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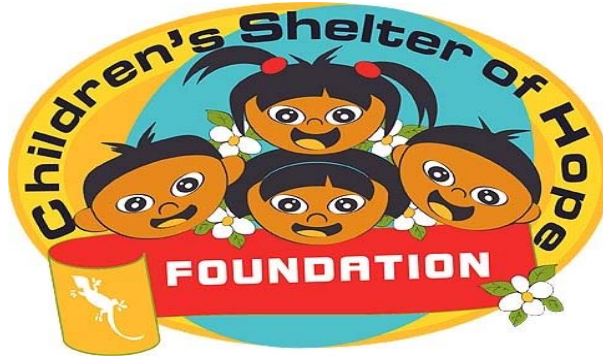
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Children's Shelter of Hope Foundation



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Growing Pains

Christine Amo - Foundation President

Dear Friends of the Refugio,

Growth spurts can be difficult, and this wonderful place for children in Puerto Vallarta, *Refugio Infantil Santa Esperanza*, has definitely reached a new plateau.

Since opening the Refugio doors in March 2001, the Mexican and American boards have accomplished many important things to make this a safe, suitable and beautiful home for children, including:

- Major repairs to electrical and plumbing.
- Correction of many safety hazards.
- Expansion of the laundry area, and additions of bedrooms, bathrooms, study & indoor play area.
- Construction of a play structure and garden area.
- General cleaning, painting, and the addition of new furniture and kitchen appliances.

The list goes on and on, as many of you know who have had the opportunity to visit.

We are VERY PROUD of these accomplishments.

However, we have created a new "pain" with our rapid growth. With all of this expansion we are now able to accommodate many more children (there are presently 37 children living at the Refugio).

This, of course, means that our basic monthly expenses have increased significantly.



In 3.5 years we have gone from operating on \$1,500 USD per month to currently needing \$3,800 USD per month.

Some of our major monthly expenses are:

- ✓ Basic food supplies - \$1,150 USD per month.
- ✓ Other supplies (*diapers, soaps, baby formula, medicine*) - \$860 USD per month.

Growing Pains cont.

- ✓ Utilities (*phone, gas, electricity, water*) - \$892 USD per month.
- ✓ Stipends for 5 Madres and salary for one employee - \$783 USD per month.

With this newsletter, we would like to invite you to become a *Refugio Angel*.

To earn your "wings" simply pick an expense that you would like to support for a month, a year, or whatever works for you.

Send me an email at keithamo@msn.com and I will let you know the estimated donation needed for that expense.

For example, to be a "milk angel" for a month we need a donation of \$190 USD.

These donations, of course, are tax deductible for US taxpayers.

Please help us with these "heavenly" children.

Chris





Helping Hands

In August we were fortunate to have a visit from three 3rd year dental students and their professor from the University of Buffalo Dental School in New York.

These wonderful professionals spent two days at the Refugio cleaning teeth, applying sealants and filling cavities. They also showed the children how to brush their teeth effectively and gave them each an activity book, toothbrush, stickers, crayons, and a wristwatch or baseball cap at the end of the visit.

In addition, the dental outreach extended their work to villagers in Quimixto and to handicapped children at Paseo de la Luz.

The Foundation was able to help with arrangements and some expenses like extra luggage charges, accommodations and transportation while in Puerto Vallarta.

Plans are underway to make this great experience a yearly outreach.

Thanks to UB student Rachel Botelho (picture: in scrubs on right) for organizing the trip.

more Helping Hands

On Saturday, Nov. 6, the Navy ship USS Antietam arrived in the Bay of Banderas with 38 crew members led by Chaplin Lt. David Thames intent on doing a charitable project while in Puerto Vallarta.

Their focus was the Refugio Infantil Santa Esperanza. These sailors spent much of the day cleaning and painting at the Refugio and interacting with the children—a definite success for all!



"When you dream that you can improve your life and the lives of other people, is when you as a human being are at your best."
Enrique Rodríguez

and even more Helping Hands

The wonderful and very generous group **Compassion4Kids** from Indianapolis returned to Vallarta and the Refugio to take 22 children plus 4 Madres and many volunteers for a swim one afternoon at SPLASH, a local waterslide park. By evening, everyone returned very happy and tired.

A few days later, this same group of 30 people, led by Julie Livingstone, returned for a day of work projects at the Refugio which included making curtains for the new upstairs



rooms, installing shelving in the laundry, making a large quilt (now hung in the upstairs patio area) with a decorated square from each child, and other craft projects and activities. **Compassion4Kids** also gave the Refugio hygiene and baby supplies, 2 changing tables, antiseptics and art

supplies. The group also gave each child a pair of sandals.

At day's end, everyone gathered together on the new upstairs patio for a moment of thanks, hugs, and the presentation of a check for \$1,500 USD for a new stove/oven for the kitchen.

In addition to helping the Refugio during their week here this group managed to help two shelters in remote communities, and aide six other shelters in the Vallarta area.

Compassion4Kids' hands and hearts are certainly wide open for us all.

Featured Child—Sandra

Sandra, the oldest child living at the Refugio, celebrated her *Quince Años* (a celebration of welcoming a 15 year old into womanhood) on Saturday, November 27, with a mass at the Refugio.

Sandra is seen as a leader at her high school and is popular for her bubbly personality, and abilities in dancing and singing. Her favorite subjects in school are biology and Spanish.

Sandra would like to be a dentist or teacher someday and help others, as so many have helped her. She would also like to be a mother and have a family, but "not now." (amen!)

Sandra has 11 brothers and sisters and appreciates living at the Refugio with her three younger sisters: Sofia (age 10), Marcela (age 8) and Fatima (age 2.5).

Her favorite experience at the Refugio was a trip by boat to Quimixto, a small village near Yelapa.

Sandra's favorite place at the Refugio is the garden - she loves the roses.

Sandra works very hard at the Refugio helping to care for many of the younger children and practicing her English with the many visitors. She is loved by all who have the privilege of knowing her.



Sandra with Juan Pablo

"You must be the change you want to see in the world."

Gandhi

Our top priority right now is to keep the Refugio afloat for basic monthly expenses by collecting a "band of angels."

Once the Refugio is stabilized, we need to move on quickly to several other important projects.

Kitchen

The kitchen remodel and expansion is still moving ahead, thanks to a \$5,300 USD infusion that donors provided to the Foundation.

[Compassion4Kids](#) donated funds for a stove/oven. The kitchen cabinets should be installed soon, along with the newly-purchased appliances.

Current Projects

Outside Play Area

By spring we hope to add a covered soft-surface play area on what is now the dirt portion of our outdoor patio and playground.

This will allow the children to burn off energy and develop physical skills - not to mention having a lot of fun outside.

The heat and rain can be so extreme at times, that a covered area is important and the soft surface will prevent many bumps and scrapes - as well as save the children's newly-washed clothes - at least for a little while.

Estimated costs at this point for this project is about \$12,000 USD.

Sandra's Continued Education

Another concern that is worrying many of us right now is providing for Sandra's continued education after high school. Sandra's high school education will end this

June, and then provided we can accumulate donations, we can send her to *prepa* (preparatory school, before university).

Sandra is a very talented and smart young lady and we would all love to see her further her education and realize her dream of becoming a teacher or dentist. Therefore it's imperative that we begin collecting donations for her scholarship fund.

Earmark Your Donation

If you would prefer that your donation go to any one of these important projects, simply make a notation on your check to the [Children's Shelter of Hope Foundation](#).

Please remember our beautiful children here in Mexico and send whatever you are able to manage.

As always, as soon as your donation is received you will receive a receipt for your US tax deductible donation.

**Thank you for
your important
donation.**

A Chat with Madre Roma

Early each day, seven days a week, you will find Madre Roma working in the kitchen at the Refugio. Her main roles at the Refugio are as the cook for two of the three meals and also as the gardener for our wonderful flower, fruit and vegetable garden. Madre Roma was born in the village of Rosa de Castilla near San Luis Potosi and grew up in San Juan (the Copper Canyon area). Her mother, who visited her two weeks ago at the Refugio, and some of her 4 sisters and 2 brothers still live in Rosa de Castilla.

The children are all given a healthy breakfast including tortillas and beans, juice, fresh fruit and sometimes eggs, before they walk down to school or begin their regular routines at the Refugio. Someone donated a small toaster for her last spring, which she found absolutely amazing and spent many days after preparing toast with honey for everyone.

At “comida” (the main meal of the day during our lunch), Madre Roma actually prepares food for 3 groups of children. For those older infants who are beginning to eat solid food, they are given a mixture of soup - usually containing vegetables and potatoes and then pureed in a blender. The toddlers and preschoolers are frequently offered a variety of healthy homemade soups and some fruit. And finally, the school-age children arrive back at the Refugio about 2 PM and eat a full meal that varies each day. When available, volunteers slip into the kitchen to help with chopping, cooking, or washing the mounds of dishes. All of the children also have “cena” (a light dinner), which is usually prepared by one of the other Madres.

At all times, Madre Roma maintains a marvelous sense of humor. When asked, she stated that her favorite food is SHRIMP.

She likes to read, write, draw, sew, garden and sleep. At the Refugio, she said that she loves the garden, and of course, the children.

However, she explained with a giggle, she prefers the children in small doses because they tie her up when she is trying to get the cooking done.

Her final comment was, “I am here to give help to those who really need it. And, oh (giggle), I need new shoes.” *(She really does, so maybe we can get Santa to bring her a pair of shoes.)*

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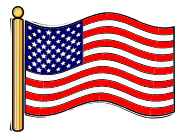
Nat Corral—Volunteer from Australia.



YOUR SUPPORT

Refugio Infantil Santa Esperanza has an on-going need to:

- Raise funds for basic monthly expenses.
- Add a covered soft-surface, rain/sun protected playground.
- Develop a scholarship fund for Sandra.
- Fund a medical and dental plan for the Madres.
- Provide for future educational opportunities for academically-gifted children.
- Plan support for the future needs of all of the children beyond their time at the Refugio.



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

Children’s Shelter of Hope Foundation

and mail this check to:
Children’s Shelter of Hope Foundation
505 N. Tomahawk Is. Dr.
Portland, OR 97217 USA

Questions?
Amy Welch, Foundation Board
wjwelchpc@comcast.net



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

Refugio Infantil Santa Esperanza, A.C.

and mail this check to:
Refugio Infantil Santa Esperanza, A.C.
R. Flores Magon #251
Col. Benito Juarez
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