

**Children's Shelter of Hope  
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Children's Shelter of Hope Foundation



[www.childrens-shelter-of-hope-foundation.org](http://www.childrens-shelter-of-hope-foundation.org)

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## Helping at the Refugio... *Things I Have Learned*

by Christine Amo, Foundation Board President

*Dear Friends of the Refugio,*

First, let me explain that I have been fortunate enough to make a life-long career out of watching and learning from children. I was a teacher of young children (mostly 5 to 8 year olds) for thirty wonderful years in Portland, Oregon. Just two years ago, my "magnum opus" was to receive a doctorate degree in curriculum and instruction for young children.



As I began going to the Refugio regularly 2 ½ years ago, I saw it as another great opportunity to learn more from these magnificent children.

The following is my list to date of discoveries:

1. The Refugio Infantil Santa Esperanza is not technically an orphanage. In December, I overheard Madre Mary explain to one of the dentists who helped with dental checks and work this past Fall that it is really a refuge or shelter for families who are struggling and not able to care for their children at this time. Very few of our children are actually available for adoption, as they still have binds and contact with their birth families and relatives.

In my opinion, it is a very humane concept, where parents can place their precious children in a safe, clean and caring environment. Many parents visit often, stay connected with their children on a regular basis, and eventually fold their children back into a healthier, happier family. The Madres at the Refugio are committed to this wonderful safe haven.

2. There is a wonderful sense of community at the Refugio. All willingly share clothes, toys, books, projects and special items. The children understand the importance of responsibility of helping others and contributing to the greater good for all at a much higher level than any of the many school children I worked with before in Oregon.

3. Having done quite a lot of artwork with the children, I have learned that again sharing the experience is expected and easily accepted. Often one child will start something and then invite another to help on the same project, or a younger child will begin as an older child volunteers to assist, but not just take over. There is no importance placed on individually owning or "getting credit" for a creation and ultimately the process of doing is much more valued than the final product.

4. A special bonus for me has been in learning more Spanish. It is important to me, in my effort to be trusted and accepted, to communicate clearly with the Madres. They are very polite in not laughing at my attempts. However, I have many wonderful tutors among the children who are amused at my struggles and happy to learn the English words from me

as well. These children are already recognizing the benefits of being bilingual.

5. The Madres are warm and loving individuals, yet they have complete control. A remark made softly, yet firmly is obeyed immediately with no disagreement. I needed their secret many times – as a teacher and as a mother.

6. This is a safe and comfortable place for all – the children, the Madres, the families, the volunteers, the visitors—everyone! And all of us are very thankful for everyone's efforts.



*Chris*

*If you ever come to Puerto Vallarta please be sure to let one of our board members know so that we can meet you and show you this magical place.*



# Healthy Teeth and Bright Smiles



The children at the Refugio now have healthy teeth and brighter smiles thanks to our Board Vice President Sudy Coy, Dr. Ignacio Gomez Guitierrez and Dr. Edward Sharp, a pediatric dentist from California.

Dental work was provided to 29 children and to the Madres as well. These services were offered at no cost because of the generosity of these wonderful dentists and their charming dental assistants.



## Helping Hands

by Sudy Coy Foundation Board Vice President



### COMPASSION4KIDS,

headed by Julie Livingston, visits the Refugio twice a year. Prior to their arrival they ask what is on our wish list.

In November 2003, we wanted new tables with benches so that the children could do their homework and crafts projects. The volunteers arrived and built four tables, as well as a cabinet for a TV/VCR.

The group included an eye doctor who checked the vision of all, and arranged for the delivery of six pair of glasses

### COMPASSION4KIDS

“Linking Hands and Hearts...at Home and Around the World”

for the children and two for the Madres.

These wonderful people also arranged to take all of our children out to swim with the dolphins—a very special outing for everyone. Their parting gift was a check for \$1,000 usd to be used for the completion of construction on our second floor addition.



**THANKS TO ALL INVOLVED WITH THEIR HANDS AND THEIR HEARTS.**



### AMBASSADORS FOR CHILDREN

led by Marcy Milkon, also visits the Refugio regularly and is aware of our continual list of needs.

We indicated that when the second floor addition is complete, we will be in need of 28 new beds and mattresses.

We received from this generous group a check for \$2,900 usd to cover these costs.



They also brought a Christmas gift for each child. The group arranged to make Christmas ornaments with the children and donated a large Christmas tree.

The children made their ornaments which included their photo on an ornament.

It was a wonderful day, which included pizza (the children's favorite) and soft drinks.

[www.ambassadorsforchildren.org](http://www.ambassadorsforchildren.org)



# Visiting and Volunteering

by Dr. Jim Boland, Foundation Board Member



The Refugio continues to be blessed with wide and caring interest from those who get to know the place. Our greatest fortune in this area are the regular United Kingdom volunteers from Project Outreach International, who are placed with us throughout the year. With only 4 Madres on staff, who are occupied with their very special tasks, it is safe to say the Refugio could not function as smoothly without these dedicated young women.

Then come the folks who have made a regular commitment, reliably showing up to change and bathe, entertain and teach, wipe noses, feed toddlers ... they keep the place open.

There are lots of good folks who drop in now and then, usually with donations of needed items, to spend "women time" with the children, and to remind us that they are available when special needs like transportation arise.

Our foundation is also volunteers, working to raise money in the north, through

tax deductible donations.

The Vallarta-based Refugio Board of Directors all volunteer their time as well, with

Sr. Rios Camarena, as President, doing a fantastic hands-on job of supervising the existing construction project that will more than double our usable space.



Sr. Juan Carlos Rios Camarena

An increasingly large part of the volunteer picture involves visiting vacationers who have heard about us from other visitors, or from our website, or periodic news releases. This is an exciting, though complex development, and we have yet to sort of "harness" this resource.

People are always welcome to visit the Refugio ... official times are 11 A.M. to 1 PM and 4 PM to 6 PM. A complex piece here is language as the Madres speak a limited amount of English and most visitors speak no Spanish.

I think that most of us hope for the day when we can budget a full-time bilingual employee who can serve as liaison with visitors, as well as office management and coordination of activities.

Some other hoped-for improvements: basic Spanish classes for regular volunteers, a monthly meeting when all volunteers could gather for basic communication info, and maybe some inservice training around such issues as how to best support kids who have experienced abuse or abandonment.

Finally, as the construction winds to a close upstairs and the yard becomes more usable for play, there will be a big need for volunteers to be involved with athletics as well as ongoing grounds management.

And, by the way, we have a master computer whiz on-board now, but no computer. Any leads?

Email me at [jimboland@aol.com](mailto:jimboland@aol.com)  
Vallarta ph (01 322) 223-2427



## Current Projects



As we begin to see an end to the upstairs construction, the Foundation Board is beginning to dream further.



Your money donated to the *Children's Shelter of Hope Foundation* will go towards all

of these important projects:

- Adding a covered soft surface playground and covered area to stay out of the rain and sun.
- Correction of safety hazards found in the kitchen and dining room areas.



- New kitchen cabinets.
- Funding a medical plan for the Madres.
- Scholarships for future educational opportunities for some of our advanced children.
- Support the future needs of all of the children beyond their time at the Refugio.

**Children's Shelter of Hope  
Foundation**

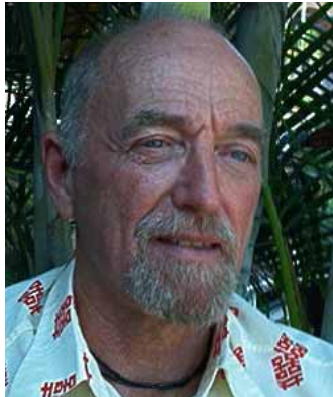
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**A few of the beautiful  
faces at the Refugio**

From left: Madre Roma, Madre Chuy,  
Madre Mary and Madre Marcella

Below: Sandra with sister, Fatima



Dr. Jim Boland  
Foundation Board Member  
& RISE Volunteer Coordinator

**Keep in Mind:** Your donations can make a large difference in the lives of these precious children. Our Board of Directors currently funds most overhead expenses such as legal and accounting, and publishing. There is no salaried staff and all involved are volunteers who use our own personal computers, telephones, fax machines, etc. Our expenses as a Foundation are kept to a minimum and include such things as printing and mailing costs; IRS and state filings; internet web site; bank fees. If you are inclined to make a really great investment in supporting these children, a check to *Children's Shelter of Hope Foundation* is a worthwhile effort.

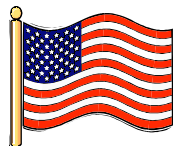
**Thank you for your continued support!**

*"The Refugio is one of God's most generous gifts to my life. To participate in building this healing community is an honor and great joy. It is truly a refuge...they come to us hurt and frightened, and in a short time the love here has them feeling safe and smiling. So many "angelitos" under one roof! I love being Don Jaime...gardener and 'abuelo' (grandfather)." -Dr. Jim Boland*

**YOUR SUPPORT**

**Refugio Infantil  
Santa Esperanza** has a tremendous need to:

- Create a covered soft-surface playground and a rain/sun protected area.
- Correct safety hazards found in the kitchen and dining room areas.
- New kitchen cabinets.
- Fund a medical plan for the Madres.
- Provide for future educational opportunities for our advanced 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 to:  
Children's Shelter of Hope Foundation  
505 N. Tomahawk Is. Dr.  
Portland, OR 97217 USA

**Questions?**  
Amy Welch,  
Foundation Secretary & Treasurer  
amywelchpdx@hotmail.com  
503 285 4007



If you wish to contribute directly to the Refugio, make your check payable to **R.I.S.E.:**

**Refugio Infantil Santa Esperanza, A.C.**

and mail to:  
Refugio Infantil Santa Esperanza, A.C.  
R. Flores Magon #251  
Col. Benito Juarez  
Puerto Vallarta, Jalisco, MEXICO

**Questions?**  
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