



The Tracking Project

Bringing the Pieces Together Again



ARTS OF LIFE

PROJETO PEGADAS BRASIL 2007

<http://www.projetopegadasbrasil.org.br>



Edison Luís telling the class some tracking stories, Barra do Dia 2007.

In May and again in October, we followed the tracks of the *onça pintada* (jaguar) into the heart of the Amazon and the vast interior spaces of the *cerrado* to renew our work with the young (and not so young) people of Brazil. Our visit in May took us to Manaus, where Caroline Carvalho (a graduate of our original **Nurturing the Roots** mentor program) hosted a week of gatherings and travels. Our October trip took us to Brasília, site of the main office of our Brazilian partners **Projeto Pegadas Brasil (PPB)**, where we conducted a tracking course at Barra do Dia, a camping area we know well north of the city. Our message of natural awareness and cultural respect has fallen on open ears in Brazil and the influence of our projects continues to grow, watered by the dedication and inspiration of the young *rastreadores Brasileiras*.

Both of these visits were funded by the **Aurora Foundation**.

The team for the Manaus visit included Able West, Solar Law and John Stokes. Solar, who has been instrumental in establishing our work in Brazil, provided translation for the course. Caroline had planned a full schedule for us, which included: a boat trip up the Amazon to meet the pink dolphins (!); sight-seeing in Manaus with her husband, Saul; a one-day tracking class for about 35 children from the local community; our participation in a large Mother's Day celebration of songs, dance and *capoeira*; and a three day tracking / **Arts of Life** course for a group of 30 young people (ages 15–30).

Happily, we were joined by a group of friends from **PPB** who traveled from Brasília to assist us—Edison Luís, Renata, Andreia and Mariana. In the heat and humidity of the rainforest, from first light until nearly midnight, we filled our days with activities and teachings: Thanksgiving words, natural movement, firemaking, tracking.... And there was still time each night for storytelling, music and dancing to *fórró*. Thanks to Caroline, Saul, Juan, Florencio, our students, Team Brasília and all our new friends in Manaus.

In October we returned with the whole Stokes family to Brasília for a tracking course organized by the **Pegadas** team. Once again, Solar Law provided us with translation services. (A problem with a visa caused us to miss the first week of our trip, in which Solar had to represent us in our absence at *Círculo dos Saberes*, an indigenous youth and elder gathering held near Cuiabá. A report on that gathering is contained in a separate report.)

Together with a group of 43 people whose ages stretched from 5 to 55, we traveled by bus about an hour and a half north of the city to the site where we held our four-day tracking class. Though the animal tracks were scarce, the weather was wild—from blazing sun to wind and hail and torrential rains—the group was energetic and the camp was a great success.

It was wonderful to re-connect with our friends and our network in Brasília. It has been almost two years since we saw many of them in 2005 at the third and final year of **Nutrindo as Raízes**, our Brazilian mentor program. Since that time, the team from **Pegadas** has kept the flame alive, sharing the **Tracking Project** curriculum model with the community at San Luís in the state of Maranhão in a multi-year project and maintaining our mentor network. After the camp, we were able to sit down and plan for two more visits in 2008.

Our work in Brazil continues to shine brightly, thanks to the **Aurora Foundation**, the hard work of **Projeto Pegadas** and the many individuals who give their time and assistance to this valuable project. *Tem saudades* for our many Brazilian hosts and friends for their dedication and hospitality.

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