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Children's Shelter of Hope Foundation



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September Trek South

by Judy McCormick
Regular Volunteer at
Refugio Infantil Santa Esperanza



I have just returned from my second "Rainy Season" September trek to the Refugio; this time staying, playing, and working beside Chris Amo. Again, I found Puerto Vallarta to be hot and humid compared to my home in the Seattle area. Many PV restaurants and shops are closed during rainy season, with signs reading, "See You In October."

Many things have changed at the Refugio since my husband Warren and I departed at the end of April. Madre Chuy is finally back into her laundry room but anxiously awaits the arrival of closets and cupboards. I have always found this area of the Refugio soothing and nurturing; maybe it is the "cha-chug cha-chug" of the washing machines with suds lapping over the top, or Madre's kind voice talking to the children at her feet, or the cool breeze that flows up from the valley. Regardless, it always makes me feel like I have returned home.



Madre Chuy

The biggest change to the rhythm of daily life at the Refugio is that the kindergarten children attend school in the AM; while the older girls, Elsa and Sophia, along with the rest of the school-age children, now attend school from 2-6 PM. The meal process is at a much faster pace but the children are being well-fed by the efficient, resourceful, and well-organized new cook, Liliana. I felt very honored when several children requested that I fix spaghetti; and after receiving an OK from Madre Mari, found that Liliana and I make a good team.

There are now 54 children living at the Refugio. I don't think I will ever adjust to returning and finding that many faces are no longer smiling and calling out their hellos. This time there were seven children gone from my life. Yes, I am happy they have returned to their families but I will still think of them often.

And when I am not in Puerto Vallarta, I will look through my photo album and ask for God's protection over each of them.

**People in life who are the happiest
don't have the best of everything...
they make the best of everything
they have.**

Anonymous

Cards and Calendars

In an effort to raise funds for the Refugio, as well as offer you special mementos of the children—our foundation is partnering with Harborworks Printing in Gig Harbor, Washington, on the following projects:

The **2007 Refugio calendar**, filled with new photos of the children and interviews about what they have been learning, will be available for purchase via phone or email until Nov 15, at a cost of \$20 US each, plus shipping.

Please note that if you have made, or make a donation of \$150 US or more by Feb 15, you will receive this calendar free.

What a great way to share your fondness for these wonderful children with friends and family members.

Packages of **holiday cards** featuring a photo of Refugio children are also available for purchase via the phone or email until Nov 15.

All orders will be shipped by Nov 22. Cards are 4 ½ x 6 ¼ on laser-jet friendly gloss card stock. Red and green envelopes are included, at a cost of:

- 12 cards for \$ 22 US plus shipping
- 25 cards for \$ 38 US plus shipping
- 50 cards for \$ 72 US plus shipping
- 100 cards for \$100 US plus shipping

Please send any questions or orders to
Chris Amo keithamo@msn.com
or
Judy McCormick—Harborworks
paws@harbournet.com

or call Judy or Warren at 1-800-772-3703



Meet Some of the Children

Carlos and Mimi from Pasitos de Luz



I am Carlos. My sister and I are best friends. I am 6 years old, and Mimi is 5. I have never been able to walk, and my sister is blind because of cancer when she was one year old. Mimi walks and talks. I am her eyes and

she is my legs. We are one.

We live with our papa. He is a carpenter and a construction worker. We have no mother because she left when we were very young, so we do not know her.

We have a bike for transportation—it is very old and sometimes it breaks down and then we have problems getting to Pasitos where we are cared for from 8 AM to 6 PM.

Pasitos de Luz helps other children like us—they are our family and do not charge for their services.

Carlos from the Refugio



Hola! My name is Carlos (red shirt in middle of photo).

I live with my sister Fernanda, and brother Manuel at the Refugio. Living with my parents is a 6-month old baby brother. They come

to visit us every week.

I turned 11 in September, and I am the oldest boy at the Refugio. I like to help sweep the patio area and play basketball. My favorite food is pizza. I like to practice speaking English with the visitors, and volunteers, and with our new English teacher, Dan.

My favorite color is “strong” blue. When I grow up, I would like to be a teacher of older children or a hotel worker.

Choices

By Chris Amo
Foundation Board President



Late summer I was faced with the decision of spending my mid-September birthday at my high school’s 40th class reunion in Colorado or spending a little time with my friend Judy, in Puerto Vallarta. In less than 30 minutes I had bought a reservation to PV; this was an easy choice for me.

And what a wonderful way to celebrate. The morning after my arrival, I drove to Pitillal to visit my friends and all of the wonderful special children at

Pasitos de Luz, a daycare center for children with severe handicapping conditions. I was welcomed at the entrance by Dulce (“Dulce,” pg. 4) and immediately found some new faces and many who have touched my heart in the past. Pasitos administrator Cesar Sanchez Santiago commented that there are now over 80 children enrolled in their program; however usually 30 to 40 are there each day. The major excitement at Pasitos is that they are moving forward with initial planning for a new facility on land recently given to them by the government. Of course, MAJOR fundraising will be needed to make this dream a reality.

Judy and I happily committed to spend some time each day at the Refugio Infantil Santa Esperanza, where my birthday quickly became a festive occasion. The children sang

to me and I got hugs from everyone. There was even a special lunch including cake—with three wonderful Madres; and Lucy, Judy, and the Outreach International volunteers.

The Refugio currently has 51 children living there; the children’s affection and trust always inspires me. During our brief time in PV we managed to squeeze in two small group outings: a special shrimp lunch for the Madres; and one rainy afternoon at the Refugio, we watched a movie and ate popcorn and fruit—all great fun.



**It’s not the years in your life,
but the life in your years!**

Anonymous

Are you looking for a special way to get older and yet feel younger? A visit to Pasitos and/or the Refugio may just be the right choice for you, too!

Chris

As most who have worked with charitable efforts in Vallarta are aware, the overwhelming bulk of money available to projects is both solicited and contributed by American and Canadian donors. Besides being a frustrating reality for those on the front lines of funding, it also can portend frightening scenarios should sources of funding from the north, for whatever reason, begin to wane. It is not overly dramatic to say that places like our Refugio and Pasitos de Luz could literally go out of existence in the event of lessening support from non-national sources.

The situation is not rooted in a lack of financial resources in Mexico, where the per capita percentage of millionaires is purported to be highest in the world. The reality is that the economy of Mexico is no longer considered that of a developing nation. Ever greater prosperity is predicted, and the awareness of not-for-profit social service funding, outside of church-related efforts, is just beginning to develop. But yet, the science of fundraising and a systematic program planning and development is in its infancy. How different things would be with our focus, if



Fundraising Training Opportunity

By Jim Boland—Foundation V.P.

rather than the perpetual moment to moment search for enough pesos for one more week or month of operation, our groups could be set on a path of self-sufficiency and predictable availability of operating expenses—even for sustained growth and program development.

There are specialists in this field, and we have been fortunate to find one who has world-wide experience and recognition, but more importantly has been working with a major Mexican city to develop their funding strategy. Scott Elliott, from Vancouver, BC, is bilingual, active in development, and funding of major non-profits, AND has a growing interest in the current realities and difficulties facing Mexican non-profit efforts like the ones we support. He is willing to waive his professional fees and come to Vallarta for 3 days of training, if we provide his travel and living expenses.

We are looking intently for a sponsor for this great opportunity. The implications can be enormous. An old adage states that “a truly effective charity is one that puts itself out of business.” Though it is unlikely the foundation will ever find itself no longer needed in

Vallarta, the prospect of our focus projects learning how to build a financial support network primarily among the Mexican business community, and develop long-term reliability predicated on state-of-the-art methodology, is so very exciting! Exciting for our kids in Vallarta, but exciting too in that models and materials that Scott will develop in his work with us, will surely be adaptable throughout Mexico. We really feel this project holds the potential to impact the welfare of thousands of Mexican kids, and we can have the delicious satisfaction of knowing we helped make it happen!

We need a little over \$1000 US (\$800 for airfare, \$135 for daily expenses, and \$100 for materials, printing and related expenses). Housing is being provided at no cost.

CAN WE COUNT ON YOUR SPONSORSHIP?

(If yes, please contribute directly to our Foundation and note that you would like the donation to be used for this purpose.)

Mil Gracias, *Jim*

Our Foundation’s major focus from May to the present has been to provide funding for basic needs at the Refugio (\$2,500 US per month) and Pasitos (\$1,500 US per month). However, we need your help now more than ever to keep up with this level of support.

Refugio costs run nearly \$6,000 US per month; an example of costs are:

Milk & Juice	\$ 650
Fruits & Vegetables	700
Electricity	500+

At Pasitos paying the medical staff is vital to the handicapped children they care for each day. Presently the Foundation supports: Food & Supplies at \$500, and salaries at \$1,000 per month.

In addition, during my visit I asked at both places for a list of current needs, which are as follows:

Current Needs

At the Refugio-

Infant to Toddlers—20 children

Baby Wipes Baby Lotion
 Baby Powder Baby Shampoo
 Diaper rash ointment
 Large- and long bibs
 3 Baby Gates to keep toddlers out of the dining room, kitchen, and downstairs bedrooms.

Donations for Laundry room completion:

Cabinets Shelves
 Closets Hanging racks

At Pasitos -

Education Classrooms needs:

Tables Shelving
 Chairs Mobiles
 Sturdy toys Toddler swings
 Braille books Games & Puzzles
 Special chairs for children with paralysis

Pasitos Administrator Cesar showed me a catalog with these items. He is generally very specific about what they want as he knows from years of experience what works best in their limited space.



You can designate that your donation go specifically to the Refugio or to Pasitos by sending us an email or including a note with your check made payable to us at:

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Thanks to all of you for caring as we do about these wonderful children!

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A Chat With Some Important People

From the Refugio:

Doña Lucy Flores



Lucy is definitely a "Jill of all Trades" at the Refugio where she has helped regularly several days each week since it opened its doors five years ago.

She cooks, she cleans, she folds clothes, she sweeps and scrubs floor—and always she smiles and laughs a lot.

Lucy and her husband have three grown children and have lived in Vallarta for 12 years.

One afternoon, as she was cutting the toddlers' hair, she confessed with a broad smile that she very much loves spending time with the children and the Madres.

From Pasitos de Luz:

Dulce Maria Anoroe Salinas



One of the smiling staff who may greet you at the entry door at Pasitos de Luz may very well be Dulce, who has worked there first as a volunteer and now as a

"nanny."

Dulce, 23, has a special understanding of the children at Pasitos who have Down syndrome. She is always happy to help and she especially loves dancing and singing with the children.

While visiting with her in September she cheerfully explained that she enjoys coming to work each day to help others feel loved.

Dulce's salary each month is paid by our Foundation.



If you wish to contribute directly to the Refugio make your check payable to:

Refugio Infantil Santa Esperanza, AC
R. Flores Magon 251
Col. Benito Juarez
Puerto Vallarta, Jalisco, MX

Questions? Email Carmen Berkowitz
carmengalvanpv@msn.com
322 222 5713 (*Mountain Time*)



If you wish to claim a charitable contribution for USA tax purposes, make your check payable to:

Children's Shelter of Hope Foundation
505 N. Tomahawk Is. Dr.
Portland, Oregon 97217
USA

Questions? Call or email Amy Welch
amywelchpdx@hotmail.com
503 285 4007 (*Pacific Time*)



If you wish to contribute to Pasitos de Luz **DO NOT MAIL DONATIONS**, but visit Pasitos at:

Pasitos de Luz
Exiquio Corona 545
Col. Bobadilla
Puerto Vallarta, Jalisco, MX

Questions? Email Jim Boland
jimboland@aol.com