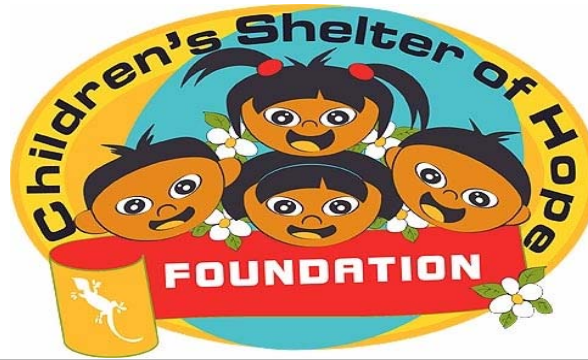


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Children's Shelter of Hope Foundation



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## Refugio Reflections

Jim Boland - Foundation Board Vice-President

### *Dear Friends of the Refugio,*

A friend introduced me to the Refugio soon after it opened in March 2001. Having always loved babies (I can't help smiling just looking at them), I knew from the first visit that I had found a great volunteer opportunity. I don't even remember now how many kids we started with, but they were all beautiful, and in need of smiles, support, and practical assistance. I was blessed to be adopted as a substitute "abuelo" grandpa.

While interviewing Madre Lupita for the article on the back of this issue, I was struck by the dramatic contrast between those "beginning" days and now. As we talked on the second floor terrace, the older girls were in the beautiful study room creating with art supplies and surrounded by shelves of Spanish language books and four complete computer set-ups. The six youngest "crib-kids" were all in new little strollers, happily zipping around our feet. We looked out over a well-established garden surrounding the newly tiled courtyard play area. And I recalled little Carlitos just a couple of years ago in the one stroller we had—wheels not working, cracked and rickety - bumping around the one small play room on the first, and only floor.



We have come such a long way in an amazingly short time. Our list of blessings is truly enormous, and you who read this know of the important part you are playing.

Little Carlitos was reunited to a rehabilitated family situation ... I still miss him, but that is our primary mission at the Refugio—to protect and care for a child when the need exists, and then release them with love into the care of others. Another of my "inspirations," Carolina, who arrived a neglected little girl with legs that could not support her



weight, is now a robust, happy, and even "chatty" little sweetheart. The successes grow in number. In fact, I have never seen a child come into our care who didn't make great gains developmentally and emotionally. An environment of love will do that. Our greatest reward is to meet a new child placed in the protection of our refuge, filled with tears, fear, and hurt, and watch as the love of Santa Esperanza heals their spirits until the day we see them laughing and playing with the other children. All kids should



have safe and happy lives!

Thanks to **all of you**, through group and individual efforts, we have a beautiful, safe home for our kids.

*Jim*

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# Out and About

During the past few months many of the volunteers at the Refugio have been concentrating on taking the children on field trips to broaden their knowledge of the world around them , and to medical appointments. Some of these outings included:

## Whale-watching Boat Trip

A large group from Ambassadors for Children came in early February to do service work with our children and take them on a boat trip to

watch the whales aboard the “Vagabondo.”. Neither the waves nor the whales were particularly cooperative that afternoon, however the time on the water was very special to all involved.



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## Rancho Capomo



On April 13<sup>th</sup> another group of regular volunteers accompanied most of our children along with four of the Madres to a special restaurant and ranch near the Las Palmas area. We spent the afternoon riding horses; playing on their special play-

ground equipment; feeding goats, deer, and cows; wading in the tranquil river below the restaurant; and enjoying a magnificent meal. All of this was offered to us free from the wonderful owner and staff. What a special and memorable treat. [www.ranchocapomo.com](http://www.ranchocapomo.com)

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## Fire Station and Burger King

During Semana Santa (Easter week in April) we again ventured out with most of our children and four Madres to visit a local fire station. The generous firefighters offered a magnificent educational experience by

giving a thorough tour of the facility; discussing fire safety equipment; allowing the children to “go onboard” a real rescue vehicle and fire truck; and offering each child a paper fire truck and coloring book with crayons to take back to the Refugio. The firemen are already talking about a follow-up visit for our older children to talk more about what to do in a fire emergency. After

our tour, we moved on to the local Burger King for a hamburger lunch and time on their play equipment. The Madres were particularly fond of the “chicken tenders.”



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## Medical Check-ups



Some volunteers were also involved in driving our children (two each day) to visit Dr. Peter Gordon for physical examinations. This wonderful, patient family physician agreed to see all of our children and Madres at a very minimal cost. He uncovered many health issues, prescribed medication to correct and

eliminate these, and talked with the Madres at length about preventative measures that will help to keep everyone healthier, happier, and on balanced diets..

## Feature Child—Lucia

Some of you already know that there has been a special angel watching over our children at the Refugio this spring with a protective wing wrapped around our nine year old Lucia. Lucia and her sister, Carmen, have lived at the Refugio since we first opened our doors in 2001 and see their mother regularly when she visits them on Sundays. Lucia loves school because “they help me to understand things I don’t know” and also the color red “because it is bright and pretty.”

During recent health examinations done by Dr. Peter Gordon, Lucia was diagnosed with a very rare, dangerous heart defect called “subaortic inter-

ventricular septa defect.” Due to the immediate efforts of several doctors, Compassion4Kids, Children’s Shelter of Hope Foundation, and numerous caring and generous friends of the Refugio, we were able to fly Lucia and Madre Mari to Mexico City in mid-May for a thorough examination and evaluation of Lucia’s condition done at the National Institute of Cardiology. The report back is filled with great news. The hole found in her inter-ventricular wall is really very small and the doctors in Mexico City believe that there is a good chance of it growing shut on its own without surgery. Lucia will be rechecked and monitored regu-

through return visits to Mexico City funded by your continued donations.

We are thankful for the wonderful angel who made sure that we found out about this problem and continues to protect all of our little “angelitos” living at the Refugio.



The Children’s Shelter of Hope Foundation has been able to contribute significantly to many important projects during the first half of this year which have made life for the children and Madres at the Refugio brighter and richer, including such things as:

- sending funds for continued construction needs,
- planning and paying for several special field trips for the children,
- arranging for and coordinating medical and dental examinations for all of the children,
- purchasing and installing fire Extinguishers,
- funding TV cable service for a year.



## Current Projects

**AND**, there is still **lots to be done**. If funds are available, work can begin this summer on fencing to be installed around the perimeter of the Refugio grounds to make this a safe and secure home for our beautiful children. Finish work is also still needed on the courtyard area, and tiles can be added immediately to the dining room area in order to make it easier to keep clean and sanitary. Safety still remains a concern in the new kitchen area until we are able to install a small gate to keep small children away from the large stove area.

A new bright star, Sarah Elengorn, is being added to the Refugio family beginning on July 1<sup>st</sup>. Sarah has been hired by the Foundation to teach English and computer skills to the children and Madres one day per week. She also will be delivering fresh fruits and vegetables to the Refugio weekly, thanks to a donation from the Foundation.

In addition, the Foundation has begun providing diapers and baby care needs to a program for physically handicapped children called Pasitos de Luz. Sarah will also deliver fresh fruits and vegetables here.

As a part of our initial visits and contact with this program, several board members have become aware of another project where urgent help is needed. “Bebe,” a young boy who has learned to walk as a result of being at Pasitos de Luz, is living in a cardboard shack with his family of five. If you can provide donations for materials, we can organize volunteers immediately to correct this terrible situation and once again make a significant difference. **Please help us build a safe permanent home for Bebe!!!**

**As we look forward toward the future**, the Children’s Shelter of Hope Foundation also is committed to the following general needs:

- ♦ scholarships for future educational opportunities for our children,
- ♦ emergency funds for medical or dental crises,
- ♦ planning and support for children who may eventually transition out from the Refugio family.

**Your donations are very important in making all of this happen!!!**

## A Chat with Madre Lupita

Madre Lupita! What a gift to our Refugio! Madre Guadalupe de Jesus, our 27 year-old “nintera” (she cares for the babies), art teacher, computer whiz, guitar playing liturgical volunteer, athlete, master decorator ... well! She brings so much to our lives at Santa Esperanza. And what an interesting life story. Growing up in Central Mexico on a ranch, she helped her family care for cattle. Her dad had gone back and forth to the US to support his ever-growing family, but returned to stay just before Madre was born. Growing family?... I had to ask Madre twice to repeat her answer when I asked how many brothers and sisters she had. There were 20!! Twenty! That’s half the Refugio population in a small ranch home! No wonder she gets along so well with kids!

Her religious path was influenced early on, as our own Madre Marcella came to her pueblo to do retreat work when Madre was 8 years old. Her interest in religious life grew until at age 17 she began her studies with our group of Madres. On Sept. 2, she will celebrate 10 years in the convent. She holds Our Lady of Mt. Carmel in special devotion, as well as the Salesian Saints Don Bosco and Maria Goretti... special saints for those who work with children.

Studying continues for Madre ... she spent last year in continued religious studies in Guadalajara and is now taking computer science and English in Vallarta. All of our Madres work hard and have hours that only firefighters understand. Madre shares the crib room each night with her little charges, and is “on call” as needed ... sometimes hourly throughout the night. She loves it when all the babies eat well during the day, because they are more likely to sleep through the night.

Next time you are at Santa Esperanza, watch the babies and children as they look at Madre Lupita-love shining in their adoring eyes! From a family of 20 children, she is now Madre to 35+! She is committed to learn English, so practice with her if you visit. Madre Lupita is delightful—you will greatly enjoy your time with her!



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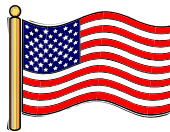


Visitor Anne-Marie Haynes  
with David

## YOUR SUPPORT

### Refugio Infantil Santa Esperanza has a need to:

- Pay monthly expenses,
- Finish the courtyard,
- Install tiles in the dining room area and a safety gate in the kitchen,
- Provide fresh fruits and vegetables weekly,
- Reserve funds for medical and dental emergencies.
- 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:

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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  
Secretary/Treasurer



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  
Puerto Vallarta, Jalisco, MEXICO

#### Questions?

Carmen Berkowitz, Foundation &  
R.I.S.E. Board Member