

## Ultimate Peace in Colombia, South America November 19-23, 2011

This fall, Ultimate Peace ventured outside of the Middle East for the first time. Veteran Ultimate Peace coaches, Loriana Berman and David Morgenroth led the program with a team of American coaches and Yuval Zolotushko (UP coach from Israel), in the city of Medellin, Colombia. Five days of clinics for approximately 40 coaches from Colombia, Mexico, and Argentina and around 200 Colombian youth players, all focused on promoting the five values of Ultimate Peace: *Mutual Respect, Integrity, Non-Violence, Friendship, and fun*.

This has been a project a long time in the making, and we are very proud it has come to fruition. There is plenty of room to grow, and this program was truly just the beginning, for Colombia and other potential sites around the world. Ultimate is grateful to Colombia Ultimate, WFDF, and our other generous donors for making this dream become a reality.

In 2009 Ultimate Peace coach Loriana Berman went to Medellin, Colombia with her club team, <u>Seattle Riot</u>, to play in the Torneo Eterna Primavera tournament. While there, she shared stories from Ultimate Peace at forums and coaching clinics that were held in conjunction with the tournament. The respect for the Ultimate Peace ideology, and the desire for programming there and in other parts of South America were apparent. The following year, Oscar Taborda, a leader in the Ultimate community in Medellin came on his own to the Middle East to be a part of UP. The seed for collaboration was planted and this fall, we brought Ultimate Peace to South America as the first Ultimate Peace program outside of the Middle East. Ultimate Peace was a major component during the week leading up to the 2011 <u>Pan American Ultimate Championship tournament</u>.



Ultimate Peace coaches Loriana Berman and David Morgenroth led the charge, teamed up with Yuval Zolotushko (Israeli player and veteran UP coach), Alicia Dantzker (2010 UP coach) and six other players from the top club team, San Francisco Fury, their coach Matt Tsang, as well as David Raflo from the World Flying Disc Federation and USA Ultimate, to run the camps. The first two days of camp involved working with approximately 40 Latin American coaches from Colombia, Argentina, and Mexico. After a warm UP welcome and listening to and sharing expectations and goals for the training, we introduced the coaches to the five UP principles: *mutual respect, integrity, non-violence, friendship, and fun.* We varied activities, presenting as a large group, and splitting into smaller groups to discuss each principle, share ideas, experiences, and ask questions. For some of the principles, each group created and performed skits to exemplify the idea. We played spirit games between each academic component, which served to unite the group, as well as give them tangible tools to use with the teams they coach. We shared experiences from UP in the Middle East and the Latin American coaches shared with us the particular challenges youth in



their communities face. Additionally, we taught alternative disc games, drills that can be adapted for all levels, and most importantly built a network of passionate, like-minded people who are dedicated to using Ultimate Frisbee as a tool for social change.

For the next two days of camp we worked with 150 boys and girls (ages 10-16) from villages surrounding the valley of Medellin. We were joined by a handful of open players as well, which was a great help. Inder, the governing sports body in Medellin has a



program called Escuelas Populares Deportes (EPD), which includes over 30 different sports programs in the most underserved areas surrounding Medellin. Included in the EPD programs is ultimate, in which 870 kids are playing ultimate. The youth at the UP camp were from these schools, and having some previous ultimate experience they were antsy to play, but took very well to the spirit-focused activities that we threw at them first. With the consistency of having worked with their coaches the previous two days, we had an army of UP reps to trickle down the emphasis on spirit and the UP principles to the kids. We separated the kids into teams, carefully split to have representatives from each school, and generally equal distribution of skill levels. Teams moved among three stations in which they had discussions about a principle, learned a spirit game, and practiced a drill. Finally we had a large tournament for the kids, wherein after each game teams would rate their opponents on each of the five principles, as well as choose a spirit winner from the other team. A spirit circle with both teams would follow where the teams would announce who they chose as spirit winners and why. The teams with the best spirit scores were chosen to compete in the finals of the tournament (rather than the teams with the best record in pool play). The energy of Ultimate Peace camp resonated in the auditorium where we finished up. Each team, a mix of kids from all schools, performed their team cheer; we presented many spirit prizes; and we watched a slide show from the two days. The UP coaches performed the Ultimate Peace rap, written and directed by Mario O'Brien.

On Wednesday, the day before the Pan American Ultimate Championship tournament started, we had a full day with over 200 kids. 20-30 kids from each of the EPD schools came, and thus the UP philosophies were



spread farther and wider. We let the kids that were at camp the previous two days educate the others on the five UP principles. We gave them context and background of Ultimate Peace in the Middle East, and then let them make it their own. Team names, team cheers, spirit games, and of course some healthy competition got everyone excited for concluding spirit awards. We huddled under a roof in the midst of an intense thunder and lightning storm, which allowed for focused presentation of spirit winners,



and conclud ing camp songs.





Ultimate Peace was a hot topic throughout the week. Loriana presented at a live press conference, did an interview for a TV news station, an interview with a newspaper reporter, and one for a documentary that the Mexican ultimate players were making. David and Zolo gave a presentation about Ultimate Peace at a forum of ultimate coaches from countries throughout Latin America. The enthusiasm for UP and the fundamental belief that ultimate is a sport that brings people together, teaches crucial life skills, and improves lives are more widespread than ever. The UP coaches came home inspired and energized.

