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## Golf Tournament Estes Park

We had an amazing time during the golf tournament at Estes Park! Such a beautiful view and nice weather! Even the elk were there! We met with friends and family and shared the latest news about the children; it is always comforting to know we have such a special group of friends who share the passion to change the world by changing children's lives. We would like to thank all the people who contribute in any way to make this tournament happen, the golfers, sponsors, volunteers and all our TCF and Casa Hogar Los Angelitos friends. Every year we strive to offer a wonderful opportunity to play and benefit the children, and every year there are lessons learned and new accomplishments. This year's first place team and second place team were GCC and Rocky Mountain Christian Church! We would like to hear back from our

golfers about their experience and let them know that we want to see them again next year in September! We want this tournament to bring us together as a family, so bring your friends! **MARK THE DATE, September 7, 2012!**



**First place winners  
Team GCC  
Second place winners  
Team Rocky Mtn Christian**



## Christmas Open House

**YOU ARE INVITED!**

**For a Christmas open house at the Nystrom's 4831 Valley Oak Dr. Loveland, CO 80538  
Friday, December 16, 2011 6-10 pm**

It is that beautiful time of year... a time of friendship, love, family, joy and celebration. Neighbors, friends and supporters it's a time of gathering and sharing... we're inviting you to come celebrate with us. Enjoy food, refreshments and lots of fun.

# Letter from the founder's heart



The past June and July, Lupita and I flew down to Manzanillo to be at the different school graduations for the casa hogar children. During that week we had the first “monsoon” rains of the season, flooding the streets, pouring into every weak or unprotected crevice, window and leaky roof, causing horrendous traffic problems, walking problems and health issues. However, even as our profuse perspiration intermingled with the pouring rain as we sloshed from one graduation to another, it was one of the most satisfying trips I have ever made. I couldn't keep the tears from swelling up and spilling over from my

eyes as I watched little Cristian, his smile spread all the way across his face, walking...almost bouncing... up to the table to receive his certificate of graduation from elementary school and assurance of being able to enroll into Jr. High School. Six years ago I never thought that I would see this day...how many times we had to beg him to come down off the roof or to call the police to help us look for him...this young man that has become an example of miraculous success. Six years ago when we found him chained to a post so he wouldn't run away, kicking away the dogs and mice that were nipping at his feet... suffering from extreme malnutrition, abusive neglect, and behaving like a wild animal, I could have only hoped that somehow, by the grace of God and a lot of work and patience, that we could make a difference in his life.

Cristian was not the only child

from the casa hogar to graduate that day or to receive honors. There were ten others, each one with their own story... overcoming extreme obstacles, traumas and circumstances to even keep going. My heart was overwhelmed with pride for what each one has accomplished.

During the time that we were at the casa hogar I had the opportunity to “celebrate” my birthday along with all the children and housemothers who had July birthdays. As a special surprise and gift for me, Cristian played a song on the electronic piano, and sang a very special song that he wrote just for the occasion. How could anyone ask for more in life than to see firsthand a child without hope, abused and neglected, living like a wild animal, traumatized beyond hope of repair, walk proudly up to receive his diploma... a life changed forever. Thank you, to each of you who have believed in hope for these children and who have faithfully continued to support this vision.

Nancy Nystrom

*How could anyone ask for more in life than to see firsthand a child without hope, abused and neglected, living like a wild animal, traumatized beyond hope of repair, walk proudly up to receive his diploma... a life changed forever.*

## Thank you Rotary

One of the wonderful things that we have been able to incorporate into the CHLA program, is the potential of project grants through local and International Rotary. The programs that Rotary have available for international altruistic projects such as CHLA can help us with a variety of projects...such as medical equipment, needed furniture as we grow, kitchen equipment and educational equipment. This potential has enabled us to advance our educational programs, facilities and other important areas for the benefit and function of the children of CHLA as well

as the community we work within. Rotary does not provide funds for daily operation, construction or utility services and taxes. We have to depend on contributors and fund raising efforts in order to support our daily operation costs and other associated expenses for CHLA. We have worked hard to look for Rotary Clubs and individuals that could help us to develop this part of our program, and look forward to partnering with your club or organization in order to continue to improve and develop the special programs and ministries of CHLA.



**Educational materials for pre school children provided by rotary**

# Perceptions Versus Reality

It is interesting how perceptions are formed regarding most things in life... friends, groups, churches, and even charitable organizations. This past month several things happened that reminded me of the delicate balance between perception and reality. I was visiting with some of our volunteers and even though they were very enthusiastic and committed to the program they confided that their families don't feel the same. When I asked why, they said "they think you (TCF and CHLA) have everything you need...you don't need his or her contribution or support." Last week we received what seemed to be a concerned email from a supporter wanting to know why we were "having a golf tournament when there are children out there starving...why we weren't feeding children instead of playing golf with our child sponsorship money." It was a very valid question...especially if the perception is that TCF is paying for a golf tournament using contributions and child sponsorship funds, rather than understanding that the golf tournament, like other fundraising efforts, is simply an opportunity for people to participate, have fun and raise funds to feed the children.

The perception might be that the children have everything they need. The reality of the situation is that TCF and CHLA is in constant need in order to provide just the daily funds needed for food and care for the 50 plus children that we are responsible for, as well as the 20-30 children that we take in for emergency temporary care each year.

Child sponsorships and general contributions are used only for the physical daily operation and care of the children ... even though many times we look affluent from the outside because a certain project has been supported by an organization, individual or church, at the same time we find ourselves short of funds for daily operation such as food, services, medical, education, transportation and general care of the children. The number of children that we rescue and care for has increased each year, however, our general and child sponsorship contributions are down by 30%.

We work to maintain the highest integrity in separating funds that are contributed for special programs such as our educational programs, construction, Ministries of Love, etc so that special funds and contributions go to the designated purpose. The basic mission of The Children's Foundation and Casa Hogar Los Angeles is no different from most child help organizations... to rescue children from the desperation and slavery of abuse, abandonment and extreme neglect, however, we go the next step to provide the facilities and atmosphere that can create an opportunity



**Brenda and Graciela**

for each child to heal their brokenness and become a positive and productive citizen within their own society. Our goal is to provide the tools to help each child develop his or her own unique talents, intellect, and capacity to make good decisions, cope with life in a positive manner with respect and honesty, and to have the personal power to break the chains of poverty, trauma and victim mentality that has controlled their lives, the lives of their family and their future. We believe that it is our responsibility to treat each child as the special and unique creation of God that they are, with

respect for all the potential that is within them. Creating an atmosphere that enables each child to dream and hope for a better future.

This is why we don't show photos of the children in casa hogar that depict them in a negative or degrading way, nor do we make public the terrible individual experiences that they have suffered. The sense of dignity and self esteem we strive to provide for our children, once they come into our care, takes priority for us.

Most children's homes and orphanages in Mexico, as well as around the world, provide only the basics...to see that the children survive, they do not understand why we work differently, why our goal is more than survive... our goal is for each child to **THRIVE**.

We believe that children deserve to live in security, with a sense of **LOVE, BEAUTY** and **HOPE**. Simply maintaining a child helps them to survive, and that is the first important step...however, without education, and the opportunity to develop, and to dream of a better future, our experience over the past fifteen years, as well as world statistics, show that many times these children will survive only to return to and perpetuate the devastating cycle they came from. Because of our unique vision we are sometimes perceived as a ministry that does not need support. Sometimes people question our emphasis on extracurricular programs such as dance, music and creative arts as being above and beyond the basic needs of an orphaned or street child, however, we recognized the extreme importance of working with programs that provide opportunities for therapeutic healing for our children, all who have suffered extreme trauma ... One of the most effective programs that we have been able to introduce into the function of the casa hogar through educational grants is the program of dance, along with art, English, spiritual, moral training and music. Through these programs we have watched damaged children begin to heal, change, and blossom.

# TCF Welcomes Melanie Kolb



We would like to introduce you to Melanie! She fell in love with the Casa Hogar Los Angelitos project back in 2007 during a volunteer trip

**Melanie  
Joined the  
TCF team  
this July!**

organized by her church; Melanie has a bachelor's degree in Family Psychology, she has experience working with children at the Namaqua Center, a residential treatment center for abused children located here in Loveland, CO, and she previously worked at LifeSpring Church as the Children's Ministry director. We are so grateful to have her and we are looking forward for all the new goals she will help us accomplish. In her own words:

"I have seen with my own eyes the life changing work that is happening at Casa Hogar Los Angelitos. One very malnourished boy had just arrived a month or so before my first visit. He was drooling and his eyes were dead. I returned 8 months later and he was so much more alive, his eyes sparkled and he smiled constantly. He had stopped drooling and was engaged with others. This is just one story of many that I have seen firsthand. Hearts, minds and spirits are being healed at CHLA"

*Casa Hogar Los Angelitos's mission is to rescue and help children and youth that are caught in desperate situations, including those who are victims of abuse, prostitution, abandonment, drugs and crime*

## Emergency Child Rescue

Casa Hogar Los Angelitos's mission is to rescue and help children and youth that are caught in desperate situations, including those who are victims of abuse, prostitution, abandonment, drugs and crime. When the police, district attorney or the Social services agency DIF's office have a child or teen under the age of 18 that has been sexually or physically abused, abandoned or running to escape the fear of a dangerous family environment CHLA is the safe haven where they are brought for care. CHLA provides temporary care and sometimes permanent care for these children, providing the security, services and environment that enables them to begin recovery. Sometimes this process is for one weekend, sometimes a week; sometimes months... CHLA's emergency care program takes in ten to twenty children each year that fits into this category. These children have no other alternative, other than

jail or the streets. This program has been part of our operation for the past ten years and now we would like to invite you to participate in this program, helping us to rescue children from the worst of circumstances.

Contributing to our Emergency Child Rescue Program is not an ongoing child sponsorship. Any amount that you can give will help us to continue this program...it costs us \$300-400 per child to take a child in under these circumstances...we set them up in school, purchase uniforms and supplies for them, get documentation from a local judge, take care of medical needs they might have and begin them into psychological help...we follow through with them until a decision has been made regarding their future ...many times they continue with us, sometimes they are only with us for a short time until a distant relative or other person can take

over the care. Contact TCF if you would like to be part of the support system for this program.

"Help Him to defend the poor, to rescue the children of the needy...."

Psalm 72:4a NLT

**FREEDOM, SECURITY AND DIGNITY**



**Nadia and Santiago**

**Nadia came through our emergency care program**

# THE DAMAGED HEART: THE THERAPEUTIC USE OF EXPRESSIVE ARTS



**Don Phelps,**  
**Associate Professor**  
**Aurora University**

*The value of our extracurricular programs, are so numerous it is difficult to list them. You can read more about the reality of these benefits in the excerpts we've included with this newsletter from the article that Dr. Don Phelps has written. We have seen children blossom from a child with blank, lifeless eyes and no desire to continue their lives into children that begin to find a sense of purpose and energy as they are encouraged to enter one of our special activities. Please take the time to read his writing. For a copy of the full article, go to our web site [www.tcfcares.org](http://www.tcfcares.org). under volunteers then testimonials.*

**The Damaged Heart;**  
*The therapeutic use of expressive arts with children at Casa Hogar Los Angelitos by Don Phelps, Ph.D., L.C.S.W.*

In broken English, a 13 year boy asked if he could draw me a picture. I sat with him as he sketched a superhero figure he had seen on TV. He was amazingly talented and drew with great detail and passion. When he was finished he smiled, gave the picture to me and proudly said "For you. Welcome!" It was my first day volunteering at Casa Hogar Los Angelitos (CHLA) in Manzanillo, Mexico. The or-

phanage has over 50 children and is registered as a Mexican civil association. During the spring of 2011 I was able to spend an extended period of time at CHLA as part of a university sabbatical. I asked to volunteer at CHLA because of their outstanding reputation for working with "difficult to place" children in Mexico. Most of the kids come from toxic environments that include domestic violence, homelessness, physical and sexual abuse, prostitution, sexual assault, neglect and abandonment. During my professional career as a social worker I have been privileged to visit many orphanages around the world. Most of them provide for the basic survival needs of children, giving them minimal healthcare, clothing, food and shelter. The kids survive but few thrive. They often repeat the patterns and lifestyles of the poor and abusive homes they grew up in. Because of the lack of resources, few orphanages effectively address the complex needs of traumatized children. CHLA came highly recommended as a place where I could observe a "success story" and learn how they do it.

I discovered many reasons for their success while I was there. They have dedicated staff, passionate volunteers, visionary leadership and a holistic approach to child development. A surprising finding, and maybe the strongest reason for the success of CHLA, is the

extensive use of expressive arts in the daily lives of the children there. The founder of CHLA, Nancy Nystrom, instinctually began using expressive arts at the orphanage when it started over 15 years ago... Expressive arts are integrated into each stage of the child's development. Through a wide variety of programs, CHLA facilitates emotional and creative expression, heals psychological wounds, and accelerates developmental growth through its use of the arts. I have never seen an orphanage embrace the arts as fervently.

Creative arts allow children the opportunity for self-awareness and growth through self-expression. This has been shown to reduce stress and accelerate psychological and physical healing... Most of the children at CHLA have histories of trauma and several display symptoms of post traumatic stress (PTSD). For some,

*CHLA came highly recommended as a place where I could observe a "success story" and learn how they do it.*



**Ballet Folklorico Los Angelitos**

# THE DAMAGED HEART: THE THERAPEUTIC USE OF EXPRESSIVE ARTS

attachment bonds with primary caregivers were absent, disrupted or severed at an early age. This destroyed the trust and security essential for healthy emotional growth and relational intimacy. During my stay at CHLA, I heard heartbreaking stories of domestic violence, physical torture, sexual abuse and assault, drug addiction, prostitution, extreme neglect and abandonment. Past traumatic events are difficult for children to talk about. They have not yet learned the words to describe the internal sensations, memories, and snapshots. Painful emotions and horrific experiences are frequently repressed by the children as a basic survival mechanism (van der Kolk, 2002). Children with histories of trauma experience multiple losses and carry the toxic memories from their past. They have a higher risk of experiencing mental health problems as adults.

The dissociative behavior and post traumatic stress experienced as a result of abuse and neglect negatively impacts a child's ability live a healthy, satisfying life.

Expressive arts have long been used with children to promote psychological health and social support. They offer children "a way to express their feelings, perceptions, thoughts, and memories in ways that words cannot" (Malchiodi, 2005, p. 9). Studies indicate that expressive arts assist in healing from childhood trauma and aid in overall mental health "by providing opportunities to share experiences in an empathic environment through symbolically expressing emotions in a concrete way" (Smilen, 2009, p. 381). Completing a work of art or finishing a performance in the presence of supportive peers and adults can raise a child's confidence and self-worth. By creating and sharing in a safe and supportive group, children are able to break their sense of isolation and shame.

Expressive arts assist in the healing process by altering a child's physiology. When children engage in expressive arts it alerts the parasympathetic system in their brain (Lane, 2005). Their breathing slows down, their blood pressure lowers and the body becomes more relaxed. This helps to reduce the physiological hyper-arousal, or "fight or flight" response, associated with stress. Creative expression modifies our biochemistry and improves our physical well-being. When children participate in the arts it actually changes their bodies.

The creative process causes specific areas of the brain to release endorphins and other neurotransmitters that affect brain cells and the cells of the immune system, relieving pain and triggering the immune system to function more efficiently. Endorphins are like opiates, creating an experience of expansion, connection, and relaxation. In conjunction with these physiologic changes, art can regularly change people's attitudes, emotional states, and perception of pain. (p. 122)

Because of the way the brain develops, from the bottom up and from the inside out, different areas of the brain are impacted during trauma depending on the age of the child. The younger a

child is during the trauma, the more necessary it is to stimulate specific neuro-pathways that promote healthy brain development (Perry, 2009). Expressive arts help children manage experiences that are too difficult or painful to assimilate. In his research on child trauma, Perry (2009) found that activities such as dance, massage, music, yoga, drumming and other similar interventions provide the patterned and repetitive neural input to alter the lower stress-response networks of the brain and help children better cope with the symptoms related to their trauma. This could explain one the many benefits children at CHLA receive from participating in the dance troupe. They practice their traditional Mexican dances many times per week. Their performance shoes have taps on them that make a percussive sound when they dance. While they rehearsed, I often closed my eyes and listened to the rhythms being created. The children emphasized specific beats and memorized the dance by the rhythmic sounds being created...

*Phelps*

*For a copy of the full article, go to our web site at [www.tcfcares.org](http://www.tcfcares.org). under testimonials.*



**MUSIC,  
DANCE, ART,  
THEATER, and  
CREATIVE  
WRITING are  
considered to  
be expressive  
arts**

# Yolanda's journey



Yolanda came to live at CHLA in February 2006, she was a little bit

shy but you could see in her eyes a desire to improve and learn new things. Deep inside a child's heart there is always hope no matter what they have been through, even if we can't see it or they can't show it, it is in there; it is this hope we want to bring out, their own power, their true beauty and their sense of self. Yolanda is now 15 years old and she is finally reaching in and finding out who she really is. She found out that she loves dancing! What a wonderful discovery, an opportu-

nity that came through the dance program at CHLA. This is the reason why the program was created, to help children like Yolanda find their passion and restore their self esteem. Yolanda has learning disabilities and needs special psychological and neurological care, her journey is just starting, we are so thankful to be able to see her thrive and to offer her opportunities for growth and self discovery. .

*Your continued investment into the future of these precious children has and will make a real difference in each life.*

## CHLA Open House and Child Sponsorship Day

### **YOU ARE INVITED!**

To The Annual CHLA OPEN HOUSE and Child Sponsorship Day... January 22, 2011 in Manzanillo, Mexico. Each year CHLA has an open house providing the opportunity for supporters, child sponsors, contributors and individuals that are interested in visiting with the children and staff of CHLA to come together and enjoy this

time with tours of the facilities, a program presented by the CHLA staff, the children, along with updates on programs, activities and successes. This year Sponsorship Day will be at the main casa hogar facilities Sunday, January 22 from 4-7 pm. During this time our Quinceañeras (our young ladies that have turned or will turn 15 years of age) are presented with

a formal program which is a special time for each of them and for those who participate in this beautiful cultural experience. This is always a great social event and opportunity for visitors as well as the hundreds of casa hogar supporters who live full time or part time in Manzanillo to join together for the benefit of a wonderful program.

## Annual Benefit Dinner Fundraiser

The 15<sup>th</sup> annual fundraiser for Casa Hogar Los Angelitos, "Changing Lives One Child at a Time" will be on Friday, January 20, 2012 in Manzanillo. The event will begin with a silent auction starting at 5:30pm, followed by dinner catered by El Caballitos, special entertainment and a live auction. Purchasing quality silent and live auction items will be possible with a credit card as well as cash and checks. The Gran Pavilion de la Feria (aka Casino) in Valle de las Garzas will be transformed into a magical site once again this year. Reserve your table today!!

If you have questions, would like to donate or volunteer, please contact:

Marge Tyler ([maggiet19@earthlink.net](mailto:maggiet19@earthlink.net)) or Janice Morgan ([janicebmorgan@comcast.net](mailto:janicebmorgan@comcast.net)).

We anticipate that the 2012 Casa Hogar Los Angelitos golf event at Isla de Navidad golf course will be held during the first part of March 2012. The committee is working on arrangements and will publicize the date as soon as plans are finalized.



**Children dressed and waiting to greet visitors**



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80538

## The Children's Foundation

PO Box 1443  
Loveland, CO 80539  
970-402-2272  
1-888-934-3733  
info@tcfcare.org  
www.tcfcare.org

## Time sensitive information



**Some of our 2011 graduates with Lupita and Nancy**