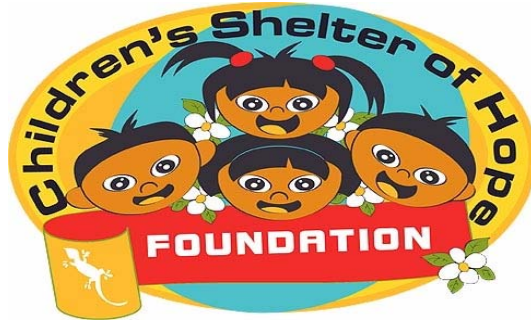


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I Survived!

by Christine Amo
Children's Shelter of Hope Foundation
Board President

In mid-May I was honored to be asked to stay at the Refugio for 3 days and 3 nights as the substitute Refugio "Mom" so that Madre Mari could take a short vacation to Guadalajara to visit friends. I readily accepted this unusual invitation knowing that I would learn a lot about the operations at the Refugio. It gave me the opportunity to see the whole picture of what happens each day – beginning at 5:30 in the morning and ending when all of the children are in bed and finally asleep – around 9:30 or 10:00. Much happens during the early morning hours and late evening time, things that I had never witnessed in my 5 ½ years as a regular volunteer.

At times, it felt as if we moved from



one meal to the next. I am sure that Sofia and Angela, who were on dish-washing duty through the weekend, saw it that way, too, as they constantly faced the stacks of dishes. I can certainly assure you that the children eat well; quesadillas, beans, and fruit for breakfast; chicken with mole sauce, rice, and vegetables for lunch; and oat-

meal and fruit for dinner; and always lots of milk and juice throughout the day.

The babies and the toddlers also enjoy 3 satisfying meals a day, with snacks frequently provided by the cook Liliana. The cook prepares the larger lunch meal each day; however, Madre Mari (or Mom Cristina, in this case) usually fixes breakfast and the evening light supper for all of the children and staff.

Another constant was the need to check and change diapers of our babies and some of the toddlers; and clean the kitchen area, the outside courtyard, the bathrooms, etc. Our babies and toddlers have two baths each day; one in the morning about 9, and another one in the evening about 6 when they put on pajamas and get ready for bed. Our older children usually bath once in the morning. Everyone washes their hair each time and the hair combing and fancy hairdos are an incredible process to behold with older children happily helping the younger children.

Bedtime was probably the most challenging part for me. Try picturing getting 51 children in shared bedroom spaces to calm down for the evening and fall asleep. The babies are actually the easiest, at least initially.

Madre Chuy has a wonderful prayer and singing session with the older children each evening, while the toddlers are taken to their bedroom by Nayali or by a couple older children. It usually takes about an hour to get the babies settled down and asleep. Madre Chuy then hands out pajamas to all of the children, ages 5-10; she



also gives them their change of clothes for the morning. Then off to bed for the children, ages 11-14. With any luck at all it is totally quiet when Madre Chuy and I do the final bed-check in 30 to 45 minutes.

To bed for me, too, except that I "sleep" in Madre Mari's bedroom right next to the babies. I want to tell you that

Alejandro (*photo on right*) likes several bottles in the middle of the night, and if he doesn't get them right away he will scream to wake up as many babies as possible!

Probably the highlight of my special weekend was on Sunday, when families come to visit. This particular Sunday was special as it was Mother's Day. It was heartwarming to see 19 of our children interacting with a parent or family member, while the rest of us enjoyed special movies and snacks in the dining room area.

By Monday morning, believe me, I felt like the old woman who lived in a shoe and had so many children she didn't know what to do.

It is simply amazing to me that Madre Mari and Madre Chuy are able to do all of this continually with such grace and love. I was exhausted – however, it was a happy, satisfying feeling – **I SURVIVED** – and I would even do it again someday, just not right away.

A special thanks to the staff members and extra volunteers who came in throughout my Refugio Mom weekend to help keep everything together.



Chris

Meet Two of the Children

from Pasitos de Luz -
Abril



Abril is a 12-year old who lives at Pasitos de Luz during the day.

She is a charming girl, with a very sweet look and she is always happy.

Abril loves to have everyone who visits Pasitos sing and clap with her.

She knows how to sing “pim-pom es un muñeco”- and other songs that she likes to repeat over and over again.

Abril is very affectionate.

In her world, only happiness and wellness exist.

from the Refugio -
Mari Cruz



Visitors or volunteers at the Refugio, no doubt, know our special child—Mari Cruz. She has been living at the Refugio since the day the doors opened in 2001.

Mari Cruz, one of the oldest children, turned 14 on May 3rd. She was thrilled to have a special cake just for her. Due to circumstances in early life, or perhaps even before she was born, she lives each day in her own world.

Mari Cruz loves to sing and dance; she adores spaghetti, cake, and sweets. Her favorite color is pink; and anything having to do with Strawberry Shortcake.

Her sister, Mari Luisa, or one of the other children, are often seen helping her brush her beautiful curly hair.

Meet Two of the Refugio Volunteers Journal Reflections

The Laundry Room at the Refugio is not just about clothes. At times you can see a room with piles of dirty laundry on the floor, and, hopefully, some clean clothes off the floor. In a corner you may find a shy child sitting in relative quiet privacy reading a book, color, or ‘mother’ a doll.



Next to that child there may be one or two children who have fallen asleep, peacefully, I might add, on the cool concrete near my ironing board.

Just outside the laundry room there may be a few more young ones entertaining little Julio in his playpen, or, in fact, he is probably entertaining them. Whichever way it is, I would call it a win-win situation.

Even the child who is sitting on the floor as punishment for some misbehavior, can only cry a short while before being drawn away from their current sorrow by the sweet activities happening around them. One day there was some rhythmic music playing, we were all working to its beat; even the young children scrubbing stains at the sink were wriggling to the great local rhythm. I’m in love with the Laundry Room and its unending activities at the Refugio.

Rena Coon

At the Refugio yesterday, I gave oranges to Madre Chuy to, “...compartir con niños por buen trabajo y buen conducta y buen escuela” (Divide the oranges between the children in recognition for helping you and being good, and for their good work at school).

Then Madre Mari and Sol asked me to help them carry food from the storeroom upstairs to the new storeroom downstairs. Covered in sweat, I then played with the kids, until completely exhausted and



tired, I snuck out the back, down by the new lawn. Hoping the children would not see me, I heard, “Senior Royer, Senior Royer!” Running down the stairs from the kitchen across the grass was little Xochilt. She gave me a big hug. I was so swept away by her love, that I just bent over and let her hug my legs. “Que buenos,” I said. I was so tired I couldn’t remember any Spanish.

Later, I wish I would have just knelt down and given her a big hug, even in all my sweat. I wish I would have said, “*Muchas gracias mi amiga hermosa*” (Thank you my beautiful friend).

Roger Muat



The New Canadian Foundation

By Anne-Marie Haynes

Children's Shelter of Hope Foundation—Board Member &
Canadian Children's Shelter of Hope Foundation—President

Little Big Man

By Lynn Wiseman

Secretary—Canadian CSHF

On my last trip to the Refugio I was amazed at how big the children had grown. Most of the babies were now walking and feeding themselves. But I had thought for David, who has Down syndrome, that it would still be some time for these changes to happen. You can imagine my surprise when Anne-Marie told me he was motoring about with a special walker.

It was truly amazing to see. He walked with such confidence. He has now gained his independence and can move about on his own.

No more baby steps for David, he is on his way—there's no stopping him now.



The Canadian Children's Shelter of Hope is a non-profit foundation that has been established to support the needs of disadvantaged children and families in the Bay of Banderas area.

Currently, we are dedicating our primary efforts to caring for the children at the Refugio Santa Esperanza Infantil and Pasitos de Luz.

Our hope is to promote awareness of the needs of the children within these organizations to further assist and support them to fulfill their goals.

If you would like to make a Canadian tax deductible donation please make your cheque payable to:

Canadian Children's Shelter of Hope Foundation

2038 Laughton Ave.
Mississauga, Ontario L4X 1H1
Canada

canadianchildrensshelterofhope.org

canadiancshf@gmail.com



Anne-Marie

PASITOS' PROGRESS

By Chris Amo—Foundation Board President

Each time I visit Pasitos de Luz, I come away with a happy, upbeat feeling. The atmosphere for these very special children is always positive, busy, and personal to the needs of each individual child. The staff members are often found singing or dancing, and are remarking about some wonderful thing that a child has just accomplished. In addition, Yolanda and Cesar, who oversee all operations, are constantly excited about a new thing that they have learned about to help the children.

An example of this positive energy occurred just recently. In a matter of weeks Cesar and the staff had decided to add on to their very tiny space by expanding onto the roof area. They pulled together, doing much of the actual work themselves, to put in a spiral staircase (not accessible to children) up to the newly-found area where they created and completed three small offices. The old office room then quickly became filled with children, toys, and materials for a second classroom for the more-able children to use. Many materials were donated, and progress was made quickly due to the posi-



tive energy surrounding Pasitos.

Donations are still desperately needed at Pasitos, as well as the Refugio, to help pay for staff members.

There are currently 5 nannies, a cook, a music teacher, and an educational specialist who are going without pay each month.

Please help us to correct this situation and add more money for staff at Pasitos by sending a donation to our US-registered 501(c)(3) tax deductible foundation:

Children's Shelter of Hope Foundation

505 N. Tomahawk Is. Dr.
Portland, OR 97217

Or send a check to the new Canadian foundation

a Canadian-registered tax deductible foundation

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Canada



**God's special children
have been sent to us
to teach us how to love.**

-Amish saying

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Meet Two Important People

From the Refugio—Nurse Ann



Our amazing volunteer nurse, Ann Van Lydegraf, graduated from the U. of Colorado's 5-year nursing program in 1973. For a majority of her career she worked as an RN/Family Nurse Practitioner in Stayton, Oregon.

Ann and her husband, have recently retired and moved full-time to PV.

They have a very special blended family with 5 children, ages 20–33. Their daughter, Liv, lives in PV and also volunteers at the Refugio. They have a Mexican “son and daughter” who have blessed them with 2-year old Mateo, and next month Pablo is due to arrive.

Ann shares that, “volunteering at the Refugio is a wonderful opportunity for me. I look forward to my daily hugs and *gracias* from my precious new family. I like getting to know each individual child over time. They are all developing different relationships with me, which makes each one special.”

Our volunteers have made a huge impact in these children's lives.

From Pasitos—Silvia Sanchez

Silvia Sanchez is a professional therapist who has been at Pasitos de Luz attending to the children for 2 years.

Silvia is very affectionate and thoughtful with all of the children. She loves these children with disabilities and gives them physical therapy and stimulation. She also carries out the services of a nurse when a child is sick and requires limited treatment.

Silvia works very hard each day to provide rehabilitation.

In the past several months, contributions for medical care have made it possible for Silvia to visit the Refugio two days per week to offer physical therapy to David, Alexis, and Nahomi.

Remarkable results have occurred in the short time that she has been working with these children.



Canadian Children's Shelter of Hope



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

Refugio Infantil Santa Esperanza, AC

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Col. Benito Juarez
Puerto Vallarta, Jalisco, MX

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