that the environment works for them. To be able to move so freely in open space transfers into self confidence for blind people. Before meeting you I was aware when there was a wall or open space, but working with you made me feel almost like things had life, and I became more sensitive to the dimension of things and what things are. It really amazed me to

learn to distinguish between a wall and stairs, or between a tree and a car where I couldn't before. It was a way of becoming integrated with the environment. It's really a good challenge. To be alone or with another blind person on a mountain getting around with this system really changes perceptions even of blind people." After her program with us, Carla invited us enthusiastically to Mexico to provide a week of FlashSonar training to 27 students and several instructors of CEIAC.



"I thought it would not work." admits Ferdinando Gonzales, Orientation and Mobility Instructor for CEIAC.

"It was something hard to believe, but now I know it will work. I am planning to add to my classes echolocation. It is something very important and extraordinary. The way FlashSonar is used has no limits. It can be used anywhere and taught to anyone. It is going to help students in the way of life. They will be able to orient themselves in a room, the streets, the field, and any place. When a blind person can describe objects that are metallic, big, small, fat and skinny, it was something I could not conceive. They were able to find houses and landmarks in the city. I knew that could be done, but not describing objects! That to me was very impressive! I stay very satisfied with all the knowledge you left us."

"I thought it was stupid at first," states George Portio, a very tall man with a very deep voice who makes his living as a masseur, "but I've changed my mind. I wish I had learned this a long time ago. Maybe I wouldn't have broken my teeth. I think that everyone has learned something very important from this course. I would recommend it to others."





## World Access for the Blind



"I thought the activities were very good, and I wish they could happen again this coming year." says Daniel, a 10-year-old boy suddenly struck blind by a bus 2 years before. "I learned to be more social, because I did not know that Jose-Luis could fight for the ball. But well, I learned, and I liked it a lot, because I saw that even blind people had the desire for sports. Well, it is not as if they don't know anything; they do. I want to thank you both, because I did not know that the mouth click would help me know where walls, trees, and things like that are."

"I wish that the courses would not end," insists Erica, a very bright and talented 10-year-old girl blind from birth. "It was a sport that helps us orient ourselves. For example, in the airport we can guide and orient ourselves - where the ticket stand is, a wall, or something. Blind people can learn this, because we are not a thing like old furniture that can't do anything. They can learn; they just need the will to learn. Thanks to you both for what you have taught us."



**"It's amazing,  
the techniques  
you guys came  
to teach us,"**

says Myrna Vega,  
Director of CEIAC.

"Everybody is happy, and they are applying it. I am very surprised at the manner in which the students have learned to conduct themselves. In your video I saw that they conducted themselves in a fast pace. I had my worries whether it was real. It is real - the way they learned to conduct themselves very well, and they move with confidence and speed. The only thing left is to express my gratitude for your time and collaboration. Thank you very much for accepting our invitations."

*Instructional Coach Juan Ruiz, (below) backs away from two mutineers in this swashbuckling game utilizing "sound-swords".*

