

## Building Tela Honduras' Peace Park - Una Sola America

Carol Pobanz  
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A group of young Unificationists dedicated their winter breaks and holidays to a two-week trip to Honduras at the end of 2016, where they would complete Phase 1 of a three-year, service-art project planned for the city of Tela, a tiny town on the northern Caribbean coast. With continued support, their “canvas” will one day become a Peace Park signifying the unity of the Americas.

The Tela project began with a project proposal by Rev. Carol Pobanz, a Religious Youth Service (RYS) advisor who hails from New Jersey, and Mario Salinas, the President of Family Federation For World Peace and Unification (FFWPU) Honduras, to Mayor Mario Fuentes in 2015. “The proposal... was to create a park representing the solidarity of North, Central, and South America as ‘One America Under God,’ said Rev. Pobanz. The mayor and many locals quickly became eager to collaborate on the idea.

The project officially began this December. Just days before the New Year, people of different backgrounds and nationalities met to work on the blueprints and beginning phases of the park, which unifies five neighborhoods in the town’s center. For thirteen days, North and Central Americans worked together to clean up the area and craft three benches made of beautiful mosaic. When the space is eventually complete, it will feature 15 benches in all, along with a mosaic floor, a garden, a gazebo, and a playground.

While volunteers and community members were busy at work, local television crews came to interview Pobanz and learn more about the idea behind the park. “Interest in the project is increasing,” says

Gabriela, a young Unificationist from North America. “Faces light up when we explain that our project theme is ‘Una Sola America’ (there is only one America). We think that any division between the Americas exists in our minds in the form of fear or misunderstanding. One man came out to say thank you for your help. We explained: ‘We are working together with you. This is a united effort -- Una Sola America.



When the young Unificationists weren't cleaning the land or prepping for its beautification, they spent time swimming, playing in the sand, and horseback riding. They also got the chance to explore local culture at a museum and during New Year's Eve, when they celebrated the music and dance of Honduras with other community members.