



Love is the Key

The Children's Foundation and Casa Hogar Los Angelitos

Spring 2006

A MESSAGE FROM THE FOUNDER, NANCY NYSTROM

Caring for children is definitely a full time job... under any circumstances! Care for 29 or more children who come from neglect, abuse or extreme circumstances requires a team of dedicated individuals, developmental programs, planned activities and loving care.

Those of you who are familiar with Casa Hogar Los Angelitos will find that we are different from most children's homes and orphanages throughout Mexico. Our immediate goal, like others, is to first rescue, provide food, shelter and basic care. However, our goal goes beyond the basics...we believe that it is possible to change the life of a child, break the destructive cycle and provide opportunity with positive reinforcement for hope and success within their own community.

When you step inside the grounds of the casa hogar there is a feeling of openness, healthy activity, beauty and peaceful security. Many casa hogars keep their entrance locked, never move beyond Spartan conditions and seldom provide programs that develop the self

esteem of the child. We believe that our children deserve to be treated with love, in an atmosphere which fosters dignity and respect. We believe that all children deserve to have education and structure in their lives as well as beauty, art, and music, as part of their environment. Every day we work to provide this.

In the past six months, more children have come to know the casa hogar as



their home; Maria 9, Adan 8, Juan Pablo 7, Jesus "Chuy" 4, Rut 1 and Omar 14. Because of extreme circumstances these children had not been attending school. Our teachers began tutoring them and were able to enroll them into the public school within a short time of their entry into the casa hogar. Every day these children are excited about going to school, they are excited to learn new things and participate with the other children. What we take for granted...being able to attend school, to read, write and learn...is special for these children.

As our children grow and mature it is rewarding to watch them take leadership roles, develop interest in various activities and become interesting young people. Some of you have heard me mention the life goals and dreams of some of the children such as Rodrigo. Rodrigo began expressing his goal to be President of Mexico when he was 9. Now at 13 he is maturing into a talented

and thoughtful leader. This past month Rodrigo was in charge of a youth program at his church.

Rodrigo's preparation, delivery and manner of leadership was so



awesome that the adult leaders were looking at each other in disbelief. He had his notes, his presentation and delivery in excellent order, leading the other youth in a calm and interesting discussion. He developed his message based on a three point subject "Lies, Vengeance and Forgiveness". It was amazing! How appropriate for children who have come from lives where they have had to sort through lies, the anger of abandonment and then try to find it in their heart to forgive.

Working with these children is one of the most rewarding things I have ever been privileged to be part of.

I recently read a comment written by 'Mother Theresa', "I am going to pass through life only once, anything good I would do or any kindness I could give to the world, I must do it now, because I will never be around once again." I believe that this is important for all of us to think about and remember as we go through our lives. The hope that you give, the comfort you provide, the life you change for good will live long after you are gone, and we must do it now because we will never be around once again!

Nancy Nystrom
Founder and General Director for
The Children's Foundation and
Casa Hogar Los Angelitos

List of Children Currently At Casa Hogar Los Angelitos

Boys (Niños):

- Andres (14), Omar (14), Artemio (13), Alberto (14), Rodrigo (12), Francisco (10), Andy (10), Raul (8), Luis (12), Adan (8), Christian (7), Juan Pablo (7), Chuy (4)

Girls (Niñas):

- Pilar (17), Bertha (15), Carmen (14), Azareel (14), Alejandra (13), Anabel (13), Brenda (13), Claudia (12), Graciela (11), Xiomara (10), Marisol (10) Maria (10), Laura (8), Lupita (6), Rut (1)



Casa Hogar 2006 Open House

Those who were unable to attend the Casa Hogar Open House, which was held on Saturday, February 4, 2006 missed a wonderful event. Thanks to all the hard work of Diana and Steve Stout along with their open house committee and the casa hogar staff this year's open house was the best yet. The spectacular event of the evening was the riveting performance of the University of Colima Folkloric Ballet. However, the part of the program that truly touched hearts of those in attendance was the presentation of 15 year old Bertha.



Bertha came to the casa hogar in 1996 with her sister Carmelita at the age of 5 and 4

respectively, and what a joy to see her, the young woman she

has grown into, being escorted by four of the boys from the casa hogar and then gracefully dancing the "waltz" of the "quinceañera".

Everyone who has participated in these years and witnessed the growth of the children was de-



lighted to see the first "public" performance of the "casa hogar band" consisting of Rodrigo on the electric piano, Alejandra on drums, and Artemio on base guitar, followed by seven of our girls dancing two beautiful folkloric dances that they had been studying for more than two months. Rodrigo and a new member of

the casa hogar family, Anabel, brought tears to many eyes as they gave short testimonies of



their lives before coming to the casa hogar.

This event was the talk of the town for several weeks. We are excited for next years event scheduled for Saturday, February 3, 2007. You will not want to miss it! Watch for more information in the winter newsletter for your opportunity to purchase tickets for the 2007 Open House.

Growing, Changing, Becoming Leaders...



Luis, 12 is becoming a leader with charisma and tremendous potential.

Luis is a member of a neighborhood soccer team. They did not have sponsors or the funds to purchase uniforms. Facing his dilemma with initiative he wrote to his community representative requesting that the community sponsor their team and purchase uniforms for all the members. Approximately three weeks later the representative came to meet with Luis personally and brought with him, enough uniforms for all 12 of the team members. Luis was pictured with the representative in the local paper. His new sense of

pride and self-esteem has given him the confidence to believe that he really can be successful and accomplish his goals.



Thank You!

To all our volunteers. Together, we can...

"Rescue Children and Change Lives..."

One Child at a time."

If you would like to visit the Casa Hogar please contact The Children's Foundation.



SCHOLARSHIPS FOR THE ARTS



The University of Colima school of Art and Dance presented four scholarships for our chil-

dren for lessons of music, dance or art, and with help from individual contributors we were able to add nine additional scholarships. We have enrolled 13 of our children at the University for various art and dance studies and have been able to provide voice, guitar, piano and flute lessons at the casa hogar for some of the boys. Our hope is to develop additional scholar-

ship programs for all of our children and eventually build a music room and library combination.



FEED Scholarship awards two deserving Women



Aurora Carbajal, of Manzanillo, Mexico is studying Psychology at the University of Colima. She was awarded a scholarship as part of a work study program. She works with the staff and the children at the Casa Hogar. Congratulations Aurora.

Ashley Baker, of Windsor, Colorado was awarded a scholarship to assist her in receiving her Associates of Science Degree. Ashley's dream is to be a Veterinarian. After completing her Associates of Science, she hopes to study at Colorado State University. Congratulations Ashley.



The F.E.E.D. scholarship was established with the hope of providing a financial boost and encouragement for young people who might otherwise "fall through the cracks" because of special circumstances. Please check out our website for information on criteria, scholarships that are available, the process for applying and contribution opportunities.

Ministerios de Amor

Established in 2003 under the guidance of Doctor Guiber Nuñez to help supply food, clothing and medical attention to severely poverty stricken communities in Mexico.



This program is growing and proving to be extremely valuable. We have established relationships with the communities we serve as well as help to meet some of their basic needs.

This program is only made possible with donations of special funds which allows us to purchase the necessary supplies such as flour, rice, beans etc. Donations specified for this program can be sent to The Children's Foundation.

Bertha Celebrates her 15th birthday with her brothers and sisters at the Casa Hogar during this years Open House.





Children's Activities



Turtle Sanctuary

This past year (2005) and early 2006 our children have had the opportunity to participate in various activities, lessons, and field trips.

with local church, Participation in activities with theater and drama, such as pantomimes, Presentations of theater in local public areas, Writing and producing performances, plays and programs, Bible studies, Church participation. Thank you to those who donated special funds in order for us to



Laura & Lupita

Personal hygiene and cosmetology classes, Voice, piano, guitar, drums, folkloric and classical ballet dance classes, aquatic activities, Colima state fair, Colima state museum, Butterfly Pavilion, Turtle Sanctuary, Circus, soccer and basketball sports, hikes into special ecological areas, Youth Conference in Mexico City, Youth groups in participation



Cosmetology Class

participate in these special events. Our hope is to allow these children to experience as many real-life experiences as possible. ~

The importance of belonging...



Claudia expresses her acceptance and affection to Maria a new member of the Casa Hogar family.

BECAUSE YOU ASKED...

Through the years we have worked with many children who suffer from various combinations of abuse. In an effort to provide a safe and secure environment we have developed policies and procedures that involve setting appropriate boundaries and limits...designed to protect our children from situations that might have a negative or harmful effect on their development. "Child abuse consists of any act or failure to act that endangers a child's physical or emotional health and development."

The results of child abuse have dire and long-term consequences. Usually they have low self-esteem, may engage in self-destructive behavior, anti-social behavior, over compliance or excessive aggression. Abuse creates lasting difficulties in a child's

life, their psychological development and social behavior can be impaired and they run a great risk of abusing their own children...thus continuing the destructive cycle.

In order to break the cycle the child must be in an environment that is secure, structured, nurturing and supportive. Our programs are designed to create positive outcome. This is encouraged through effective learning opportunities, communication, structure, positive relationships, consistency and safe surroundings. This allows the children to live healthy lifestyles, establish healthy relationships, and become positive and productive adults. We have incorporated policies and procedures that foster these principals. We do not simply "maintain" our children we work to break the cycle of abuse and poverty.



OMAR,
14years old;

Omar ran away from his home in the hills out side of Colima when he was 9 years old because of a very abusive

situation. After trying to find help from relatives in the Guadalajara area he was sent back to Colima by bus expecting to be met by his mother. No one ever came for him and he finally worked his way to Manzanillo. Sleeping in the small boat of a fisherman who had befriended him and sleeping on a bus parked in the area during the rainy

season. This had been his life for almost 5 years. During that time he earned his food by helping the local fishermen.

We met Omar when the youth group from the church rented the same bus he was sleeping on to go on an excursion to Mexico City. When Omar heard it was a group of youth his age he begged to be able to go along.

With hesitation and restrictions the leaders gave permission. It was during that time he won the hearts and friendship of our youth and the group leaders. We were asked to consider taking him into the Casa Hogar family, even though we usually don't consider a child who has lived on the "streets" for so long and is as old as Omar. After several weeks of evaluation and a trial pe-

riod we brought him into our family.

After a number of long trips into the area where Omar came from, an area that is not accessible by vehicle. Ninfa, our social worker, was able to gather enough paper work to establish legal authority for the casa hogar regarding Omar and enroll him into public school.

The middle of February he attended his first class in the 5th grade and his new "brothers" in the casa hogar that are also in the 5th grade were the first to announce, as Omar proudly acknowledged, that he had made 100% on his first two tests.

Here in Casa Hogar Los Angelitos Omar has become a positive member of our family, expressing his gratitude for his new home and family and eagerly joining in at every opportunity. Omar is now home.



Andres with Rut

Sponsorship Opportunity

With a \$40 monthly donation, you can become part of our Child Sponsor program. Your contribution will be used to help care of the children, and help us meet their daily physical, educational, medical and emotional needs. You will receive a photo of your sponsor child and will have the opportunity to correspond. This program has been rewarding for the children and sponsors involved. Send your sponsorship to The Children's Foundation or contact The Children's Foundation if you would like more information about this program.

Long Awaited Delivery!

We have been working hard for more than 5 years to obtain a vehicle that was safe and could carry a portion of our children. In February we had an unexpected blessing! After having received a grant from a Mexican business and a contribution from an individual for this purpose, we found a Canadian couple familiar with the work of the casa hogar and who were willing to sell their "almost" new van for the exact funds that we had available for this purpose.





Construction News

This has been a busy year with construction expansion and maintenance projects. We continue to grow and improve. As our number of children increase we feel it is vital that we have an efficient and functional kitchen. We are hoping to complete the kitchen remodel this fall. We have begun to collect funds specifically for this purpose which will include a walk-in cooler, pantry and industrial appliances. Because of the disruption caused by a kitchen remodel we do not feel that we should begin this project until all the necessary funds are available.

Because the safety of our children always comes first, we are planning to increase the security around the main property. We have reviewed different ideas that would provide security and maintain a home like atmosphere. Hopefully, we will be able to complete this project this year.

Casa II is in need of bathroom and laundry remodeling. A new roof and security is needed in the carport area of Casa I, and various other projects are in the planning stage for the future. We are continually reviewing the priority of these projects.

Thank you for your continued help and support of construction and maintenance projects!



LifeSpring Youth labor to complete soccer field for the Casa Hogar March 2006



Rocky Mountain Christian Church shovels dirt to complete drainage line for Casa Hogar April 2006.

Supplies delivered to Asaradera de la Lima

Mary Beth Carey, an elementary teacher from Muscatine, Iowa accompanied us on one of our outreaches. "When I shared with my sixth grade students at West Middle School that I was coming to Manzanillo to visit the Casa Hogar, they were filled with questions about the children I would be visiting..."

in our country. The reality of the experience reminds me that as we educate the future, there are many things far more important than being at grade level, and meeting the educational standards...we must not forget to care (for) and nurture the child as a whole!! Thanks to all associated with Casa Hogar for providing me with an educational experience that no classroom could ever provide...and thanks for allowing me to help make a difference in a small handful of children's lives."

Appreciatively, Mary Beth Carey

We contacted the teacher from one of the remote villages and a wish list was made. Mary Beth purchased the supplies. "What a heart warming experience it was for me to provide all the things on the teachers list... with the van loaded we traveled to the very rural, and very appreciative little *under the tree* classroom and delivered the supplies that I hope will help boost the learning of those students...I couldn't help but envision the extent to which many of us naively forget that many children will never have the chance to experience the educational setting that we have



Bob and Lori Bauer, Jeff and Cathy Miller and Loren from Iowa build and install a new cabinet for the kitchen at Casa 2.



Casa Hogar Los Angelitos "Family Photos"



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If you would like to be removed from our mailing list, please call or email us at The Children's Foundation.

CHILD PROFILES

Maria



Maria

Maria is 9 years old. She came to the Casa Hogar in early 2006. Maria is one of six children in her family. Maria is in the 2nd grade. She likes art and her favorite food is birria. She loves being in the Casa Hogar, and

her favorite place to go is the beach. She wants to study to be a Doctor. She would be a great Doctor, she loves to help others.

Jesus "Chuy"



Jesus

Chuy is 4 years old. He came to the Casa Hogar in early 2006. Chuy is one of six siblings. He does not go to school, but, he goes to dance class with the older girls to study folkloric dance. He has two dimples that

make his smile very special. His energy and excitement is contagious. He loves music and loves to be held and have someone softly sing to him.