

Tres Islas Orphanage Fund

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Gaudelia "Fella" Cruz Hernandez 982-25-80

Annual Report 2008



Isabel and Dulce
Orfanatorio Mazatlan

In their own words to you. . .in English. . .thanks to you sending them to English classes. . .

Dear Tres Islas Orphanage Fund Donors. . .

My name is Alejandra Isabel, I am 17 years old and I have been in the orphanage since I was three years old. . .the orphanage has been a safe, trustable and homey place where I received much more than a house; here I found a home, here I met my family. . .the 'Orfa' as we call our home from our hearts, represents the place where I belong and gives me an identity, the place where I learned to see the future with optimism and hope. Here I found people who gave me love and faith in humanity. I recognize in your faces, many people who, throughout each moment of my life, have given me the grain of a mustard seed for my personal development. Thank you for being part of this community, which gave me the tools and the opportunities to succeed in the human society. . .there are many things to thank all Tres Islas friends and sponsors for. . .in all these years I received from all of you warm food at my table every day, every meal; school shoes, uniforms and supplies never were a lack of in my school days. . .and one of the most important things for me, my English lessons and love over the years that you provided us. And the most important was your friendship and the knowledge that I was not alone. This is going to be my last year in high school and I now dream to be in college and get a professional degree. Thanks to each and every one of you, I know this is possible! Because of all of you – Tres Islas donors – I can only begin to imagine what the future holds for me! Thank you, each of you – I love you all forever and ever! ~ Isabel

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I want to thank you for all of your help and support that you have been giving us. Very good food daily, the uniforms, the shoes, the very nice backpacks and school supplies and thank you so much for my English classes because this is going to help me in the future, I enjoy it to the maximum, and in addition, thank you very much for this great opportunity to go one year to Italy (as a foreign-exchange student) – that is a great surprise for me of having the opportunity to know another place, other nationalities and customs. I would like that you continue helping to the children – not only us, also to other orphanages.

I write this letter with all of my love with the purpose to be thankful to you for all the love that you give us. ~ Dulce

It doesn't take a Herculean effort to be a *miracle* in someone's life.

- Author Unknown

November 15, 2008

Dear Friends of the Children. . . Wonderful Tres Islas Orphanage Fund Donors,

Each year as we begin the Tres Islas Orphanage Fund annual report to you, we include on the cover page a quote or two we heard or read during the year that was especially meaningful to us that related to all donors' endeavors on behalf of the children in the orphanages.

Last April, during our spring mission week at the orphanages in Mazatlan where donors gather to spend time with the children and make improvements at their homes, the orphanages, Isabel, who grew up at Orfanatorio Mazatlan, addressed 40 Tres Islas donors who came for the week. What is remarkable about Isabel's address is that she composed and then gave it in English - thanks to the English lessons Tres Islas donors provided for her and thanks to the computer Tres Islas donors purchased for the orphanage for her to write her thoughts on. In addition, she sat down and wrote a thank you letter to each of you to be included in this annual report. After she addressed the donors present that evening, she walked over to us, gave us her written address and asked us to copy it and share it with each of you who wasn't there but who have supported her over the years. Her address that evening and her thank you letter are included in this annual report.

Not long after, Dulce, who also resides at Orfanatorio Mazatlan, penned words of appreciation to you - and like Isabel, Dulce's thoughtfulness to write her letter to you in English, was of her own fruition, straight from her heart.

As you read this annual report, Isabel is now an international exchange student for one year in Northern California and Dulce is in Italy. Both were chosen because of all of their attributes, including their ability to speak and write English - again, thanks in large part to each of you and your support of them.

So, each time you make a donation to Tres Islas, please remember the contented faces of Isabel and Dulce on this year's annual report cover page and their words of gratitude to you; and know that you truly do make a positive difference in all the children's lives. Thank you and God bless you.

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As the Tres Islas Orphanage Fund heads into its twenty-first year supporting the 91 children in the four Mazatlan orphanages, thanks to your donations, the children continue to receive nourishing food each day, they attend school wearing shoes that support their growing feet and wear their school uniforms with dignity. Thanks to your support, they have positive attitudes and images of themselves, which cause them to take pride in who they are and encourages them to excel in school.

When the children start school each day with the right "tools" - nourished minds from the quality food you provide and the proper educational supplies - this combination allows them to learn and study well. It is because of each of you that the children have all they do. They love and thank you for this and so do we.

You'll notice one change in this year's annual report that we want to explain to you. We are changing our reporting period to you for this year to be from October 31, 2007 to September 30, 2008; and then next year and all years after, our reporting period to you will run a full-year from October 1st through September 30th. We are making this change because we are now able to purchase all school supplies by the end of September and we want to get the annual report into your hands as soon as possible before the busy holiday season, allowing you more time to read the annual report.

Thanks to your support, from October 30, 2007, to September 30, 2008, the Fund provided \$62,970.29 for the children's food, educational needs and necessary orphanage repairs.

From the inception of the Fund 21 years ago through September 30, 2008 the Fund's total purchases for food, school supplies, shoes, uniforms, backpacks, advanced education, medical needs, appliances, health, safety and welfare improvements for the children in Mazatlan's orphanages totals \$264,522.20! Thank you, donors for your loyal support in helping the children!

With the deepest gratitude we can express from our appreciative and humble hearts, we ask, please, for your continued support of these children through the Fund. Please know you are needed, you are appreciated beyond what words may adequately express. The Fund could not do what it does for the children if it weren't for you.

Here is what you did for the children this past year. . .

Introduction

All amounts listed in Tres Islas annual reports are in U.S. dollars. Everything purchased in Mexico is purchased with pesos. The Fund is also blest to have Canadian donors who make their donations in Canadian dollars, so we want to clarify which monetary denomination we use as we report expenditures to you.

The Fund's banking institution, the Cheyenne-Laramie County Employees Federal Credit Union, is located in Cheyenne, Wyoming.

With the exception of the emergency roof repairs at Ciudad de los Ninos orphanages - that we learned needed to be done after last year's annual report to you - and was paid for by specified donations, we are again pleased to report to you that the Fund "came in" \$4,528.57 under budget for the year. We are also proud to report that we have never come in over budget; we steward your donations with respect: only purchasing nourishing food, school items, providing educational classes and making upgrades to the orphanages as they are genuinely needed. The previous year, we came in \$7,204.09 under budget.

Here is what you accomplished for the children this past year with your donations. . .

Orphanages Served

1. **Orfanatorio Mazatlan** (the first orphanage the Fund began helping in the late-1980s, which the Fund assists full-time)

Avenida Zaragoza 227-A, El Centro

Mazatlan, Sinaloa, Mexico C.P. 82000

Telephone: (When dialing outside Mexico): 0011526699812214

Telephone: (When dialing in or around Mazatlan) 981-22-14

Executive Director: Cristina Pena de Herrera (whose grandmother was a board president and whose great-grandmother was once treasurer)

2. **Ejercito de Salvacion Hogar de Ninos (Salvation Army Children's Home)** (Originally served part-time by the Fund beginning in 1998 and full-time by the Fund since 2003)

Angel Flores S/N Antiguo Camino a la Culebra, El Venadillo

Mazatlan, Sinaloa, Mexico C.P. 82129

Telephone: (When dialing outside Mexico): 011526699807609

Telephone: (When dialing from in or around Mazatlan) 980-76-09

Directors: Major Candi Frizzell and Captain Lourdes Ramirez

(The former directors, Majors Israel and Victoria Garcia Cruz, were reassigned to Merida, Mexico, which is customary in the Salvation Army every three to four years).

3. **Father Tovar's Home for Boys Hogar San Pablo** (Served part-time by the Fund since 2003 and full-time by the Fund since 2005)

Paseo del Centenario S/N, Apartado Postal 1233

Mazatlan, Sinaloa, Mexico

Telephone/fax: (When dialing outside Mexico): 0011526699823720 and 011526699816121;

Telephone/fax: (When dialing in or around Mazatlan) 982-37-20 and 981-61-21

Executive Director: Padre Pedro Tovar Cortes (Father Tovar)

4. **Ciudad de los Ninos** (Served full-time by the Fund beginning February 23, 2006)

Carretera Internacional Norte KM.1207 Apartado Postal 629

Mazatlan, Sinaloa, Mexico

Telephone: (When dialing outside Mexico): 011526699806026

Telephone: (When dialing in or around Mazatlan) 980-60-26

Directora: Madre Velia Morales Moreno

The lists (names) of the children in each orphanage the Fund serves are attached to this report for you, along with thank you cards from the youngsters and thank you letters from the directors of each of the orphanages for all the help you gave them this past year. The number of children in each orphanage fluctuates throughout the year, ranging between 80 and 100 for all four orphanages. As of this annual report, there are 91 children in the four orphanages.

On some of the lists you will see names of those who live at the orphanages who are past the age of 21, the typical age when youngsters have graduated from college or trade school and have left the orphanage to make a life on their own. We want to explain why this is to you. Here are some examples:

In the case of Elizabeth "Elle," who resides at Orfanatorio Mazatlan, and who is older than the other children, Elle cannot hear nor speak. Elle has called Orfanatorio Mazatlan home the majority of her life. Most likely, Elle will never leave. Loved, appreciated and wanted, Elizabeth is included in every activity; she's happy and safe. Three years ago, Elle began working part-time bagging groceries at a local mercado and then went on to work at the local aquarium - accomplishments for which she and all of us are proud! At home at the orphanage, Elle takes care of the younger children, enjoys cleaning and helping the caregivers.

It is the same situation for Jesus "Grande" at Ciudad de los Ninos. As a baby, he had a brain tumor, which, when removed, left him permanently brain-damaged. Unable speak, Jesus communicates via his kind smiles and signing. He is very much loved and included in all Ciudad activities. Ciudad will always be his home. He enjoys keeping the orphanage yard groomed. Gardening is his contribution to his home, the orphanage.

Then, there are other cases, such as Saul, who grew up at Ciudad and is studying to becoming a psychologist. Although past the age of 18, he has nowhere else to live while attending college. It's wonderful he's receiving excellent grades and making something positive of his life. To be able to live at the orphanage while completing college is a blessing for him. He is much like a youngster in the U.S. or Canada who lives at home while in school. In exchange, Saul tends to the younger children's needs and gladly does chores at the orphanage.

At Fr. Tovar's Home for Boys, Hogar San Pablo, there is (another) Saul, who is also past the age of 18. Saul has an acute case of cerebral palsy and also suffers frequently from epilepsy. Saul has nowhere else to live. Saul is blest that Fr. Tovar found him at a young age and provided him a loving home. This last year Saul wanted to study computer classes and thanks to specified Tres Islas donations that enabled him to do that, Saul not only studied computers - he aced every class! You'll read more about Saul and other youngsters' success stories throughout the annual report.

Purchases

During last year's reporting period, October 30, 2006 to October 29, 2007, total money allocated to support all four orphanages amounted to \$34,223.91.

This year, money dedicated to the care of the children in the orphanages (food, school supplies, school shoes, uniforms, backpacks, English/tech school classes and orphanage repairs) totaled \$62,970.29. The big jump in the amount this year is due to the unexpected \$17,410.86 roof repair needed at Ciudad de los Ninos orphanage, which we detail further in this report under orphanage happenings for the year.

The itemization of the benefits from your contributions is presented below with a summary spreadsheet attached showing expenditures for this year, last year and projections for next year.

Food

In the spring of 2007, the Fund began increasing weekly food purchases for the orphanages from \$130.00 to \$150.00 per week due to the rising cost of food – with the exception (for the time being) of Fr. Tovar's Home for Boys, which has fewer children than the other orphanages. They continue to receive \$130.00 per week for food until more boys arrive to align their needs with the other orphanages.

One of the many wonderful attributes about Mexico is the reasonable cost of food; however like everywhere, food prices have risen over the years. It's important to note that in most cases, the amount for food each orphanage spends each week ranges from \$130.00 to \$150.00. This speaks highly of the orphanage caregivers' integrity – they don't take advantage of the system and are careful and respectful with their purchases.

The total food purchases for each orphanage are as follows (Christmas dinners are itemized separately in their own category):

Orfanatorio Mazatlan: \$7,629.88 (Last year: \$6,503.31).

Salvation Army Children's Home: \$6,980.12 (Last year: \$6,374.58).

Father Tovar's Home for Boys Hogar San Pablo: \$5,867.91 (Last year: \$5,944.99).

Ciudad de Los Ninos: \$7,360.39 (Last year: \$6,604.63).

Total food purchased for all four orphanages this year: \$27,838.31 (Last year: \$25,427.51 - an increase of \$2,410.80).

This year's food purchases represents 78.46% of the Fund's expenditures, not including construction costs. (Last year's food purchases represented 78.77% of the Fund's expenditures, not including construction costs.)

Christmas Dinners ("The Christopher Fund") 2007

We itemize the orphanages' Christmas dinners separately for you because they are a special event where donations are received for this occasion in addition to weekly grocery purchases. This way, you will know exactly how your donations have been spent.

Orfanatorio Mazatlan: \$230.93 (Last year: \$170.05 – because many people brought in homemade dishes).

Salvation Army Children's Home: \$245.45 (Last year: \$223.37).

Father Tovar's Home for Boys Hogar San Pablo: \$272.29 (Last year: \$215.79).

Ciudad de los Ninos: \$231.00 (Last year: \$253.97).

Christmas Trees 2007

Orfanatorio Mazatlan: \$33.17 (Last year: Received via another donation).

Salvation Army Children's Home: \$33.17 (Last year: Received via another donation).

Father Tovar's Home for Boys Hogar San Pablo: \$33.17 (Last year: Received via another donation).

Ciudad de los Ninos: \$33.17 (Last year: Received via another donation).

April 2008 Beach Barbecue Fiesta for All Orphanages

Food purchased (hamburgers, hot dogs, chips, beans, buns, cakes, ice cream): \$498.02 (Donor specified donation).

Education Fund

Tres Islas has two funds related to education. One, the 'Education School Supply Fund' purchases all school items (paper, notebooks, pens, pencils, etc.), school shoes, uniforms and backpacks.

The second education fund, the 'Education Fund,' provides classes for the children in addition to their daily school subjects - such as English, computer and tech/trade classes.

We need and encourage your donations, please, to each of these funds. It is one of Tres Islas' major goals that after each youngster graduates from high school will go onto college or will have the enough English lessons, computer classes and tech/trade school classes for them to be able to enter the workforce - taking care of themselves and being good, contributing members of society. As you read in the poignant words of Isabel and Dulce on the cover of this year's annual report, the children value a good education - and weren't you, as the people who provided for them to take English classes, proud of their command of the English language? Your continued support of the Education Funds will be greatly appreciated and valued by the children.

Education School Supplies

If new school items aren't needed at the beginning of a school year because they are in good condition from the previous year or if there are enough school supplies on hand, the Fund doesn't purchase them. School item needs are assessed a second time - mid-year - and purchased only if needed. The orphanage directors and the Fund are prudent with all purchases. This also teaches the children fiscal responsibility - an important life lesson. Orphanages do not stock pile items but honestly request them as they become necessary. This is one reason we have such a wonderful working relationship with each of the orphanages because they make all purchases, including food, only as needed. We are blest are to work with individuals who possess such high-integrity!

School Shoes

Orfanatorio Mazatlan: \$544.38 (Last year: \$497.28).

Salvation Army Children's Home: \$605.68 (Last year: \$506.57).

Father Tovar's Home for Boys Hogar San Pablo: None - provided by Friends of Mexico, another Mazatlan charitable organization (Last year: none provided by Friends of Mexico).

Ciudad de los Ninos: \$544.45 (Last year: \$623.38).

Total school shoes purchased for all orphanages: \$1,694.51 (Last year: \$1,627.22).
School shoes purchased represent 4.78% of the Fund's expenditures, not including construction (Previous year, school shoes purchased represented 5.04% of the Fund's expenditures).

School Supplies, Uniforms and Backpacks

Orfanatorio Mazatlan

School supplies: \$533.17 (Last year: \$402.19).

School uniforms: \$403.65 (Last year: \$293.94).

Backpacks: \$248.21 (Last year: \$149.25).

Total purchases this year for Orfanatorio Mazatlan for school supplies, uniforms and backpacks: \$1,185.03 (Last year: \$845.38).

Salvation Army Children's Home

School supplies: \$401.32 (Last year: \$402.06).

School Uniforms: \$500.83 (Last year: \$403.69).

Backpacks: \$255.36 (Last year: \$290.39).

Total purchases this year for the Salvation Army Children's Home for school supplies, uniforms and backpacks: \$1,157.51 (Previous year \$1,096.14).

Father Tovar's Home for Boys Hogar San Pablo

School supplies: None this year - supplied by Friends of Mexico (Last year: purchased by Friends of Mexico).

School Uniforms: None this year - supplied by Friends of Mexico (Last year: purchased by Friends of Mexico).

Backpacks: None this year - supplied by Friends of Mexico (Last year: purchased by Friends of Mexico).

Ciudad de los Ninos

School supplies: \$877.79 (Last year: \$290.72).

School uniforms: \$694.49 (Last year: \$592.58).

Backpacks: \$231.62 (Last year: None; the backpacks purchased the previous year were still in good condition).

Total purchases this year for Ciudad de los Ninos for school supplies, uniforms and backpacks: \$1,803.90 (Last year: \$883.30).

Total school supplies, uniforms and backpacks purchased for all orphanages: \$4,146.44 (Last year: \$2,824.82).

Total school supplies, uniforms and backpacks purchased represent 11.69% of the Fund's expenditures, not including construction (Last year, school supplies, uniforms and backpacks purchased represented 8.75% of the Fund's expenditures).

English, Computer and Tech/Trade Classes

To date, the Fund has paid for six English scholarships. This past year the Fund paid for Dulce and Claire, from Orfanatorio Mazatlan, to study English with Teacher Gabino Covarrubias and his wife, Olga – recognized as the finest English teachers in all of Mexico.

The cost for students to study English for a two-month period is \$280.00. However, Teacher Gabino and Olga reduced the fee to \$140.00 for a two-month period for Tres Islas so we can pay for more children in the orphanages to have the opportunity to take English lessons. The cost for the two students to study English this past year was \$200.00. Teacher Gabino prefers that we pay him once a year, at the end of the calendar year, and so, we will do that in December.

The Fund paid for Cristián, Eduardo and Fabian from Fr. Tovar's Home for Boys, to study auto repair and computers at Felton School for a total of \$292.33.

The Fund paid for Saul, also from Fr. Tovar's, to study computers at CTEC for \$229.10.

Including English and Tech classes, expenditures this year for school supplies, school shoes, school uniforms and backpacks for the 91 children in the three orphanages totals \$6,362.38. (Last year: \$7,532.04 for the 99 children in the three orphanages for 12 months.)

School supplies represent 5.11% of the Fund's expenditures. Last year: 3.39%.

School shoes represent 4.78% of the Fund's expenditures. Last year: 5.04%.

School uniforms represent 4.51% of the Fund's expenditures. Last year: 3.00%.

School backpacks represent 2.07% of the Fund's expenditures. Last year: 1.36%.

Tech/English classes represent 1.47% of the Fund's expenditures. Last year: 4.77%.

This year, all school related items (supplies, shoes, uniforms, backpacks and English/Tech classes) represent 17.94% of the Fund's expenditures. Last year: 18.56%. Again, we will be paying Teacher Gabino in December for all English classes taught during the year, which would increase the percentage rate to be equivalent of last year's rate.

Construction Fund

Construction fund projects are detailed below under the orphanage where they were performed.

Orfanatorio Mazatlan

Orphanage improvements totaled \$6,117.24 this year. Last year: None.

- \$3,262.52 for 30 new mattresses to replace the buckled and very worn mattresses that were approximately 15-years old.
- \$166.38 for 30 new pillows.
- \$1,649.47 for 30 new blankets.
- \$475.22 to purchase material and reupholster the family room sofas and chairs that were badly worn.
- \$421.22 to repair the 12'-high outer front wall (that serves as a fence around the orphanage).
- \$142.43 to purchase paint for donors to paint the outer front wall of the orphanage during our 2008 Spring Mission Week.

Ciudad de los Ninos

Expenditures for repairs at Ciudad de los Ninos totaled \$21,746.97 (Last year: \$1,920.80)

- \$17,410.86 to repair all the roofs at Ciudad de los Ninos that were badly leaking and deteriorating.
- \$1,262.97 to purchase storage bins and shelves for the supply receiving rooms
- \$1,455.76 for paint for the boys' bedroom, reading room, inner garden and outer wall paint, garden plants and tools for the 2008 Spring Mission Week.
- \$523.67 to replace the boys' dormitory windows blown out by the hurricanes (the windows were replaced with Plexiglas, which won't break in future storms.
- \$669.81 to replace two rooftop water storage tanks (tinacos), which in Mexico, reserve water for usage; the former ones were very old, had cracked and no longer held water.
- \$184.00 for two commercial-grade (400 lb. load capacity) garment racks with 4" industrial-strength swivel casters.

Appliances

Orfanatorio Mazatlan: None. (Last year: None).

Salvation Army Home for Children: None (Last year: None).

Father Tovar's Home for Boys Hogar San Pablo: \$311.55 (water heater.) (Last year: None).

Ciudad de los Ninos: \$246.54 (water heater.) (Last year: None.)

Tres Islas Spring Mission Weeks

This past April forty-two donors came to Mazatlan for the Fund's fourth annual Spring Mission Week to upgrade the orphanages, spend time with the children, the children's caregivers and get to know other donors. As is the case with every Tres Islas Spring Mission Week, all money utilized for orphanage upgrades are made from donations specified for the project.

The week began by donors hosting a barbeque fiesta on the beach for all the children from the orphanages. The food for the fiesta was purchased by a specified donation. La Costa Marinera Restaurant grilled hamburgers and hot dogs and provided tables, chairs and tents for the party as part of their annual contribution to Tres Islas and the children. Donors served the children lunch, which also included all the cake and ice cream the children could eat.

Before serving the children their lunch, the donors and children formed a big circle on the sand and joined hands with one another. Tres Islas Fund Chaplain, Fr. Joe Sioli of Pennsylvania, stood in the center of the circle, turning around and around as he prayed out loud, first in Spanish so each child could understand, then in English, thanking God for the children's and donors' lives and asking God to continue blessing the life of every child and all the donors who help them.

To see the almost 100 children from the orphanages holding hands with donors and one another on the beach on that sun-kissed Sunday and for the children to realize they are not alone and hear how important they are and seeing the smiles on their faces as Fr. Joe prayed for them (okay, we peeked! ☺) was a precious, precious sight. After Fr. Joe's prayer-in-the-round concluded, the children clapped and clapped – then, they ate a lot of really good food!

Throughout the afternoon, donors spent time with the children on the beach. Beach activities included donors and children joining in a game of soccer, swimming and building sandcastles.

The orphanage caregivers took a much-needed and well-deserved respite on the boulders at the edge of the sand.

As you'll see in the compact disk presentation we've included, the beach barbecue fiesta was an afternoon of enjoyment. The children again asked if we would make the beach barbecue fiesta an annual event during upcoming Spring Mission Weeks. We want to honor that wish and if you would like to donate to help provide the food for next year's beach barbecue fiesta, please specify on the donation form.

In conjunction with the Spring Mission Week, the Salvation Army Children's Home, Fr. Tovar's Home for Boys and Ciudad de los Ninos were provided pizza and cake fiestas and Orfanatorio Mazatlan was provided a tamale fiesta - all by specified donations.

Spring Mission Week 2008 - What Donors Accomplished

Orfanatorio Mazatlan

"A Boy Named Noah. . ."

Included in your annual report last year was a copy of the Thanksgiving Day front page, banner story published in the Roseburg, Oregon *News-Review* newspaper about the Tres Islas Orphanage Fund.

After reading that story, Gordon Avery of Roseburg, phoned us to inquire about the possibility of his family helping the children in the orphanages. We met Gordon, his wife Lisa and their 12-year old son Noah and shared the history of the Fund and needs of the children. Noah was more than a polite listener; he listened intently and with obvious genuine interest.

When the Avery's asked the most pressing need for the orphanages we replied that the director of Orfanatorio Mazatlan, Cristina Pena, had just made a plea to the Fund asking if we could possibly start purchasing a couple of new mattresses each year for the orphanage because after 15-years, their mattresses were worn-out. The cost per mattress would be right-at \$115.00 U.S. Dollars. Cristina thought by purchasing one or two mattresses a year, it wouldn't be too expensive for the Fund all at once. Here again is good proof that the orphanage caregivers are very respectful with their requests for help from donors.

Noah said he'd like to help and, being that Tres Islas is all about helping children, we couldn't have been more delighted to have Noah help other children in need! What Noah and his parents hadn't shared with us until after we eagerly accepted Noah's offer, was that Noah had sought out several charitable organizations around the community wanting to help others in need - but until he approached Tres Islas to help, he was repeatedly turned away because of his age.

Noah went to his principal, Robert Freeman, at West Intermediate School in Sutherlin, Oregon with his idea that the students at his school could raise the money needed for the mattresses.

Along with support from his parents, Principal Freeman, teachers, the generous students and their school fundraisers, just three months later during our Spring Mission Week in April, every major newspaper in Mazatlan photographed Noah as he put the first of 30 new mattresses on the children's beds. Thank you - and way to go, Noah! Noah's thoughtfulness shows that we should never under-estimate the enthusiasm and commitment of children. We are honored and grateful to have Noah's participation and much-needed help.

Donors who came to the Spring Mission Week in April helped Noah remove the former, worn-out mattresses and replace them with the new mattresses. Tres Islas donors also rallied to the cause and either brought or sent down two pairs of new white sheets for each bed as well as purchased new blankets and pillows to top-off the bedding. After placing the mattresses on the beds, together, Noah

the donors and children made the children's beds with their new sheets, blankets and pillows. Many children didn't want to get off of their new beds once they were made because they were so comfortable, but did so, to gather around Noah and give him a thank you round of applause and hugs! The *News-Review* newspaper also covered Noah's accomplishment, which we've included with this year's report for your reading.

Additional improvements at Orfanatorio Mazatlan included having the front wall (which serves as a fence) of the orphanage repaired because it was crumbling apart. Then donors lined up along the two-block long wall one morning and painted it in all in less than three hours. Mazatlan's television station and three newspapers photographed and headlined the good works of Tres Islas donors that day.

Ciudad de los Ninos Orphanage

Receiving Rooms

For those who've visited Ciudad de los Ninos before, it's been obvious there was no place to receive donations such as clothes, shoes or personal hygiene items. Items brought to the orphanage were stored in the bags or boxes they arrived in, having no rhyme nor reason to their name and were unable to be properly inventoried for use – simply because the orphanage didn't have the funds to create such an area.

This year's trip concentrated on creating a "receiving" room at Ciudad de los Ninos – which included erecting shelves, placing plastic, see-through bins on the shelves, putting existing supplies into the bins and labeling the outside of the bins with the name of the contents in both English and Spanish. We did this because tourists stop by to inquire how they may help – but they don't speak Spanish. By creating a specific receiving room for all supplies from toothbrushes to shampoo and school supplies, when visitors arrive, with bins labeled in both Spanish and English, the nuns could take visitors to the receiving room and show them the bins where the supplies are lacking. The visitors may either provide the nuns money to purchase the needed supplies or go purchase the supplies and bring them back. A win-win situation!

Laundry Room

Then, donors tackled the laundry room – painting it 'sunflower yellow' (the nuns said that color would make the laundry room a happy place for them to do laundry!) and placed additional shelves in the laundry room so sheets, blankets, towels and clothes may be neatly stored until used.

The Fund also purchased and we took to Mazatlan two commercial-grade clothes hanging racks that have large, sturdy wheels (because none could be located in Mazatlan). Prior to this, there were two very old, hand-made, bent and rusted garment racks with no wheels that the tiny caregiver nuns had to tug, pull and jerk to move them around the small laundry room.

The nuns' faces were filled with ear-to-ear smiles when they saw the new shelves and hanging racks! They chatted happily to each other gleefully proclaiming how, thanks to Tres Islas donors, the lives of the children and their own lives are so much better!

Little Boys' Bedroom

Donors painted the little boys bedroom a pretty hue of baby blue and members of what has becoming lovingly known as the "Iowa Contingency" after spending time at the orphanage making improvements during the day, they also donated their evenings sewing curtains and then purchased new sheets and blankets for the boys' beds to make the project complete.

Floral and Herb Gardens

We are grateful to donors for their purchases of garden tools and every flower and shrub that Sister Velia set her eyes on and commented on its beauty, as well as every herb available to plant in the gardens at the orphanage. This was probably the first time in her life that Sister Velia was able to go into a store and pick out everything to her heart's delight with no restrictions – and to think – that everything she selected also went to the good of the orphanage!

The donors then dug and dug, then dug some more, in planting beds, added planting mix and planted the lovely plants and flowers. Ah! What beautiful gardens began to pop-up throughout the orphanage compound!

And the next day upon our arrival, we were delighted to find that after we'd left the orphanage the afternoon before, the children were so happy their home now had landscaping, they painted rocks they found on the orphanage grounds and surrounded plants with a circle of the hand-painted stones. Sister Velia told us that credit for the idea of painting the rocks and placing them around the plants was solely the children's – and they worked until long after dark – using flashlights and candles for light – painting the rocks and surrounding the plants with them so when donors arrived the next morning, we would all see the children's "thank you!" to us – in the form of their artwork.

Reading Room

At the end of the inner floral garden located across from the kitchen is a secluded, tranquil room that has come to serve as a reading room where the children may study and caregivers may relax, read or pray. Painted white years ago, the walls became dusty and somewhat blackened over time and much of the stucco had begun to peel off. After some minor restoration work, Donors gave it a fresh coat of 'icicle pink' paint that Sister Velia selected, added a bookshelf and installed carpet – a remnant that had been dropped off at the orphanage but until Tres Islas donors came, no one had taken time to install for them. The caregivers were so pleased with the room after donors painted it and installed the carpet, that Fr. Sioli, the Fund's Chaplain, saw caregivers sitting on the couch contently smiling and reciting the Rosary as we departed that day.

Window Replacement in the Boy's Bedroom

In keeping up with general repairs, last year the Fund paid \$150.00 to have the glass windows in the girls' bedroom replaced (due to heavy winds from the hurricane). This year, to replace all the windows in the boy's bedrooms (larger and more of them) the cost was \$550.00. In both cases, the glass windows were prudently replaced with Plexiglas so they will be less likely to break in future storms.

Basketball Court

The men and boy volunteers tackled the basketball court repairs with a vengeance. They tore down and replaced the dilapidated backboards, applied a coat paint and striping to the new backboards and installed new hoops and nets.

All the Roofs

As we wrote in last year's annual report, with the summer monsoon (rainy) season being just around the corner from the this year's Spring Mission Week, one of our projects would be to seal the roofs at Ciudad to stop water seepage into the children's bedrooms, dining room and other areas (much like we did at Fr. Tovar's Home for Boys in 2005 and Orfanatorio Mazatlan in 2006).

On the second day at Ciudad, the men climbed up on the roofs to seal them, only to quickly return a short while later to say, "You better come up on the roof and take a look – there really isn't any roofing to seal."

The roofing on the buildings was so badly deteriorated that grass and small trees were growing in cracks. In some places the roofing had deteriorated to the point it was paper thin or nonexistent. One of the donors present, a contractor from the U.S., said it was his recommendation that the roofing be completely replaced by a professional – and as soon as possible. Delaying the repairs would eventually lead to roof collapse and compromise the integrity of the walls below and could be dangerous for the children.

We asked Sister Velia if she knew when the roofs last received any repairs?

She said the last time any work was done on the roofs was when the orphanage was built – 38 years ago in 1970. She also said that last year when heavy rains came, water seeped into the girls' bedroom and the girls got water on them as they slept and water also seeped in the hallway between the girls' bedroom and dining room.

When we inquired why she didn't tell us about the problem, she replied, "Tres Islas donors do so much for us – they buy the children's food, provide their school supplies, shoes, backpacks and Christmas dinners – which we had no help with before Tres Islas came into our lives. We don't want to take advantage of your generosity."

We explained to Sr. Velia that she should feel comfortable letting Tres Islas know when there is a problem because we all love the children and her. With that, she bowed her head, got tears in her eyes, and gently said, "Gracias, gracias, Amigos" as she patted our hands.

Thanks to Enrique Rivera who works in the construction business in Mazatlan and is the brother-in-law of Gaudelia "Fella" Cruz Hernandez (Fella purchases the food on behalf of Tres Islas each week for each of the orphanages as well as all their school supplies and shoes) Enrique had the best roof contractor in Mazatlan come to the orphanage the next day to inspect the roof and provide an estimate.

Time was of the essence. In Mazatlan, with summer come the monsoon (heavy) rains quickly beginning toward the end of June. We knew the roof restoration project had to take place within two months or we risked the roofs deteriorating further and possibly collapsing. Within six weeks of notifying donors the job would take right at \$15,00000, the Fund raised all the money needed for the entire roof project thanks to the generosity of donors.

Additional roofing and structural repairs were made beyond the original estimate to ensure the new roofing would stop possible additional leaks and last even longer, bringing the total project cost to \$17,410.86.

In addition to the price paid to the contractor, there was going to be an additional 15% tax charged. Enrique talked the contractor into absorbing the 15% tax as a discount because the project was for the orphanage.

The new roofing warranty for all materials and labor is for 7 years, with a life expectancy of the roof approximately 15 years.

Thank you, all donors, who rushed to help with this project. Photos showing the finished project are included in the photo section and on the accompanying compact disk.

Upcoming Needs

Orfanatorio Mazatlan

Cristina Pena, director, has made an appeal to donors for help with a new orphanage she and the other board of directors want to found. There is no place in all of Mexico for teenage girls to find refuge who have been exposed to or forced-into sexual abuse, prostitution and even drugs, as a result

of that life-style. In recent years, a few of these girls found their way to Orfanatorio Mazatlan but as Cristina explains, and we agree with her, these girls have had their innocence erased and they need desperately to talk about their tortured experiences in order to help them heal. Placing them with innocent children who have not been exposed to this type of seedy behavior is not good because the innocent children hear and are exposed to information they do not need to be exposed to.

Cristina and her board of directors are willing to be responsible for these girls and as you can tell by how well the children at Orfanatorio Mazatlan are cared for and the quality of life the children have; Cristina and her board will provide the same for the teenage girls in the new orphanage they want to create. They are now searching for a bona fide home for the new orphanage. If they secure a home as they expect to do, they will house around 16 girls. They have the commitment of psychologists and psychiatrists to help the girls. They would very much appreciate the Fund's help feeding the girls and providing for their education – like we do for the other orphanages.

Additionally, projects that would provide painting, mattresses, bedding and appliances are needed. If you would like to help with this endeavor, please let us know or earmark your donations for them. We will keep you updated in the future as this develops.

Salvation Army Children's Home

Major Candi recently told us the children's home needs a new water heater, as theirs is no longer functioning. They also need shower curtains on the showers and doors on the bathrooms. We will spend time with her in December assessing additional orphanage needs. We would like to devote some of our upcoming Spring Mission Weeks to making improvements at this orphanage.

Father Tovar's Home for Boys Hogar San Pablo

Father Tovar, now, more-often-than not, remains frail in health. He continues to participate as much as possible in his boys' lives and remains assisted by Antonio in looking after the boys.

The new window in the boys' locker room has arrived. The mason work around it needs to be completed and then it will be installed – the cost was right at \$200.00 U.S. dollars.

The Fund is in the process of getting estimates to purchase new blankets, pillows and bedspreads for the boys' bedrooms and will do so by Christmas so the boys will be warm during the winter months. Their mattresses are still in good condition.

Please continue to pray for Fr. Tovar. As always, he sends his love and appreciation to everyone and expresses his gratitude for your loyal support of his boys in his accompanying thank you letter.

Ciudad de los Ninos Orphanage

One of the "big dreams" the nuns have is that one day the children and they will have a garden where they may grow some – if not a majority – of their own produce. In addition to aiding in their self-reliance, this is an excellent opportunity for the children to learn valuable gardening skills that will contribute to their well being now and after they have grown up.

Sister Velia has expressed an interest in learning about composting and how to use their kitchen waste (peelings and acceptable food scraps) to make compost and how to better prepare more garden area. During our December trip, we'll be visiting with her to firm up the details for our spring trip.

Prior to repairing the roofs, the plaster on the dining room walls was damaged from rain seeping through. The wall needs to be repaired and painted, as does the children's study room on the first floor.

In addition, Sister Velia would like a cascading waterfall to at least one of the inner gardens so the sounds of the gentle, flowing water will enhance the children's lives.

Our Next Spring Mission Week April 18 - 25, 2009

Although we accomplish much during our Spring Mission Week, everyone has a good time. There was constant conversation and laughter throughout the week as we “labored-in-love” at the orphanages. From planting gardens to helping children make their new beds, donors experience the fruits of their labors.

We thank all donors who could help and we invite everyone to join us for our next Spring Mission Week, which will be April 18 - 25, 2009. We encourage volunteers to arrive April 17th, as we'll start orphanage improvements and activities on the 18th.

We're frequently asked if there's a possibility of having too many people come on one trip. The answer is an emphatic, “No!” ☺ - we always need and want donor participation. Depending on the number of donors and the scope of improvements needed, in the past, donors have made improvements at two orphanages during one week.

This is your personal invitation to join other Tres Islas donors in the fun, reaping the rewards of helping the wonderful children!

If you'd like to participate in this coming year's trip April 18 - 25, 2009, please let us know. Donors are already signing up and everyone is welcome.

We promise you will:

- Experience a rewarding and memorable time.
- Interact one-on-one with the children - who'll be grateful for the time you share.
- Make a positive difference in the children's lives.
- Meet other donors who, like yourself, care about the children.
- Share smiles, laughter and the most wonderful “work” you'll know in one week.
- Want to return to participate in the children's lives again and again.
- Have time to enjoy beautiful Mazatlan and its delightful, friendly citizens.

Please join us! You're Invited!

An Accounting of Your Dollars and Cents

We provide donors the detailed accounting we do each year for every dollar and cent in the Fund's account because we feel we owe this level of detail to you. After all it's your money, not the Fund's. We steward your money for the benefit of the children and therefore, we must be accountable to you because we need and want your continued support. We are here to serve, to be good stewards.

We always strive to maintain at least **one year's operating reserve** to meet the children's needs for the upcoming 12-months.

While we have monies in the Fund's accounts to feed, educate and clothe the children in the four orphanages for the coming year, we are now seeking the donations needed for the next year. This way, we can commit to supporting the four orphanages beyond just the upcoming year.

All donations continue to be deposited in the Fund's account at Cheyenne-Laramie County Employees Federal Credit Union in Cheyenne, Wyoming. Their toll-free number, should you have questions, is 1-888-918-6476. While any of the wonderful associates there can help you, the person who works closest with the Fund on a daily basis is Tabitha.

General donations to the Fund this past year (October 29, 2007 - September 30, 2008) totaled \$88,343.82 (Of this, \$17,410.86 was specifically donated to repair the Ciudad de los Ninos roofs.). The previous year, \$59,209.78 was donated to the Fund.

Donations are deposited into the Fund's escrow account. From there, monies are either transferred into the grocery purchase account, as needed, into to the education classes account, education school supply account or construction account as specified by donors or into certificates of deposits (CDs) if more than adequate donations are on hand for a six month period and could be earning interest in the meantime.

At the end of each month, we transfer the amount needed for the upcoming month's groceries for the four orphanages from the escrow account into the grocery purchase account, keeping only the amount needed for a few weeks at a time in that account.

The Fund pays for the majority of orphanage purchases with a debit card; by check only when debit cards aren't accepted by vendors (in Mexico, this is still quite common) and lastly, by cash, only if a vendor doesn't have the capability of accepting debit cards or foreign checks (such as Teacher Gabino or an electrical repairman or plumber – again, often the case.)

In an effort to ensure debit cards are not compromised, by keeping only the upcoming amounts needed in the purchase accounts with the majority of money kept in escrow accounts or CDs, we minimize the possibility of an account being compromised – although the credit union has assured we would not be responsible if that occurred. Still, we do all we can to be prudent with the funds in the accounts and respectful of the credit union.

We obtain receipts for every transaction. Orphanage caregivers sign and stamp the receipts. We also have the orphanage directors sign and stamp the receipt accounting books, which we copy and send to you with each annual report.

The amount in the grocery escrow account on September 30, 2008 was \$26,623.29. On October 30, 2007, our last reporting date to you, there was \$23,136.96. Interest earned on this account the past year was \$176.69 and \$11.19 the previous year.

At the conclusion of this annual report – with the exception of the amount needed for the upcoming six-month supply of food for the orphanages – we'll transfer all money from the grocery escrow account into a sixth-month certificate of deposit to earn interest at a higher rate.

The amount in the grocery checking account on September 30, 2008 was \$1,113.68 compared to \$683.16 the previous year. Interest earned on this account this past year was \$11.01 and \$4.30 the previous year.

The construction fund account balance on September 30, 2008 was \$9,210.48 and \$1,209.70 last year. Specified deposits to the construction fund during this year's reporting period were \$33,184.63 and \$2,595.60 last year. Interest earned on this account this past year was \$17.17.

The September 30, 2008 balance in the Christopher Fund is \$3,220.32. Last year's balance, prior to purchasing last year's Christmas dinners and tree purchases, was \$2,813.62. Interest earned on this account this past year was \$11.70.

The September 30, 2008 balance in the Education Fund is \$3,053.25. Last year's balance was \$5063.69. Interest earned on this account this past year was \$106.59.

We ask for your help: please continue your donations to feed, clothe and educate these children. Your help is invaluable and needed. You make the positive difference in the children's lives. We cannot do it without you.

Next Year's Projections

Our biggest plea this year is to be able to continue to purchase the children's food at each of the four orphanages. We currently budget to purchase \$150.00 per week for the four orphanages although we purchase \$130.00 per week, for now, for Fr. Tovar's because they currently have less

than half the number of children as do the other orphanages. If the number does increase and it certainly could, it will become necessary to increase their food purchases to \$150.00 per week.

We also include them in our budget for school shoes, supplies, uniforms and backpacks because should Friends of Mexico be unable to make those purchases, we want to be ready to do so.

When you “do the math” here is how it works out:

\$150.00 per week for food

x 52 weeks per year

\$7,800.00 annually for food for each orphanage.

x 4 orphanages

\$31,200.00 for food for all four orphanages for one year.

divided by 91 children in all four orphanage

\$342.86 per child per year for food, or \$6.60 per week to feed one child.

Projections for food and school needs for each of the four orphanages during the coming year are as follows:

Item	Amount
Food	\$7,800.00
Christmas dinner	\$250.00
School supplies	\$625.00
School shoes	\$625.00
School uniforms	\$600.00
School backpacks	\$250.00
English/Trade classes	\$840.00
Hygiene & Health Care	<u>\$100.00</u>
Total for <u>each</u> orphanage	\$11,090.00

If Friends of Mexico continues to purchase the school supplies, school shoes, school uniforms and school backpacks for Fr. Tovar’s Home for Boys, the amount to support that orphanage for the year will be \$8,890.00.

Total projected expenditures for all four orphanages for the coming year, not including construction or Christmas trees, is \$44,360.00.

Please refer to the attached summary spreadsheet for each orphanage’s projected expenditures for the coming year.

Dividing the projected \$44,360.00 by the 91 children in the four orphanages at this time, amounts to \$487.48 annually, or \$1.34 per youngster per day, to provide nourishing food, school supplies, shoes, uniforms and backpacks for each child and English classes for two children from each orphanage. That is not very much money to help children have a nourishing, well-educated, productive and safe quality life for an entire year!

The goal of the Fund has always been to provide the type of life to each child in the orphanages that will help them grow up to be well-nourished, healthy, educated, motivated and positive-contributing members of society. We strive to be prudent in our purchases and not extravagant. We value your trust and your donations. Without you, the children would not have the quality of life they now do.

The Fund operates on a “donations received basis” meaning, we never know from year-to-year how much we will be able to provide the orphanages each year. We have always trusted in the Lord to touch the hearts of donors to provide and we will continue to do so.

The Christopher Fund

Named in honor of young Christopher Jemio from Pennsylvania, who along with his sweetheart, Eileen, sought-out and volunteered at Ciudad de los Ninos in the summer of 2005, Christopher dreamed of returning to the orphanage to help; however, he passed away unexpectedly on December 25, 2005.

Touched by Christopher's gentle soul in traveling to Mazatlan and volunteering at the orphanage, the Fund has permanently named the Christmas dinner account "The Christopher Fund" to honor him.

If you'd like to help provide Christmas dinners (\$250.00 per orphanage) and/or Christmas trees for the children in any of the four orphanages, please designate your check for the Christopher Fund where you'll make many children happy on this most special of Mexican holidays and keep the memory of a kind young man named Christopher Jemio, who had a dream of going to Mexico to make a positive difference in an orphanage, alive forever.

See the Benefits

We invite you to visit the children any time you'd like. Part of the beauty of the Tres Islas Orphanage Fund is you're always welcome to participate in the children's lives. So donors may also meet one another, we especially invite donors to gather in Mazatlan each Christmas to see the benefits your donations have accomplished over the years. You'll enjoy Christmas dinners with the children as you spend time with them and see the great difference your contributions make. Please let us know how we may help as you make your plans. December 21 through January 3 is a good time for you to plan your visit.

Please be sure to sign-up for the Fund's next Spring Mission Week April 18 - April 25, 2009. As you'll see in the accompanying compact disk, the rewards are many, true friendships are forged and at the end of the week, we're sure you'll be glad you came.

The presentation on this year's enclosed compact disk is in *Windows Movie Maker* format, which should load automatically and play on your computer. If you need the presentation in a different format (DVD or VCR to play on a television instead), please let us know. We want to be sure you can enjoy the many pictures of the children. Please share them with family, friends and others - such as your church and organizations with whom you're affiliated.

Tres Islas Facilitators

Lena and Cliff Brown - Extraordinaire

The Fund is proud to acknowledge, with deep and great amounts of gratitude, Mazatlan residents and Tres Islas Facilitators Lena and Cliff Brown, who again helped bring this year's restoration project at Ciudad de Los Ninos to fruition with their legwork, vast-amount of time devoted, calculation of estimates and making all advance arrangements including purchases and/or reserving goods so when donors arrive, everything is in order for them to begin their labors of love. The Fund is blest with Lena and Cliff's honest, loyal, knowledgeable, hard-working and dedicated presence day-in, day-out, month-after-month, year-after-year.

As an example of all that Lena and Cliff do in advance of the Spring Mission Week, this year they measured walls in the hallway and what would become Ciudad's reading room for paint and measured walls in the receiving room for the installation of bins. Then they took the measurements to

Home Depot to find the best paint, exact amount and proper size of bins to house the products that would be stored inside them.

Lena and Sister Velia made a list of all supplies the children use on a regular basis – from toothpaste and toothbrushes to shampoo and deodorant to school supplies, then Lena wrote the words in Spanish, translated them into English, emailed them to us and Tom made large, bilingual signs which now are on the front of each bin so visitors will know what is needed.

Lena and Cliff visited in-depth with Sister Velia to learn her desires about planting flowers and herbs in orphanage gardens to bring the grounds alive with foliage and valuable herbs to accent their food.

Lena and Cliff again took Sister Velia to Mazatlan's Home Depot (where they have permanently negotiated a discount on all purchases because they for Tres Islas and the orphanages – thank you, Home Depot! – we appreciate your kindness!). Then Sister Velia selected the color to paint the orphanage reading room – a pretty pink– and they arranged to have the paint ready to pick up the day we arrived so we could begin work. Then they helped Sister Velia select flowers and herbs for the garden that donors would purchase and plant.

Additionally, Lena and Cliff let us know when the boys at Fr. Tovar's are ready for additional schooling, Lena teaches the boys and the nuns English each week and they coordinate all projects and needs for the Fund at Fr. Tovar's. Lena travels to all the stores in Mazatlan – on her time and dime – to acquire estimates and examine the quality of products before making any recommendations for purchases.

Once again, we humbly say, there is not adequate space in our annual reports to express our appreciation to Lena and Cliff for the time and effort they devoted bringing and all projects they are called on to help with to fruition. They are an intricate part of Tres Islas and all the children. In addition, they also sponsor an “Angel Tree” at Mazatlan's Cannucks Restaurant just before Christmas. They place the name of each boy at Fr. Tovar's, their sizes and wish list for the boys to be “adopted” for the holidays to receive presents. Thank you from the center of our hearts, Lena and Cliff – you are more valued and appreciated than we may say, show or pay tribute to you. We love you!

Gaudelia “Fella” and Jasmine Cruz Hernandez - Tres Islas Volunteer of the Year 2008

We always do our best to provide you the most detailed and accountable information for your donations because we value you and your contributions. Without you, the Fund would not exist.

The food, school supplies and shoes for all four orphanages continue to be purchased by Gaudelia “Fella” Cruz Hernandez and her lovely daughter, Jasmine. Were it not for their dedication, generosity, love and good-heartedness, the Fund could not operate as it does. Each week they spend many hours tending to the grocery shopping needs of the orphanages and maintaining accurate records for verification to each of you. Additionally, they spend countless hours helping purchase the children's school shoes, school supplies, school back packs and uniforms for each of the children.

Fella has been with us from the beginning of the Fund. When Donelle received a newspaper assignment in 1987 to “photograph the children of Mexico” and wanted to visit an orphanage, it was Fella who took her to Orfanatorio Mazatlan – where Donelle discovered there was little food and her “assignment” changed from taking photos of some awfully cute kids to that of raising the awareness and donations to help the children in Mazatlan's orphanages. For 21 years, Fella has remained an intricate part of Tres Islas and that is why she was selected to be this year's honored volunteer.

Imagine buying more than 75 pairs of school shoes, uniforms, backpacks and coordinating purchasing enough school supplies for an entire year for more than 75 children! Whew! But yes! That is exactly what Fella and Jasmine do.

In 2007 we created the Tres Islas Volunteer of the Year – or in some cases because the recipients may be a couple – then Tres Islas Volunteers of the Year.

Last year’s recipients were Helen and Bill from Michigan and Bucerias, Nayarit, Mexico who were two of the Fund’s first donors and who have loyally helped the children for over a decade.

Bob and Janet Schmitt, Cristina Pena, Director of Orfanatorio Mazatlan and Donelle and Tom Manton presented this year’s award and plaque to Fella. In the words of Cristina, “We could not have and be what we are without you and we honor you for honoring us each day with your love and devotion to the children!”

The plaque is a traveling one to be passed from donor-to-donor for one year at a time. Each recipient’s name is added on the back of the prestigious award. Please see the accompanying photos in this year’s CD of Fella receiving her award – she was very surprised!

Annually we proclaim, yet, we cannot say it enough: if there are angels on earth, then Fella and Jasmine, who always steps up to help when Fella has another commitment, are surely two.

Bob and Janet Schmitt – Mazatlan’s *Pacific Pearl* Citizens of the Year 2008

The Fund continues to be blessed by Bob and Janet Schmitt, winter residents of Mazatlan each year from November through May. While in Mazatlan, Bob and Janet are “on call” to help Fella and Jasmine purchase the food each week, often take children to dinner on their birthdays (as part of Bob and Janet’s donations), purchase piñatas and cakes for the children on special days such as birthdays or Christmas, and participate in the children’s lives. Additionally, Janet and Bob oversee the construction on orphanage projects occurring before the spring trips and write the checks for work completed. This is such a big help!

Janet organizes the Fund’s “Adopt-a-Child-for-Christmas” at the Salvation Army Children’s Home. Bob and Janet take photos of the children and record the children’s clothing and shoe sizes. They post the children’s pictures and needs for winter residents and visitors to “adopt.” They collect all the gifts, wrap those that are not wrapped, buy treats and take any one who would like to participate to the orphanage to share in the children’s Christmas. As you have seen over the years and in the accompanying photos, the children are thrilled to receive such lovely gifts.

If you’d like to sponsor a child for Christmas, we encourage you to do so! We’ll email you the picture of “your” child and the gifts you bought them if you can’t make it to Mazatlan for the Christmas party. Both Lena and Cliff and Bob and Janet do an outstanding job of making Christmas special for each child and are to be commended for their painstaking efforts.

Bob and Janet also represent the Fund in meeting those of you who visit Mazatlan when we aren’t there and take you on tours of the orphanages.

They are our board advisors and “lightening rods” – meaning, when we need advice, they are always there for us.

Additionally, Bob and Janet work with The Vineyard “La Vina” Christian Fellowship and its dedicated pastor, Fred Collom of Mazatlan. Their ministry connects the English and Spanish-speaking communities, devoting itself to bettering the lives of those less fortunate than they are.

Each week, Janet and Bob, a group of church volunteers and visitors prepare and take food to the poorest of the poor who live at Mazatlan’s city dump (which should not be confused with a modern landfill in the states) in makeshift cardboard housing.

Here the poor scavenge for even the smallest of items, hoping they might find anything that has been discarded by others as trash, which they may sell for a peso or two.

Bob, Janet and those who come on the tour, handout the hearty sandwiches they made, a piece of fruit and a bottle of water to each person living at the dump. On the tours, Bob and Janet take people through other needy outlying areas where La Vina Church also has a positive impact such as

building first-time schools, community centers, churches, feeding the poor and providing free dental care for the poor.

This past year, Mike Veselik, publisher of Mazatlan's *Pacific Pearl* News Magazine created the 'Citizen of the Year' award to honor a person or persons for their outstanding and selfless commitment to improving the lives of the people and the community of Mazatlan. In January 2008, the *Pearl* began soliciting names for the award and testimonies why the person or persons being nominated should be the recipients. The Fund nominated Janet and Bob.

In April 2008, Janet and Bob Schmitt were named Mazatlan's Pacific Pearl Citizens of the year.

In awarding Janet and Bob the distinguished honor, Mike Veselik wrote that he wanted to set the bar high for the award and he didn't have to look far to find everything the award represents in Janet and Bob Schmitt. Congratulations, Janet and Bob, you truly deserve and certainly, you have blest the lives of the children in the orphanages.

Please be sure and read the accompanying *Pacific Pearl* story honoring the Schmitts.

Charities of Mazatlan

In December and April, the Charities of Mazatlan held its bi-annual meetings. We founded the group to bring together all charitable organizations in Mazatlan twice a year to learn from one another who needs help, to share the scope of each others' endeavors so there is no duplication of efforts and help each other whenever possible.

Passages

Albert J. Savolskis

June 23, 1917 - November 3, 2008



The last time we saw the affable Mr. Savolskis was during the 2007 Spring Mission Week in Mazatlan. As the week wound down, with a big hug and equally big smile, he told us what a fine organization the Fund is and shared, that due to his health, he didn't know if he'd be able to make it back the next year but said he would be with us in spirit. As we drove off that night, Mr. Savolskis gave us a sweeping wave of his hand and one last smile as he turned and faded into the meaningful memories of that week and the Spring Mission Week the year before.

Mr. Savolskis was the beloved husband of 68 years of lovely Dorothy (Prokopovitsh) and the proud father of benevolent Dorothy "Dotty" (David) Wasik, Nancy (Jack) Funa, Lulu (William) Glenn and Sue (Russ) Wonsock. He was the brother of Victoria Savolskis, Josephine Senatt, Edward Savolskis, Eldona Sabo, Mildred Veslany and the late Alex, Willie and Peter Savolskis, Ruth Buby,

Pauline Zilner and Helen Dimperio; also survived by 15 grandchildren, 38 great-grandchildren and many nieces and nephews.

An accomplished man professionally, Mr. Savolskis was the founder of the Savolskis-Wasik-Glenn Funeral Home in Munhall, PA after working as a funeral director at the Prokopovitch Funeral Home for 20 years. Mr. Savolskis was a funeral director for 62 years of his life. He was the first president of the West Mifflin Lions Club and a former Steel Valley School Board Director. He was a Navy veteran who served in World War II. He was a member of the Thompson Club AARP, Homestead Elks, Slavs and Sokol Club. He was a founding member of the Lithuanian Country Club of Pleasant Hills and was the heart and soul of the Wayne Boone Family Mountain Retreat in Somerset, PA. His 91 years were filled with devotion to family, friends and business and a love of travel. He had a special love for Mexico and its people and traveled with his beloved Dorothy to Mexico, and Mazatlan as often as possible.

Our hearts go out to Albert Savolskis' wonderful family as we honor this fine gentleman for his life of service to all whom he encountered, including the Tres Islas Orphanage Fund, for which we are most grateful.

Mazatlan's *Pacific Pearl* News Magazine

When you're away from Mazatlan, be sure and read Mazatlan's best news magazine, the *Pacific Pearl*, online at www.pacificpearl.com. When you're in Mazatlan, pick up a copy - it's free!

Mike and Maricha Veselik have been the "eyes and ears" between the English speaking living and visiting community and Mazatlan for 15 years and are steadfast supporters of the Tres Islas Orphanage Fund - usually publishing at least one story about the Fund and the children each year. Thank you, Mike and Maricha for helping the Tres Islas Orphanage Fund and all Mazatlan charities!

Roseburg, Oregon *News-Review* Newspaper

Thank you, Vicki Menard, *News-Review* editor and John Sowell, *News-Review* staff writer, for the heart-warming, Thanksgiving Day 2007, front-page article you wrote about the endeavors of the Tres Islas Orphanage Fund and wonderful children in the four orphanages God blesses us with helping and for your follow-up story May 19, 2008. Thank you for the hours you spent preparing and writing the stories and for the many people your words reached.

For those donors that didn't read these newspaper articles, the first Thanksgiving Day 2007 story and editorial are available on-line at www.nrtoday.com/article/20071122/NEWS/71121077 and www.nrtoday.com/article/20071123/EDITORIALS/71123023, respectively.

EPUERTO, Staples and Imagistics

Thank you to the following companies for their support:

- We continue to give a big "hats-off" to EPUERTO, the Fund's Internet provider and web page host. You can visit EPUERTO at www.epuerto.com
- Staples of Roseburg, Oregon for providing the paper on which you read this annual report.
- Imagistics Copy Center of Roseburg, Oregon for your discounted copy service used to produce this annual report.

Thanks to each of you, for twenty-one years and looking ahead. . .

In closing. . .because of you, the Tres Islas Orphanage Fund is heading into its 22nd year serving the children. We ask for your continued support, please. Your on-going help continues to make positive differences in the lives of the many children who are equally grateful to you.

One hundred percent of all Tres Islas donations go toward the betterment of the children with nothing ever taken out for administration, salaries or stipends.

Your Tres Islas Orphanage Fund donations are 100% tax deductible because all donations truly go to the children and the IRS recognizes the Fund as a 501(c) (3) charitable organization.

May our Lord bless you and yours as you have blessed the children the Fund humbly serves on your behalf.

With gratitude,

Donelle Manton, Founder

Tom Manton, Vice-President

Enclosures - extras - stuff to read - lots of it - just like always! 😊 😊