



News In Brief

- February and March: trained 220 teachers in Costa Rica and Nicaragua to implement JovenSalud services with their students.
- February: launched the new version of our educational platform

Celebrate With Us!

It is our pleasure to start this newsletter with some amazing news: TeenSmart was recently honored by the Carlos Slim Foundation (Mexico) as their **2016 Exceptional Latin American Health Institution!** The award recognizes our track record and commitment to collaboration with governmental, non-profit, and corporate partners across multiple countries, as well as our innovative use of technology. We also received a **\$100,000 honorarium**, and we are busy strategizing how best to use this prize to advance our work, knowing that the increased recognition and publicity will open the doors to new collaborations and opportunities. We are very proud of our accomplishment and **we would love it if you shared this news with your**



What's New?

the next generation of our educational platform

TeenSmart uses our online platform, JovenSalud.net, to deliver all of our key services to youth, including self-assessment questionnaires, online courses, one-on-one counseling, and a database of health information. **Our new website was launched in February** and features big improvements to user experience and functionality... as well as looking fantastic!

Key changes include **improved mobile support, text-messaging services, and a task board that guides users through JovenSalud's tools** according to their areas of greatest risk. The administrator section was also improved – this provides access to user statistics and customization for facilitators, so that they can best respond to the needs of their youth.

We are also working on creating a mobile app and expanding our text-messaging program. We want to make JovenSalud's services convenient and seamless on mobile, as well as adding new functionality to help teens stay aware of their risk behaviors as they move through life. Our text-message program sends regular cues for healthy behavior to youth in response to their risk assessment, and we are expanding this program and improving its sensitivity.

Get Inspired!

Ricardo Loaiza González works at the **Manantial after-school program in one of the poorest areas of San José, Costa Rica**. Ricardo is a nurse and has worked with TeenSmart for five years. We caught up with him last week in the classroom, where he used his humor and compassion to help guide and engage his grade





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and 6 students with the JovenSalud platform. After class, we talked to him about his work:

*“Adolescence is maybe the most difficult stage of life, because we’re not adults and we’re not children. We’re halfway in-between. **Many adolescents lose their way.** A lot of them are rebellious, and have problems in many parts of their life. But with these tools at jovensalud.net – when they have someone to talk to when they’re afraid – it really helps. (...) The professional volunteers who help answer their questions are really capable and well-oriented in their lives, and can help the teens find their way. Adolescence is a time with a lot of risks, and without a guide, young people can lose themselves. **But with help and a resource like TeenSmart, we can build a better future for our youth.**”*

Thank you so much for your hard work, Ricardo! It wouldn’t be possible without you.

Educate Yourself!

It’s clear whenever you look around: **smartphones are taking over!** Currently, 20% of TeenSmart’s users access JovenSalud.net via their mobile phones, 3% by tablet, and 77% by computer. The number of mobile users has been steadily growing over the past 10 years, mirroring the trend in mobile Internet use worldwide. **In Costa Rica, mobile Internet usage almost tripled in just the past two years.**

For people in developing countries, accessing the Internet via mobile 3G service is often cheaper than paying to connect a wired broadband service, and in rural areas mobile networks may be the only means of accessing the Internet. **Phones are also cheaper and more convenient than computers or tablets.** Therefore, increasing numbers of people are choosing to access the Internet using their phones. Accessing the Internet by phone can change usage patterns: studies show that people spend almost 90% of their time online on their phone using mobile apps as opposed to a general web browser! This is why we are working so hard on developing our mobile app.

You can help! Make a Donation Online:

<http://teensmart.org/web/index.jsp?c=online>

Tell a friend about us or let us know about grant opportunities! Write to:

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