

# Tres Islas Orphanage Fund

3717 Monroe Avenue

Cheyenne, WY 82001

Serving Mazatlan, Mexico's Orphanages Since 1987

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IRS Federal Identification Number: 84 -1408725

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Please visit the Fund's website at: [www.orphanagefunds.org](http://www.orphanagefunds.org)

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Gaudelia "Fella" Cruz Hernandez 982-25-80

## Annual Report 2009



**Flor and Dulce**

**Orfanatorio Mazatlan**

**In their words, to each of you. . .**

*Hello, Tres Islas Donors,* My name is Flor Maria Aguirre Rodriquez. I am grateful, with this little note, for all that you do for us. Thanks to you, we are able to study, we have clothes and food daily and we are very happy because you are always at our side, good and kind angels.

I'm studying graphic design in a college close to the orphanage. I am in the fifth semester. I hope to graduate in July 2011. I like photography and I would like to work in a newspaper or magazine.

Thank you so much for your help! *With love, Flor*

**TO TRES ISLAS ORPHANAGE FUND DONORS - THANK YOU FOR THE SUPPORT IN EVERYTHING!**

I am 16 years old and I go to the first grade of high school. The classes that I like most in school are computer science and chemistry. I would like to be a psychologist but I would like to study computer science too.

Also I want to add that I am very grateful with all of you for the great support that you have offered to me all these years with my schooling, school shoes, uniforms, backpacks, with food every day and the Christmas dinners.

Last December I traveled to Italy as an exchange student. It was a fantastic trip! It was great and very fun!! I learned many things, for example: culture, language, food, music and art. I liked the experience very much.

Thank you for my English lessons that helped me communicate on my journey.

God bless you and thank you for everything!! – DULCE E. SOBERANES GONZALEZ

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

**November 15, 2009**

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

Thanks to your loyal support, we are blest to greet you in our annual report each year with words from youngsters in the orphanages whom your donations have helped.

Last year, Isabel joined Dulce in greeting you. Today as we write this annual report, Isabel has returned to Mazatlan from being an exchange student near San Francisco and is working on the ferry boat that takes travelers from Mazatlan to LaPaz in Baja California. Thanks to your support of her over the years - nourishing food, her school needs and opportunities such as English classes - when it came time for Isabel to leave the orphanage, she left with good skills, a good work-ethic and is self-sufficient.

Dulce has returned home after her meaningful exchange student experience in Italy and is back in school in Mazatlan continuing her studies.

Isabel, Dulce and Flor are the perfect examples of what Tres Islas is all about - thanks to the positive influence your donations and support provide.

This year, as you see the healthy, shining faces of Flor and Dulce and read their words to you, we hope you may know through them the gratitude from each of the children, like Isabel, Flor and Dulce, for whom you are truly making the difference needed in each of their lives.

Thank you and God bless you.

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In the summer of 2008, Cristina Pena, president of Orfanatorio Mazatlan, the first orphanage in Mazatlan and the first orphanage the Tres Islas Orphanage Fund began to help in 1987, asked if Tres Islas donors would consider participating with her and a group of Mazatlan ladies in the formation of a fifth orphanage. It would be the first of its kind in all of Mexico, dedicated to rescuing girls who had been forced into prostitution or sexually abused in their own homes. The orphanage would be given an appropriate name, "FloreSer" - which means to blossom, to bloom. No one hesitated. How could we not help?

In our annual report to you last year, we presented the idea. Thanks to all of you stepping-up to say, "Yes! We'll help!" in April 2009, Tres Islas donors who came on our Spring Mission Week met the first eight girls rescued at FloreSer's temporary new home as we each shared why we are part of Tres Islas. Then the girls joined us as we made improvements to their temporary home for two years while a permanent home could be found.

In the typical Tres Islas donor-style we've come to know and respect, Tres Islas contributors stepped forward to help bring a much-needed respite to girls in desperate need.

From donations to purchase their weekly food, to youngster Laney from Utah raising \$600.00 to purchase the girls' lockers, to a special education grant that purchased the girls' first school books and supplies, to purchasing their refrigerator, donors answered the call. It could not have happened without each of you. THANK YOU!

And so, as the Tres Islas Orphanage Fund begins its twenty-third year, you are supporting 123 children in five Mazatlan orphanages. Thanks to your donations, the children continue to receive nourishing food each day, attend school wearing shoes that support their growing feet and school uniforms they're proud to wear with dignity. Thanks to your support, they have self-esteem and a sense of stability because they know you're there to support them.

The children know you genuinely care about their well being, which allows them to take pride in themselves and do their best in school.

Thanks to your support, from October 1, 2008 to September 30, 2009 (our annual reporting period) the Fund provided \$68,038.69 U.S. dollars for the benefit of the children; primarily for their food, educational needs and necessary orphanage repairs - compared with \$62,970.29 the previous year.

From the inception of the Fund 22 years ago in 1987, through the close of our 2009 annual reporting period on September 30, 2009, 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 \$332,497.88! Thank you, Tres Islas donors for your loyal support in helping the children!

As we begin a new year, we ask please, for your continued support of these children. The Fund couldn't do all 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.

Having the privilege to now include Orfanatorio FloreSer - Mazatlan's newest orphanage that is dedicated to rescuing girls who have been forced into prostitution or who have been sexually abused in their own homes - the Fund increased our budget by \$7,273.28 to take care of these girls who began arriving at the orphanage in March. (We'll share more about FloreSer and the girls later in this report).

We also received donations specifically designated to provide educational classes and purchase school supplies, new and updated school books for the children as well as school uniforms and shoes. The caregivers are always respectful of donors' contributions. School uniforms and shoes are reused until they no longer can be worn. Books are shared and passed down from child to child from one year to the next. Tres Islas donations are valued and respected by the caregivers and the children.

### **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 great-grandmother was once treasurer)  
Vice President: Mary de los Angeles Henderson
2. **Ejercito de Salvacion Hogar de Ninos (Salvation Army Children's Home)** (Served part-time by the Fund beginning in 1998 and full-time 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 Maria de Lourdes "Lulu" Ramirez Puga
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: (Outside Mexico): 0011526699823720 and 011526699816121  
Telephone/fax: (When dialing in or around Mazatlan) 982-37-20 and 981-61-21  
Executive Director: Padre Arnoldo Villa Peinado (who assumed responsibility for the boys with Father Tovar's death July 21, 2009)
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

5. **FloreSer** (Served full-time by the Fund beginning March 9, 2009)  
Heriberto Frias 1008, Colonia Centro  
Mazatlan, Sinaloa, Mexico  
Telephone: (When dialing outside Mexico): 011526699590909  
Directora: Gabriela Perez Jimenez Vice President: Cristina Pena Miranda

The lists (names, ages, clothes sizes, etc.) 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 directors of each orphanage for all the help you gave them this past year. The number of children in each orphanage fluctuates throughout the year depending on new arrivals or when children grow-up and leave the orphanages. As of this annual report, there are 123 youngsters in the five orphanages the Fund now serves. Last year at this time there were 91 children in the four orphanages. The increase in children is primarily due to the addition of FloreSer and new arrivals at Fr. Tovar's Home for Boys.

On some lists, are names of those who live at the orphanages who are past the age of 21, the typical age when most have graduated from college or trade school and have left the orphanage to begin life on their own. Here are four explanations - examples - why:

In the case of Elizabeth "Elle," who resides at Orfanatorio Mazatlan, and who is older than the other children, she 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 that left him permanently brain-damaged. Unable speak, Jesus communicates via his kind smiles and signing. He, too, is very much loved and included in all Ciudad activities and it will always be his home. Jesus Grande enjoys keeping the orphanage grounds well-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 frequently suffers from epilepsy. Saul has nowhere else to live. Saul is blest Fr. Tovar found him at a

young age and provided him a loving home. Two years ago 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! He looks forward to studying more this year.

### **Purchases**

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 \$68,038.69. Last year, total money allocated to support all four orphanages amounted to \$62,970.29.

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 2008, 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 of Fr. Tovar’s Home for Boys which had fewer children than the other orphanages. In March, girls began arriving at the newest orphanage the Fund serves, FloreSer. Because there are eight girls (mostly teenagers) at the orphanage, the Fund is purchasing \$75.00 per week for them.

Beginning October 1, 2009, the number of boys at Fr. Tovar’s increased to 29, so, the Fund increased their weekly purchasing amount to \$150.00 – the same as Orfanatorio Mazatlan, the Salvation Army Children’s Home and Ciudad de los Ninos. The orphanage caregivers are mindful of the amount they spend, type and quality of food they purchase for their youngsters. This speaks highly of the orphanage caregivers’ integrity – as is apparent with their careful and respectful purchases.

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

**Orfanatorio Mazatlan:** \$7,614.24 (Last year: \$7,629.88).

**Salvation Army Children’s Home:** \$7,461.89 (Last year: \$6,980.12).

**Father Tovar’s Home for Boys Hogar San Pablo:** \$6,570.54 (Last year: \$5,867.91).

**Ciudad de Los Ninos:** \$8,036.16 (Last year: \$7,360.39).

**FloreSer:** \$1,847.18 (Last year: None).

Total food purchased for all five orphanages this year: \$31,530.02 (Last year: \$27,838.31).

This year’s food purchases represent 65.56% of the Fund’s expenditures, excluding construction costs. (Last year’s food purchases represented 78.46% of the Fund’s expenditures, excluding construction costs).

## **Christmas Dinners ("The Christopher Fund") 2008**

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

**Orfanatorio Mazatlan:** \$245.55 (2007: \$230.93)

**Salvation Army Children's Home:** \$288.87 (2007: \$245.45).

**Father Tovar's Home for Boys Hogar San Pablo:** \$264.53 (2007: \$272.29).

**Ciudad de los Ninos:** \$282.80 (2007: \$231.00).

**FloreSer:** None - orphanage not in existence until March, 2009

## **Christmas Trees 2008**

**Orfanatorio Mazatlan:** \$29.95 (2007: \$33.17).

**Salvation Army Children's Home:** \$90.74 (Reusable, artificial tree) (2007: \$33.17).

**Father Tovar's Home for Boys Hogar San Pablo:** \$29.95 (2007: \$33.17).

**Ciudad de los Ninos:** \$94.55 (Reusable, artificial tree) (2007: \$33.17).

**Flore Ser:** None - orphanage not in existence until March, 2009

## **April 2009 Beach Barbecue Fiesta for All Orphanages**

Food purchased (hamburgers, hot dogs, chips, beans, buns, cakes, ice cream):  
\$342.10

(Donor specified donation). Previous year: \$498.02.

## **Education Funds**

Tres Islas has two funds related to education. One, the "Education School Supply Fund" purchases all school supplies (school study books, English books, paper, notebooks, pens, pencils, etc.), school shoes, school uniforms and backpacks to carry the children's books and supplies.

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

We need and encourage your donations, please, to each of these funds. It is one of Tres Islas' major goals that upon each youngster graduating from high school, he or she will go onto college or will have the enough English lessons, computer classes and/or tech/trade school classes for them to be able to enter the workforce - to be self-sufficient, capable of taking care of themselves and being contributing members of society.

This year, the Fund was grateful to receive donations specified for the Education School Supply Fund and Education Classes Fund that enabled us to purchase much-needed new uniforms, shoes, backpacks and school supplies beyond what we typically purchase as well as new schoolbooks and pay for school registration and tuition for the youngsters where needed. We are most-appreciative to have received these donations that permitted every child to start the school year with the supplies they needed and to take all the classes they want to study.

The Fund has also begun purchasing all school shoes, uniforms and backpacks for Fr. Tovar's Home for Boys. Previously Friends of Mexico purchased these items but they are no longer able to do so. Now, more than ever, the donations for education supplies and education classes are vital to providing the youngsters the best education possible.

With the addition of FloreSer Orphanage in March, most girls at this orphanage haven't received much of an education - if any. It's important to place them in the type of specialized school that provides one-on-one instruction, and allows them, for the first time in their lives, to receive the education they deserve and one where they have the opportunity learn at a pace that permits them to absorb what they are being taught. Because of this, and thanks again to the timely, specified donations that arrived, the Fund was able to enroll them in these schools - Instituto Cultural de Occidente, AC and ICS. Thank you so much for the support of this vital area!

### **School Supplies**

If new school items aren't needed at the beginning of a school year due to their being in good enough condition from the previous year to reuse, 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 Supplies, Shoes, Uniforms Backpacks and Education Classes**

#### **Orfanatorio Mazatlan**

School supplies: \$3,067.63 - incl. \$2,584.00 for school books (Last year: \$533.17- no school books).

School shoes: \$477.37 (Last year: \$544.38)

School uniforms: \$1,444.90 (Last year: \$403.65).

Backpacks: \$188.92 (Last year: \$248.21).

Education classes: \$449.32 (Last year: None)



Total purchases this year for Orfanatorio Mazatlan for school supplies, shoes, uniforms and backpacks: \$5,628.14 (Last year: \$1,729.41).

### **Salvation Army Children's Home**

School supplies: \$352.67 (Last year: \$401.32).

School shoes: \$422.25 (Last year: \$605.68).

School uniforms: \$526.80 (Last year: \$500.83).

Backpacks: \$105.41 (Last year: \$255.36).

Total purchases this year for the Salvation Army Children's Home for school supplies, shoes, uniforms and backpacks: \$1,407.13 (Last year: \$1,763.17).

### **Father Tovar's Home for Boys Hogar San Pablo**

School supplies: Purchased by Friends of Mexico (Last year: purchased by Friends of Mexico).

School Shoes: \$421.93 (Last year: purchased by Friends of Mexico).

School Uniforms: \$997.84 (Last year: purchased by Friends of Mexico).

Backpacks: \$184.72 (Last year: purchased by Friends of Mexico).

Education Classes: \$143.97 (Last year: \$521.43).

Total purchases this year for Father Tovar's Home for Boys Hogar San Pablo for school shoes, uniforms, backpacks and education classes: \$1,748.46 (Last year: 521.43).

### **Ciudad de los Ninos**

School supplies: \$499.54 (Last year: \$877.79).

School shoes: \$490.74 (Last Year: \$544.45).

School uniforms: \$1,473.14 (Last year: \$694.49).

Backpacks: \$187.60 (Last year: \$231.62).

Total purchases this year for Ciudad de los Ninos for school supplies, uniforms and backpacks: \$2,651.02. (Last year: \$2,348.35).

### **Flore Ser**

School supplies: \$356.95 - incl. school books (Last year: None).

School shoes: \$89.30 (Last year: None).

School uniforms: \$80.30 (Last year: None).

Backpacks: \$113.07 (Last year: None).

Education classes - tuition and registration: \$845.58 (Last year: None)

Total purchases this year for FloreSer for school supplies, uniforms and backpacks: \$1,485.20 Last year: None - orphanage not in existence until March, 2009

Total school supplies, uniforms and backpacks purchased for all orphanages: \$9,549.69 (Last year: \$4,146.44).

Total school supplies, uniforms and backpacks purchased represent 19.85% of the Fund's expenditures, not including construction (Last year: 11.69% of the Fund's expenditures).

Total school shoes purchased for all orphanages: \$1,901.59. (Last year: \$1,694.51). School shoes purchased represent 3.95% of the Fund's expenditures, not including construction (Last year: 4.78% of the Fund's expenditures).

Total education classes purchased for all orphanages: \$1,438.87 (Last year: \$521.43). Education classes represent 2.99% of the Fund's expenditures, not including construction. (Last year: 1.47%)

School supplies represent 8.83% of the Fund's expenditures. Last year: 5.11%.  
School shoes represent 3.95% of the Fund's expenditures. Last year: 4.78%.  
School uniforms represent 9.40% of the Fund's expenditures. Last year: 4.51%.  
School backpacks represent 1.62% of the Fund's expenditures. Last year: 2.07%.  
Education Classes (Tech/English classes/tuition/registration) represents 2.99% of the Fund's expenditures. Last year: 1.47%.

This year, all school related items (school supplies, shoes, uniforms, backpacks and education classes represent 26.79% of the Fund's expenditures. Last year: 17.94%.

### **Christmas 2008**

Christmas 2008 came to the children in a very big way. So big, that Cristina Pena, Director of Orfanatorio Mazatlan, said this was the biggest Christmas the children had ever experienced.

Donors who selected their contributions go to Tres Islas' "Christopher Fund" - the fund designated to purchase the children's Christmas dinners each year, provided each orphanage bountiful Christmas dinners once again with all the trimming! Named in honor of Christopher Jemio, a kind-hearted young man from Pennsylvania who volunteered at Ciudad de los Ninos, Christopher died of a brain aneurysm on Christmas day, 2005. The following year, Christopher's mother donated \$250.00 in Christopher's honor, to provide Christmas dinner for the children at Ciudad. It was only natural to honor this sweet young man who had a heart for children in orphanages, that we create a fund so all children in the orphanages would always have a bountiful Christmas dinner. Christopher's good mother, Teresa Jemio, kindly heads the Christopher Fund. If you would like to honor the life of a very special young man who enjoyed helping the children in orphanages and provide these children a traditional Christmas dinner, please remember the Christopher Fund when making your Tres Islas donations.

In September 2008, we received a phone call from a family in Utah - Kim, Rici, Spencer, Mike, Laney and Abbie - who wanted to purchase a Christmas present for

each child in each orphanage! All we needed to do was provide the list of names, genders and ages and they'd do the rest. And did they ever! Not only did they invite their kind family, church members and friends to participate - which they all joyfully did - this wonderful family also wrapped each gift very beautifully - then placed over 100 gifts - including those for the caregivers at each orphanage - in a haul trailer and trucked all the presents from Utah to Mazatlan, then presented each gift to every child in the orphanages complete with a big hug! Because husband Rici speaks fluent Spanish and English, he made a big hit with each child as he shared personal insights to the children about the people who care about them and purchased the gifts his loving family gave to them.

At the same time last Christmas, another wonderful family, this time from Idaho - Brett, Vickie, their children and extended family members - contacted the Fund wanting to bring a special Christmas to one of the orphanages. They chose Ciudad de los Ninos and the children at Ciudad couldn't have been happier to receive new towels, undergarments, shirts, barrettes for the girls' hair and makeup that this kind family selected and then presented to each of the 40 youngsters. The children were thrilled with their gifts and so happy with the time this kind family spent with them. The day was topped off with all the pizza the children could eat - purchased at Domino's Pizza - who always provides a nice discount to the Tres Islas Orphanage Fund and where every day is "two pizzas for the price of one" for the children Tres Islas serves thanks to the generosity of Domino's Pizza.

Thanks to you all for hosting a "VERRRRYYY MEERRRRRY CHRISTMAS!" for the children!

### **Construction Fund**

Improvements to the children's homes, the orphanages, are made by specified donations. Most improvements take place during the Fund's annual Spring Mission Week, which traditionally begins the first Friday after Easter. We invite everyone to join next year's trip and all the fun!

Spring Mission Week 2010 will begin Saturday, April 10<sup>th</sup> and conclude Friday, April 16<sup>th</sup>. We encourage everyone to arrive by Friday, April 9<sup>th</sup> and depart Saturday, April 17<sup>th</sup>.

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

### **Orfanatorio Mazatlan**

Orphanage improvements this year: \$4,129.75 (including foreign transaction fees assessed for use of the credit card). Last year: \$5,262.01.

- † \$960.23 - Memory boards to hang behind each child's bed so they may post their report cards, favorite photos, post cards and letters and have a

- † \$625.18 - Construct a storage room for orphanage supplies
- † \$352.10 - Repair the 12'-high outer east and north walls (that serve as a fence around the orphanage).
- † \$627.49 - Paint and painting supplies for donors to paint the outer front wall of the orphanage and the storage room during our 2009 Spring Mission Week.
- † \$423.05 - Receiving room bins (to storage school items, personal hygiene items, socks, shoes and other items pertinent to the daily needs of the orphanage and children.)
- † \$11.80 - Laminating receiving room bin labels in English and Spanish
- † \$103.70 - One-fifth the cost for a power washer (donor specified to use at all the orphanages)

### **Salvation Army Children's Home**

Orphanage improvements totaled \$3,746.01(including foreign transaction fees assessed for use of the credit card). (Last year: none).

- † \$244.00 - Two commercial-grade (400 lb. load capacity) garment racks with 4" industrial-strength swivel casters
- † \$452.02 - Purchase paint/supplies to paint the boys' dormitory, receiving room, kitchen
- † \$808.62 - Receiving room bins
- † \$383.47 - Receiving room shelves
- † \$92.40 - Receiving room labels, lamination, Velcro for adhesiveness
- † \$292.54 - Water heater and water heater connections
- † \$33.20 - Shower curtains for the children's showers
- † \$32.85 - Two ceiling fans - kitchen areas
- † 380.35 - Install water heater; parts, labor: kitchen sink faucets, kitchen drain, dormitory bathroom shower heads, installation, shower drains
- † \$1,027.37 - Floats for water storage tanks and installation, repairs to non-functioning cistern, new pump, installation
- † \$103.70 - One-fifth the cost for a power washer (donor specified to use at all the orphanages)
- † \$63.00 - Kites for all the children to have kites to fly with donors

## Fr. Tovar's Home for Boys. .Hogar San Pablo

Orphanage improvements totaled \$3,185.59 (including foreign transaction fees assessed for use of the credit card). (Last year: \$413.01).

- † \$59.09 - Padlocks for boys' lockers
- † \$147.50 - Window repairs in boys' bedroom
- † \$211.64 - Bedspreads for all boys
- † \$64.28 - Pillows for all boys
- † \$75.60 - Blankets for all boys
- † \$31.23 - Dowels for curtain rods (Curtains were made and donated by LauraM, a Tres Islas donor)
- † \$909.52 - Receiving room shelves, bins, kitchen vegetable cart
- † \$4.57 - English classroom bathroom toilet seat
- † \$364.19 - English classroom window repairs
- † \$11.91 - Orphanage cleaning supplies: mops, buckets
- † \$792.87 - Paint, painting supplies, step-ladder for Spring Mission Week to paint English classroom, boys' locker room, receiving room
- † \$14.54 - Locker room mirror
- † \$52.55 - English classroom storage shelves
- † \$9.60 - Laminating receiving room bin labels in English and Spanish
- † \$103.70 - One-fifth the cost for a power washer (donor specified to use at all the orphanages)
- † \$15.28 - Plants for gardens
- † \$105.27 - Painting and garden supplies
- † \$164.48 - Receiving room supplies - stocking of bins with personal hygiene items
- † \$15.07 - Flowers in memory of Tres Islas donor Thomas O'Leary who supported the boys
- † \$19.96 - Light fixture for locker room

## Ciudad de los Ninos

Orphanage improvements totaled \$5,362.28 (including foreign transaction fees assessed for use of the credit card). (Last year: \$21,746.97).

- † \$227.72 - Donor-specified electric bill payment
- † \$2,978.54 - Donor-specified donation to paint 28-passenger transport bus, misc. engine repairs and new tires
- † \$108.50 - Bedspread material so caregivers could sew new bedspreads for youngsters in anticipation of the arrival of the new mattresses Tres Islas donors would provide
- † \$1,267.56 - New mattresses for the children's beds
- † \$50.00 - Construction repair/final roof inspection

- † \$7.14 – Laminating receiving room bin labels in English and Spanish
- † \$103.70 – One-fifth the cost for a power washer (donor specified to use at all the orphanages)
- † \$205.16 – Plants for gardens
- † \$174.67 – Paint for outer wall of orphanage
- † \$126.97 – Storage bins for construction/maintenance equipment
- † \$75.72 – Sophia’s Garden plaque – specified donation

### **FloreSer**

Orphanage improvements totaled \$3,523.18(including foreign transaction fees assessed for use of the credit card). (Last year: none).

- † \$153.33 – Receiving room shelves
- † \$360.58 – Receiving room storage bins
- † \$276.85 – Window iron work cleaning and priming for painting
- † \$63.00 – Window repairs
- † \$82.31 – Repair patio wall
- † \$52.38 – Repair front (outer) wooden wall
- † \$103.70 – 1/5 the cost (attributed to each orphanage) for a power washer whose purchase was donor specified to use at all the orphanages
- † \$448.43 – Paint and painting supplies for Spring Mission Week
- † \$1,148.59 – Purchase of lockers for girls’

### **Appliances**

**Orfanatorio Mazatlan:** 20 fans for use throughout orphanage: \$998.01. (Last year: None).

**Salvation Army Home for Children:** Refrigerator: \$500.00 (Last year: None).

A used (but brand new in appearance and quality) stainless steel refrigerator was purchased for the Salvation Army Children’s Home for \$500.00 by a cash donation from two Tres Islas donors present during the Spring Mission Week 2009.

**Father Tovar’s Home for Boys Hogar San Pablo:** None. (Last year: \$311.55).

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

**FloreSer:** Refrigerator: \$426.70; water dispenser: \$162.37; water filtration system \$220.89.

### **Tres Islas Spring Mission Weeks**

Forty-two inspired donors came to Mazatlan for the Fund’s fifth annual Spring Mission Week to upgrade the children’s homes, the orphanages, spend time with the children and their 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 projects.

The week began with 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 – *really* big! – circle on the beach 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 children from all five orphanages holding hands with donors, caregivers and one another on the beach just steps away from the aqua-colored waters of the Sea of Cortez that sunny Sunday and seeing the smiles on their faces as Fr. Joe prayed for them was a heart-warming, rewarding sight. After Fr. Joe’s prayer-in-the-round concluded, the children enjoyed a lot of delicious barbecue and all the desserts their tummies could hold!

After lunch, the donors and children shared time together on the beach playing, swimming, building sandcastles and digging in the sand.

And once again, orphanage caregivers enjoyed an afternoon of relaxation, taking a much-needed and well-deserved break at the beach.

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

In conjunction with the Spring Mission Week, throughout the donors’ time there, each of the orphanages were provided pizza or homemade Mexican food and cake fiestas and Orfanatorio Mazatlan was provided a tamale fiesta – all by specified donations.

### **Spring Mission Week 2009 – What Donors Accomplished**

Spring Mission Weeks could not be accomplished without each of you, your kind donations that allow making improvements to the children’s homes possible, coming to Mazatlan to spend time with the children in activities and volunteer at the orphanages making the improvements and verifying how your donations are being stewarded. We thank you each sincerely for the support you give to the construction fund, your donations, time and efforts, to make all of this possible. Visitors to the orphanages tell

us that Tres Islas' sponsored orphanages are the most up-to-date, positive and progressive orphanages they have ever visited – thanks to each and all of you.

Before each Spring Mission Week begins, several months of planning and preparation takes place to ensure we accomplish the goals established - meeting the needs of the children – and provide each volunteer with a life-time memory.

We are grateful to and proud to give credit for a large part of the planning, estimates and purchases to Tres Islas facilitator Lena Brown of Mazatlan, who each year devotes countless hours volunteering to make all of the goodness happen during Spring Mission Weeks, and then throughout the year when additional items break, need fixed or replacing and at Christmas time, helping organize Christmas parties and making sure each detail is met – including that all the lights on the Christmas tree light up as they should! Thank you Lena Brown for being the kind, generous and devoted volunteer that you are to the children. Truly, you are the best and we love you!

So, wonderful donors, as you read about the improvements below, please give yourselves a pat on the back for all you have done. It truly could not and would not happen without each of you.

## **Orfanatorio Mazatlan**

### **Receiving Room**

It doesn't take Martha Stewart to tell the orphanage caregivers how organization around the home equates to time-savings. To improve caregivers' efficiency, donors created a receiving room at Orfanatorio Mazatlan complete with shelving and clear, plastic bins so items are readily available and when low, they can alert us they need more or share with visitors by simply showing them the bins, what supplies – from personal hygiene to socks are needed.

### **Storage Room**

There was no place to store items such as fans during winter, baby cribs when there are no babies in the orphanage, donated goods waiting to be used, etc. Thanks to donors, there is now a big storage room with a white tile floor and ceiling lights for the caregivers to safely keep items tucked away for future use.

### **Completion of Outer Wall**

This year we completed restoration, sealing and painting the east and north outer walls surrounding Orfanatorio Mazatlan. In 2008 we completed the southern wall. While aesthetically pleasing with its red and white paint, the 12-foot high wall serves as a barrier that keeps the children safe inside and where their playground is located for them to run, jump and safely play.

## **Salvation Army Children's Home**

The Salvation Army Children's Home is located on the north end of Mazatlan in the "suburb" of Venadillo, one of the municipality of Mazatlan's poorest areas. While



the Children's Home accepts orphans and has had orphans over the years, most of the children who are there on a regular basis have one or both parents living. However, the parents of these children are so very poor or have other insurmountable challenges that they can't take care of the children as they should or would like; so the children stay at the Salvation Army Children's Home and go home at varying times. The homes they go to are pretty-much hovels: an entire house is very tiny – tinier than most living rooms by modern standards – and the construction is a combination of cardboard, old fence posts and rusted tin with no glass windows and hard dirt pan for “yards.” A step-up for some is if their homes are made of cinderblock – but little else. A trip through the area quickly reveals why the Children's Home is such a valued respite for these children and is truly their only hope for success and quality personal growth. Thanks to the caregivers who take them to-and-from school every day, work on their homework with them and teach them every good skill needed to properly mature and grow, these children are afforded opportunities they otherwise wouldn't receive if the Salvation Army Children's Home was not located in this area. Thus, it is called a Children's Home and not an outright orphanage.

This was Major Candi Frizzell's first year as the director of Mazatlan's Salvation Army Children's Home. When she was assigned to Mazatlan, she was told, “The good news is you have food – every week – provided for the children by a group of donors from North America through the Tres Islas Orphanage Fund. And they provide the children's school needs – shoes, school supplies, uniforms and backpacks and Christmas dinners. The bad news is you have \$900.00 in electric bills and no money in the bank.”

In her letter to you this year, she will tell you how grateful she is for the help of Tres Islas donors. It is a poignant letter from a fine lady who has 30 years of service in the Salvation Army from the United States to Russia to Mexico.

We welcome Major Candi and her assistant, Lulu and are proud and fortunate to work with them both.

### **Boys' Dormitory**

Donors painted the boys bedroom the same pretty hue of baby blue that we painted the boys' bedroom at Ciudad de los Ninos the year before. The walls hadn't been painted in years and the fresh paint and peaceful blue color really brightened up the boys' bedroom.

### **Receiving Room**

As with the other orphanages, having a receiving room has made a positive difference in the caregivers' lives. The donors assembled and setup shelving, painted the room, filled plastic bins with supplies and labeled the bins.

As many of you know, the children at the Salvation Army Children's Home learn the historic dances of Mexico, and, donning various costumes of the region, perform the dances and sing Christmas carols throughout the Christmas season for locals and tourists. At the end of each performance, they pass a donation plate. Money collected

helps pay for items such as electricity, gasoline for the van (that takes the children to-and-from school and their dance performances), cleaning and other assorted items Tres Islas does not provide.

In addition to providing a place to store personal hygiene items and school supplies, the receiving room here also houses the dance costumes. As part of creating the receiving room, the fund also purchased two commercial-grade clothing racks on which to hang the costumes – keeping them crisp looking and not wrinkled.

### **Caregivers Kitchen**

In the living quarters of Major Candi and Lulu, donors completed the following:

- † Moved an upper kitchen cabinet to a lower location so they could reach inside them without standing on a stool
- † Painted the bright yellow walls white
- † Installed a new ceiling light and fan.

### **Plumbing Repairs**

A plumber was hired to complete the following needed work in kitchen where the children’s food is prepared:

- † Purchased a new water heater for washing dishes and had it installed
- † Installed three faucets at the children’s dish washing station
- † Connected the drain pipes from the kitchen sinks to the septic system piping

The plumber also completed the following repairs:

- † Repaired showerhead piping and installed new showerheads
- † Chiseled out shower floor concrete and installed floor drains
- † Removed and replaced defective floats for all tinacos (roof-top water storage tanks)
- † Removed and replace defective water pump in facility’s water supply cistern

### **Other Improvements**

Donors also preformed the following activities at the children’s home:

- † Power washed the sidewalk outside the dining room
- † Painted the boy’s dorm a nice light blue color
- † Inspected the roofs and cleaned them and their drains of debris
  - Dug watering trenches around landscape trees so they can receive a soaking watering
- † Laid out a drainage ditch for the nearby town to excavate to correct a stormwater runoff problem, which flooded the boys’ dorm during heavy rain events
- † Hung new shower curtains and towel hangers in the boys’ and girls’ shower rooms.

## **New Bath Towels**

Having learned from the caregivers that a bath towel shortage at the Salvation Army Children's Home had lead them to cutting what used towels they had in half so each child could dry off after showering, Tres Islas donors brought enough new bath towels - dusty pink and dark blue - for each child to have their own.

## **Kite Flying Celebration**

Who would have thought that Major Candi's mention of her idea to have the Fund purchase kites for the children would turn into an awe inspiring sight to be remembered by all! If only all of you could have been there. Imagine the sky filled with 20 kites of different shapes, colors and sizes being flown by children and donors. It was wonderful - and fun! - as you'll see in the CD photos

## **Father Tovar's Home for Boys. . .Hogar San Pablo**

Sadly, this was Fr. Tovar's final Spring Mission Week. As we emailed and phoned many of you in July, the goodly Fr. Tovar died July 21<sup>st</sup>. He died as happy as he could be, leaving his boys, because he knew that they are safe and will be well cared for. Fr. Tovar was grateful for the improvements donors made again this year, which were:

## **Receiving Room**

As you'll view on the enclosed CD, the room where every day items of need were stored at Fr. Tovar's was probably the saddest of all orphanage storage rooms until Tres Islas donations and donors made the vast improvements this last spring. From items being piled on top of one another in black trash bags, not knowing what was in each bag, the room has gone from impassable havoc to complete organization. Madre Marta, Fr. Tovar's assistant, kept coming in the room during donors' transformation of it and exclaiming, "Gracias! Gracias!" After years of despair, she probably could hardly believe her eyes to see how, in one day, her life suddenly became easier to manage.

## **English and Craft/Art Classroom**

As we shared in part, earlier, Lena Brown, who along with Gaudelia Cruz Hernandez is the principal facilitator for the Tres Islas Orphanage Fund in Mazatlan, is a "Jill of all trades." If Tres Islas has a project, Lena gets measurements for it, garners and barter the best price for the goods and wares needed, ensures everything is delivered on time and does perfect accounting - to the centavo (cent) - for every purchase.

Lena also teaches English and art classes to the boys but the "classroom" she has used has been dreary with walls of dark peeling paint, with no glass on the windows, rusted wrought-iron window security bars and no area for storage of supplies. The walls were cracked and the stucco was coming off the walls. The bathroom had no toilet

seat and no privacy. Still, Lena carried on, day-after-day, week-after-week, with her always happy attitude.

This year, it was time to improve this important classroom. Before donors arrived in April, the stucco walls were repaired. In addition, prior to the donors arriving, Lena and some of the boys removed rust from the wrought-iron window bars (No easy task!) and painted the windows wood white. Plexiglas was installed in the windows. Donors painted the classroom a light turquoise blue color. A toilet seat was installed in the bathroom and a pretty blue and pink plastic curtain was installed to give privacy to the bathroom area and one for in front of the storage area. As you'll see on the accompanying CD, it went from a shambles of a room to a respectable classroom - complete with shelves for storing school supplies and teaching aids.

This makes a big difference not only for all the time Lena spends in the room but also for the boys who learn and study here.

### **Orphanage Office**

The orphanage office where Madre Marta conducts her business wasn't much better than the classroom; in fact, the description was pretty much the same. Thanks to donors on the Spring Mission Week, her office and bathroom was painted a pretty taupe/beige color with turquoise blue trim on the windows. It's a bright place to work and certainly now deserving of Madre's time that she spends there.

### **Orphanage Gardens**

Like each of the orphanages, this is the children's home. One of our big dreams is to have the orphanages be aesthetically beautiful for the children - so they can go sit under a tree and study or go sit in the grass and do their homework - and not be cramped-up on their beds trying to do their assignments because there is no place else for them to study.

To begin that beautification, this year at Fr. Tovar's, donors planted flowers and shrubs along the walkway to the chapel entrance and near the kitchen and caregivers' quarters. During lunch, we shared with the patranados - the orphanage board of directors - our goal for making the orphanage a botanical garden complete with imported loamy soil, one day, so the boys may grow tomatoes or other vegetables and fruits - and further their educations by learning good gardening skills.

As a surprise token of appreciation and expression of working together, after the Spring Mission Week 2009, the patranados began that process - bringing in good soil, planting sod, trees and flowering shrubs. The land has quickly transformed and Lena happily reports that the boys now go sit under a tree to read or do their homework and now play soccer on the old sports court donors repaired for them years ago surrounded by the lovely foliage as opposed to kicking the soccer ball around the barren dirt parking lot at the entrance to the orphanage.

Lena shares that Fr. Tovar's principal caregiver the last few years, Javier, whom many of you know, has stayed on as the gardener and tends to the grounds. We look

forward to planting more trees, shrubs and plants in the future and creating a botanical garden at this orphanage like we have started at the others.

## **Ciudad de los Ninos Orphanage**

### **Receiving Room**

During Spring Mission Trip 2007, at Ciudad de los Ninos we created what would be the first of five receiving rooms at each of the orphanages. As was the case with each of the orphanages, there was no place at Ciudad to receive or properly categorize and store donations such as school supplies, clothes, shoes or personal hygiene items. Items brought to the orphanage were stored in the bags or boxes they arrived in – and on the floor – solely because the orphanages didn't have the funds to create such an area.

The receiving room 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 caregiver 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 themselves and bring them back. A win-win situation!

Madre Velia was so happy with the receiving room – because now everything is perfectly organized, she can see into the clear bins when looking for an item, everything is alphabetically categorized and in a specified area, that we decided to ask all orphanage caregivers if they would like this feature at their orphanage and allow us to do the same for them. We received unanimous yeses!

Also as a result of creating the receiving room at Ciudad, Madre Velia can now tell us – at a glance – what supplies they're running low on so we can recommend to donors what to bring. Since we've installed the receiving rooms at the other orphanages, the positive comments – and knowing the ease it's made in the caregivers' lives – has made this project rewarding and worthwhile.

When you go to Mazatlan, if you'd like to "fill the bins" please let us know and we'll get you a list of needs!

### **New Mattresses**

Thanks to the Fund's chaplain, Fr. Joe Sioli of Pennsylvania for spreading the word among parishes and students that raised all the money to purchase much-needed new mattresses for the children! A few of the children had mattresses in good condition, so Madre Velia didn't request new mattresses for each bed if they didn't need it. Like all the caregivers at each of the orphanages, she is very respectful of the donors' contributions and never takes advantage of your benevolences.

## **New Sheets**

One good deed deserves another! And so, we asked donors to please bring with them new sheets for the children. Tres Islas has the best donors in the world because every bed now has a new set of white sheets – and a back up set – so the nuns aren't pressed to strip, wash and replace the same sheets for all children in one day! Madre requested white sheets so there's no need to match varying patterns and colors after washing so many sets of sheets.

## **Painting the Outer Front Wall of the Main Orphanage Building**

This year's painting spruced-up the front exterior wall of the main orphanage building. Before the work began, Madre Velia had a sidewalk built to define the gardens we started planting this year and will continue to expand in the years to come. She chose a deep emerald green color for the front of the building to serve as a fitting backdrop for the plants that would soon arrive. And, she selected gold-colored paint for the wrought-iron on the windows.

## **Floral and Herb Gardens**

We continue to be grateful to donors for their purchases of every flower and shrub that Madre Velia sets her eyes to turn the orphanage compound into a well-manicured and lovely botanical setting for the children. The vast change in the landscape since our gardening endeavors began two years ago has made a significant difference in the once barren land.

Madre Velia asked that we assure you that she is carefully watering the plants – each evening during the cool of the day – when the water will do the plants the most good and not during the heat of the day when water easily evaporates.

Madre asks for your continued help in raising funds and planting more fruit trees and working toward having a self-sustaining garden so the orphanage may one day (hopefully soon!) have a garden.

She would alike more flowers, shrubs and trees to be planted to make the orphanage compound the beautiful park she has longed dreamed of creating for the children who reside there.

## **FloreSer**

### **Outer Building, Patio and Garden Areas**

Although the building was provided rent free for two years, it needed major work to transition it into a pleasant home for the girls. Before donors arrived, the rusted wrought-iron work around the windows was sanded and primed and the stucco repaired on the inside wall that surrounds the orphanage and garden.

During our day at FloreSer, donors painted the wrought-iron black and painted the garden wall and swing set white. Then donors spread a large pile of gravel across the garden/yard area, planted bougambilias and other flowering plants. Within one day, the outside of the orphanage was transformed into a beautiful area for the girls. A

great joy was that the girls who live at the orphanage participated in these activities and felt the genuine caring about their lives by the donors. For them to realize quality, proper caring is the beginning of their new lives. . .and Tres Islas' support and presence is a wonderful part of it all.

### **Receiving Room**

FloreSer got off to a good start with the creation of the receiving room as the orphanage began. Just like the other receiving rooms, FloreSer's was completed with a fresh coat of paint, plastic shelves and clear plastic bins as well as labels in English and Spanish for each item. As with the other orphanages, Tres Islas donors brought and stocked the bins with every day needed items from shampoo and conditioner to toothbrushes and toothpaste and school supplies. After donors left a door was added for security.

### **Upcoming and On-going Needs at the Orphanages**

Here are some of the upcoming and on-going needs at the orphanages. If you would like to help with these needs, please let us know and/or designate so on your donation forms for these needs. Thank you, in advance, for your meaningful support.

#### **Orfanatorio Mazatlan**

It's not uncommon for a lucky fisherman to donate their "catch-of-the-day" to an orphanage - especially when the catch is an 85-plus pound fish and the fisherman lives north of the border and can't take it with them. For this reason, having a big freezer comes in handy. The freezer the Fund purchased several years ago for Orfanatorio Mazatlan has quit working. A new freezer has been ordered at a cost of \$1,300.00 and is scheduled to arrive in the next few weeks.

As with all the orphanages, a huge, on-going need is to keep the receiving rooms stocked with every day supplies such as shampoo, conditioner, tooth paste, toothbrushes, deodorant and cleaning supplies - everything any household would use daily. If you would like to help with these items, please mark your donation accordingly - it would be a big, big help.

In the past two annual reports we've shared the needs of Little Luciana who has facial and left ear deformities. She is receiving medical help in Monterey, Mexico each month to correct her jaw, mouth and teeth that have not lined-up with one another. In the next few years she will have surgery to create a realistic-looking ear. This monthly care will continue until July and then be quarterly for three years. While doctors are providing their care for free, the cost to get her and an orphanage caregiver to and from Monterey averages \$700.00 per month. Little Luciana is very smart and receives excellent grades in school. She is loving and kind and a model child. Please consider helping this precious girl - who came to the orphanage as a result of terrible abuse - to continue the road to love and success by helping with her medical expenses

## **Salvation Army Children's Home**

There are several areas needing attention at the Children's Home - they desperately need new lockers - theirs are metal, rusted and badly deteriorated as you'll see in the CD photos. The lockers serve as individual closets for the children. We would like to purchase the same lockers - made of hard, durable plastic - that we purchased for the children who reside at FloreSer. The cost was right-at \$115.00 per locker. So the cost of lockers for the 23 children who reside at the Children's Home will be approximately \$2,650.00. If you would like to help with this much-needed project, please earmark your donation for it.

The on-going dance lessons, where the children learn the history of each region of Mexico's dance, the meaning behind the costumes and the intricate dance steps is \$30.00 per week. These dance classes teach the children history, respect for their country's heritage, the meaning behind the intricate costumes, dance steps and how to work together. The lessons are invaluable. If you would like to sponsor one week - or as many weeks as you'd like - please feel welcome!

## **Father Tovar's Home for Boys...Hogar San Pablo**

### **Coats and Sweaters for the Boys**

Believe it or not, it does get chilly in Mazatlan during the "winter mornings." With the orphanage located on a hill that overlooks the Sea-of-Cortez, the breezes kick-up at this end of the peninsula that evokes a good chill on the bones.

For the first time in years, there are new boys at the orphanage - now a total of 31 - and they don't have any coats or sweaters to wear to school. This would be a useful gift that could in turn, be reused in years' to come. We estimate the cost to be \$25.00 per sweater and \$25.00 per coat. Please let us know if you would like to help with this project.

### **Guest Room**

A goal of Madre Marta's is to have a guest room for visitors to the orphanage who are these to help the children - such as Tres Islas donors or for a visiting electrician or carpenter who come to specifically help at the orphanage - would have a place at the orphanage they could stay.

Next to the office we painted during the Spring Mission Week 2009 is the perfect room. It needs a good coat of paint, a bed and small couch or a couple of chairs. The windows need some shoring up and perhaps some new Plexiglas. The bathroom needs a new toilet seat and a fresh coat of paint. This is a worthwhile project that long-term, would be beneficial to the orphanage and Tres Islas donors.

### **Orphanage Grounds Improvements**

The orphanage caregivers would like more fruit trees and the start of a garden where tomatoes and other vegetables can be grown on the orphanage grounds. They would like the boys to learn - and take with them when they leave the orphanage -



good gardening skills – something Tres Islas donors are welcomed to help teach the boys.

### **Ciudad de los Ninos Orphanage**

With the start of the floral gardens – in the orphanage courtyard and front areas – thanks to donors and Spring Mission Week 2009, 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 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 continues to express 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.

In addition, Sister Velia would like a small cascading waterfall feature (like you see at your local home improvement store) to one of the inner gardens so the nuns and children can hear the sounds of the gentle, flowing water as they walk by or sit and do their reading or homework.

### **FloreSer**

#### **Home Sweet Home**

The big news with FloreSer is that a permanent home has been located and purchased for the girls by a very kind Mexican national who believes in what Cristina and the board of directors are doing to rescue girls who have been forced into prostitution or who have been sexually-abused in their own homes.

The home, located just-off the malecón (the seaside sidewalk) as you head south from Valentino’s and near the baseball stadium, is large and has all the possibilities for being the perfect home for these girls. Please plan on joining us for Spring Mission Week 2009 to visit the home and help with the improvements so the girls can move in!

Everything we purchased for FloreSer – from the receiving room to lockers to the appliances and the flower pots now adorned with flowers – will be moved to the girls’ new home!

### **Our Next Spring Mission Week April 9<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup>, 2010**

We accomplished a great deal during Spring Mission Week 2009, everyone had a grand time! As in past years, there was constant conversation and laughter throughout the week as we “labor-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 this year and we invite everyone to join us for our next Spring Mission Week, April 9<sup>th</sup> - 17<sup>th</sup>, 2010. We encourage volunteers to arrive April 9<sup>th</sup>, as we'll start orphanage improvements and activities on the 10<sup>th</sup>.

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 more donor participation.

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

If you'd like to participate in this coming year's trip April 9<sup>th</sup> - 17<sup>th</sup>, 2010, 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!

## **Tres Islas Orphanage Fund Accounts**

### **Escrow Account**

The escrow account serves as the main depository account for the Tres Islas Orphanage Fund. Each donation is deposited in the Fund's escrow account. From there, donations earmarked for other accounts are transferred into those accounts.

At the conclusion of each calendar year, we transfer all money from the escrow account, with the exception of the amount needed for the upcoming six-month food purchases for the orphanages, into a sixth-month (or longer) certificate of deposit to earn interest.

### **Grocery Account**

Donations earmarked for the grocery account or "where most needed" remain in the escrow account until needed. On the last day of each month, the amount needed to purchase the children's food in each of the orphanages for the upcoming month is transferred into the grocery account.

Fresh Christmas trees have been purchased each year for the orphanages from this account, which cost approximately \$35.00 a piece. Starting with last Christmas,

we've started purchasing artificial Christmas trees for each orphanage in an effort to cut costs.

### **Christopher Fund (Christmas Dinner Account)**

The Christopher Fund was established in 2007 to honor the late Christopher Jemio, a fine and gentle-hearted young man who had a heart for children in orphanages and who volunteered at Ciudad de los Ninos Orphanage. Christopher was exemplary of having a heart of gold for giving.

Christopher died from a brain aneurysm on Christmas Day 2005. The following year, his mother, Teresa, sent \$250.00 to help Ciudad - the exact amount needed to purchase the orphanage's Christmas dinner. It was only appropriate that we name the Christmas dinner account in honor of Christopher. We are also pleased to announce that Christopher's mother, Teresa, is stewarding the fund raising this account.

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

### **Education Classes Account**

Established by Rev. Robert Mischke, M.D., and Genca Mischke, this account sponsors education classes that may not be taught in all schools such as computer and English classes. It also sponsors college and/or tech classes for youngsters after they have graduated from high school.

In the case of the newest orphanage, FloreSer, many of these girls have received no education and must be placed in special classes that even though they are in their teens, allow them to "start from the beginning."

It is a goal of the Fund that after each youngster graduates from high school, he or she will enter college or tech school so that when they leave the orphanage, each young lady or young man leaves being able to take care of themselves financially and becomes good, contributing members of society.

While Dr. and Mrs. Mischke established this account, they encourage and invite everyone's support of the account to ensure each child receives a quality education. Donations are needed and appreciated for the education classes account throughout the year.

## **Education Supplies Account**

From this account the Fund purchases the youngsters' school supplies, including school books, school shoes, school uniforms and school backpacks in which the youngsters carry their school books and supplies.

The condition of the backpacks is assessed annually. If they are in good enough condition, they are not automatically replaced at the beginning of the school year. Like the education classes account, donations are needed and appreciated for the education classes' account throughout the year.

## **Medical Assistance Account**

A heartfelt thank you to the many of you who have begun supporting the medical assistance account to purchase the children's medicine during the year and to help Little Luciana, who resides at Orfanatorio Mazatlan we have shared with you the last three years. Luciana's congenital anomaly known as Hemifacial left microsomia (HMF). HMF is a genetic disorder in which one side of the face is underdeveloped and it affects the auditory, oral and mandibular regions primarily. This disorder has twisted her facial alignment and impedes her ability to chew her food and speak clearly. Since receiving her treatments over the past year, orphanage caregivers say they are now able to understand her words and she's chewing food normally.

Thanks to your support, the Fund is able to send Luciana, who is now 5 years old, to the only Mexican medical clinic, located in Monterrey, Mexico, which treats this type of defect.

While her medical treatment by doctors is gratis, Luciana and one of the orphanage caregivers (most often Rafaela) must travel each month from Mazatlan, located on the west coast of Mexico, to Monterrey, located on the east side of Mexico. The journey also includes the need of a hotel room, usually for one night, occasionally two and taxis.

Approximately every four months, the device used to straighten Luciana's jaw with the rest of her face, must be changed because of the improvement she is making and because she is growing. The cost of the device has been \$150.00 U.S. dollars. It is for this reason that quarterly Luciana and her caregiver spend two nights in Monterrey - so she may be measured for the device and to allow 24-hours to create and mold it and then fit it into her mouth.

It is expected she will need to make monthly trips to Monterey through July 2010 to monitor/replace the device and then quarterly thereafter for three years. It is expected that by the end of July, 2010, the medical device will have improved her defect, and she will have grown enough, that the device will then only need to be replaced and monitored quarterly for approximately three years - at which time her facial deformity will no longer be evident.

During her trips this past year, she has also been seen by a plastic surgeon who will create a replacement "ear" for Luciana's deformed left ear. It is estimated that

surgery will take place when she is around 14 years old. It is not known at this time if she will ever hear from this ear.

In addition, donations to this fund help purchase medicine for the children in all the orphanages.

### **Construction Account**

Donations to this account make necessary orphanage improvements such as replacing water pumps, roofs, appliances and plants for gardens. When the Tres Islas Orphanage Fund began serving the orphanages, each was in a sad state of disrepair from sewage on the ground to bare floors to rodents living in appliances.

Thanks to donations, the orphanages have been upgraded to meet health, safety and welfare needs, including all improvements made by specific donations to the construction account for improvements during the Fund's annual Spring Mission Week.

Your continued support of this invaluable account will be greatly appreciated and will allow the children to live in safe and sanitary homes.

### **"Because of Kenny Project"**

Minnesota donor Julie Foster loves taking pictures. She has an entire wall in one room of her and her husband Mark's home lined with photo albums. When their daughter Amelia was born, she took so many photographs that her husband Mark suggested she buy stock in the company she uses to develop her pictures. She loves to show Amelia her baby pictures and the progression of her growth, documenting her youth.

A few years after Amelia was born, the Fosters adopted Kenny, from Russia, when he was 18-months old. Julie shares that it's difficult to explain to him why they don't have any baby pictures of him, adding, they detect sadness in his eyes because he doesn't have pictures for this part of his life.

Because of Kenny, it occurred to her that the children in the orphanages the Tres Islas Orphanage Fund supports don't have memories of their children in photographs either. Realizing it is the same for the children in the orphanages as it is for her son Kenny, as the children grow up, they won't have pictures to show their families how they looked and what they did while they were growing up.

The Fosters approached the Fund this year about creating the "Because of Kenny Project" to establish funding to equip each orphanage with a digital camera, a photos printer and a photo album for each child's pictures. What a great idea! The Fosters have donated the funds for the cameras, photo printers and ink/photo paper, which we've purchased and will take down to the orphanages.

Donations are needed to supply on-going materials such as a photo album to be presented to each child residing in an orphanage or to give to each child who comes to the orphanage, ink-printer cartridges and printer photo paper.

Everyone is welcome to help each child document their childhood and have fond memories of their young life to take with them when it comes time for them to leave the orphanage by donating to the "Because of Kenny Project."

### **"Sophia's Gift"**

Expecting their third child, a girl, on February 25, 2008, Sally and Paul Schumack were thrilled at the prospect of adding Sophia to theirs and their twin daughters' family. While the delivery "went off without a hitch," Sally shares that a special-care nurse brought their newborn daughter to them saying they needed to monitor Sophia's breathing. That night, their baby experienced several "spells" in which she stopped breathing, appeared to choke and turn blue. After two days, she was transferred to a neonatal intensive care nursery where it was determined she lacked gagging, sucking and swallowing reflexes.

Ultimately, Sophia's ability to live without full-support declined and on March 21, 2009, Sophia's family made the decision to stop interventions and release Sophia to God.

Since Sophia was released to Jesus, her family says they will never be the same because of her presence in their lives, even for a short while. Connecting with other families who've experienced similar losses, they've learned that children truly are a gift and while we don't know how long they will be with us, they said they, "learned to lean on God; because He truly will walk with us through grief if we ask and allow Him to."

As Sophia's aunt, Julie Foster wanted to keep Sophia's memory alive in a meaningful manner. Over the past several years, her family has fallen in love with the children residing at Ciudad de los Ninos through their donations to the Tres Islas Orphanage Fund. Working with Mother Superior, Madre Velia, who helped found the orphanage, they were able to establish a garden in honor of Sophia - for the children living at Ciudad to enjoy. Included in the garden is a memorial plaque dedicated to Sophia and all children everywhere.

Thinking others may like to donate money to purchase fruit trees, flowers or vegetables for the gardens at each of the orphanages in honor of children living, or as a memorial for their children or family members who've loved children that have passed away, please indicate which orphanage you'd like to receive your living gift on the donation for under the construction account and earmark it for "Sophia's Gift" in honor of the children and loved ones in your life.

### **Next Year's Projections**

The Fund's number one priority each year is to continue purchasing healthy, nutritious food for each child at the orphanages. We're budgeting \$150.00 per week each for four of the orphanages and \$100.00 per week for FloreSer. While FloreSer

currently has eight girls and receives \$75.00 per week, we anticipate and have budgeted for that number to increase over time to 16 girls maximum.

How much will it cost to feed each child in the coming year? Here's the math:

- † \$150.00 per week x 52 weeks per year = \$7,800.00 x 4 orphanages = \$31,200.00
- † \$100.00 per week x 52 weeks per year = \$5,200.00 for FloreSer
- † \$31,200.00 for 4 orphanages + \$5,200.00 for FloreSer = \$36,400.00
- † \$36,400.00 divided by the 123 children in all five orphanage = \$295.94 per child per year
- † \$295.94 per child per year divided by 52 weeks per year = \$5.70 per week to feed one child.

The summary table below presents the projected costs for each orphanage during the coming year, minus costs for construction, appliances, Christmas trees and Luciana's medical assistance.

<b>Projections for <u>each</u> of the four orphanages for the coming year:</b>		<b>Projections for FloreSer for the coming year:</b>	
<b><u>Item</u></b>	<b><u>Amount</u></b>	<b><u>Item</u></b>	<b><u>Amount</u></b>
Food	\$ 7,800.00	Food	\$5,200.00
Christmas dinner	\$ 250.00	Christmas dinner	\$ 150.00
School supplies	\$ 625.00	School supplies	\$ 425.00
School shoes	\$ 625.00	School shoes	\$ 120.00
School uniforms	\$ 600.00	School uniforms	\$ 100.00
School backpacks	\$ 250.00	School backpacks	\$ 110.00
Education (Classes)	\$ 840.00	Education (Classes)	\$1,000.00
Hygiene & Health Care	\$	Hygiene & Health Care	\$
	<u>100.00</u>		<u>50.00</u>
<b>Total for each of the <u>four</u> orphanages</b>	<b>\$11,090.00</b>	<b>Total for FloreSer Orphanage</b>	<b>\$7,155.00</b>

Total projected expenditures for all five orphanages for the coming year, including construction, appliances and Christmas trees, is \$71,300.00.

Please refer to the attached summary spreadsheet for each orphanage's itemizations for this past year, projected expenditures for the coming year and a comparison with 2007-2008's expenditures.

Dividing the projected \$71,300.00 for the coming year by the 123 children in the five orphanages at this time, comes to \$579.68, or \$1.59 per youngster, per day, to provide nourishing food, school supplies, shoes, uniforms, backpacks, education classes and orphanage improvements at their homes, the orphanages. This small amount of

money daily equates to a huge help impact...the children have a nourishing, well-educated, productive and safe quality of life for an entire year!

This past year: \$68,028.69 divided by the then 91 children in the four orphanages at that time equaled \$747.57 annually or \$2.05 per youngster, per day, for their care.

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.

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.

### **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.

Please be sure to sign-up for the Fund's next Spring Mission Week April 9 - April 17 2010. 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 Brown**

The Fund continues to be blest and is proud and grateful to have the continued, day-to-day help of Lena Brown who lives in Mazatlan and continues to oversee and



bring to fruition the projects you read about in the annual report that your donations make possible.

From being on-hand to help purchase groceries each week and learning the exact peso/U.S. dollar exchange rate for the day so the caregivers may purchase the most food for the money, to getting estimates and making the majority of purchases in advance of each year's Spring Mission Week, the Fund could not be more blest to have a finer person tending to the day-to-day needs of the children and the Fund than Lena Brown.

### **Gaudelia "Fella" and Jasmine Cruz Hernandez**

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 five 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 22 years, Fella has remained an intricate part of Tres Islas.

Imagine buying more than 123 pairs of school shoes, uniforms, backpacks and coordinating purchasing enough school supplies for an entire year for more than 123 children! Whew! But yes! That is exactly what Fella and Jasmine do. Fella and Jasmine are two other angles on earth.

### **Bob and Janet Schmitt**

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, they help sponsor the college tuition, books and lab supplies for some of the youngsters' - which provides the youngsters the high-education they would not otherwise receive.

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.

The Fund has been blest for over 15 years to have the loving presence of Janet and Bob Schmitt and we cannot thank them enough for all they do for the children and for being our sounding blocks when we need to run an idea by them and for their Godly, loving guidance.

### **Tres Islas Volunteer of the Year 2009**

Because of everything we wrote above, and so much more - such as the detailed accounting of each day's activities and expenditures to coordinating donor visits and teaching the boys English and art at Fr. Tovar's Home for Boys and being a true friend on call 24/7, it was an easy and unanimous decision by past Tres Islas Volunteers of the Year to nominate and name Lena the Tres Islas Volunteer of the year 2009.

The award was presented to Lena by 2008 Volunteer of the Year, Gaudelia "Fella" Cruz Hernandez, orphanage caregivers, and Donelle and Tom Manton, at Orfanatorio

Mazatlan the last night of Spring Mission Week 2009 as Lena was surrounded by the children at Orfanatorio Mazatlan and Spring Mission Week volunteers.

Thank you, Lena, for all that you have done and continue to do for the children in the five orphanages and on behalf of the Fund. You are truly an angel on earth.

The Tres Islas Volunteer of the Year - or in some cases because the recipients may be a couple - so they would be Tres Islas Volunteers of the Year, was created in 2007 to honor donors whose extraordinary service over the years has made significant improvements in the children's lives.

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 Lena receiving her award - clearly, she was very surprised!

The first 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.

Last year's recipient was Gaudelia "Fella" Cruz Hernandez.

### **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 or what entity in the Mazatlan community needs help, to share the scope of each others' endeavors so there is no duplication of efforts and help each other whenever possible. These meetings are organized by Janet Schmitt - who is to be commended for "rounding-up" all of us twice a year for these invaluable meetings. Thanks again, Janet!

### **Passages**

Each and every donor is a very special friend in varying and vast ways. The Tres Islas Orphanage Fund could not do all that it does for the 123 children in the five orphanages if it weren't for the donors. The words grateful and appreciative and thankful have the deepest meaning in all of our hearts.

And so, when one of Tres Islas' "family of friends" becomes ill or passes away, we are all affected.

## Gloria Geraths - Friend Extraordinaire



Many of you know lovely Gloria Geraths who throughout the 1990s was a constant presence at the orphanages and Donelle's "right-hand" in every activity. Gloria successfully organized the first "Adopt-a-Child-for Christmas" in Mazatlan that has now grown into each child in every orphanage receiving wonderful Christmas gifts - when before Gloria's presence - most received very little or nothing at all.

At that time, there were no chocolate chips in Mazatlan. Gloria quickly endeared herself to the children when she brought not only the first homemade cookies they'd ever tasted - but chocolate chip cookies!

Each time Gloria brought cookies, some of the children happened to be in school. Without being prompted and on their own, the children at the orphanage counted the cookies, reserving an equal amount for those still in school. For those of you who've tasted Gloria's delicious cookies - that must have been an awfully difficult thing for a child to do and took an exceptional amount of self-discipline to give up even one of Gloria's cookies! Upon the school children's arrival, the children present scooped-up the box of cookies and fled to the door, welcoming the others home with the great news about the arrival of Gloria's cookies.

Gloria also took her spaghetti maker to the orphanage and showed the children how to make spaghetti, then allowing each child to cut their portion as it came out of the machine. Topped with homemade sauce and meatballs, the children ate and ate until their tummies were stuffed. Gloria - and her trusty spaghetti maker - were requested to come back often for a repeat version!

Over the years, Gloria and her good husband Lloyd took the children to purchase needed shoes and always stopped for ice cream on the way back - what a treat for the children! Gloria and Lloyd helped organize the first and helped host many barbecue beach parties for the children from Orfanatorio Mazatlan and Ciudad de los Ninos - over 60 children! And each week, Gloria and Donelle shopped for the children's food. They were a constant team, dear friends and family in the heart. Those were joyous years in which precious friendships between countries and people - both big and small - were forged that are now forever etched in the memories of our minds and will remain dear to us all.

Today Gloria is battling the final stages of cancer at her home in Bend, Oregon with her devoted Lloyd by her side - just as the two have been together in everything they did for over 55 years.

Gloria Geraths brought love, grace, confidence and success to everything she did on behalf of the children and the Tres Islas Orphanage Fund.

In recent years, Gloria and Lloyd stopped coming to Mazatlan only because Gloria's health prohibited her from making the trip. But in her heart, she has always been there with us and with each and every child. She loves all the children and we all love Gloria.

There is a Bette Midler song titled, "Wind Beneath My Wings" which describes Donelle's feelings toward Gloria because of her friendship, help, dedication and encouragement. The song gained fame as part of the movie, "Beaches." Interestingly, Gloria and Donelle met on one of Mazatlan's pristine beaches.

While the entire song could have been written for Gloria, for truly she was the one who "was always content to let others shine and walk a step behind," the verse that always comes to Donelle's mind when she thinks of Gloria is:

Did you ever know that you're my hero,  
and everything I would like to be?  
I can fly higher than an eagle,  
'cause you are the wind beneath my wings.

Won't you please pray for Gloria now - and Lloyd - as Gloria makes the final journey of her life - one that we know, because of her selfless heart of gold for the children and everyone's life she touched - especially Donelle's - will one day soon swiftly carry her to Heaven and into the arms of our sweet Lord.

We love you, Gloria. . .always. . .

+ + +

**Fr. Pedro Tovar Cortes**  
**July 5, 1928 - July 21, 2009**  
**Founder**  
**Fr. Tovar's Home for Boys. . .Hogar San Pablo**



Father Pedro Tovar Cortes was a friendly icon on the streets of Mazatlan for over 40 years, devoting his life to rescuing homeless boys or those who were abandoned, abused or could not be properly cared for by their families.

In recent years, due to his declining health, we all held our breath each time we left the boys' orphanage he that he founded, and prayed mightily that he would be there when we returned.

This year, we weren't so fortunate.

With his death in July at the age of 81, his passing leaves a voluminous void in the lives of those he served and a legacy that may never again be replicated in the man who unselfishly searched the streets by night and day to save boys in need and provide them a safe and loving home.

Born in Guachinango, Jalisco, Mexico - one of 14 children - early on he had the desire and awareness of the need to help others. As a child, he even dressed himself in black, emulating the priests in his community parish and Saint John Bosco Parochial School.

Studying for the priesthood in Guadalajara and Culiacán seminaries, Father Tovar entered the new Diocese of Mazatlan in 1958 and was ordained a priest on February 22, 1961. Over the years he realized the depth of the need for a safe home for boys - first by providing temporary shelter for boys whose fathers were inmates at Islas Marias, a penal island located 90 miles south of Mazatlan in the Pacific Ocean. While boys were allowed to live with their fathers during their incarnation, the kindly Fr. Tovar offered the boys a place to live during the school year because the penal island initially had no schools.

The adage, "one good deed deserves another" was applicable throughout Fr. Tovar's life. His caring for inmates' boys evolved into rescuing boys living on the streets and those who being abused throughout Mexico and as far away as Central America.

Initially Fr. Tovar welcomed the boys into his own parish home but the boys' numbers quickly increased and the goodly priest was faced with finding a larger

facility. On a prayerful walk up Cerro de Vigia one day in the mid-1970s, Fr. Tovar came upon an abandoned Carmelite convent that formerly served as a medical dispensary for poor Mazatlecos – but was vacated after Hurricane Olivia devastated the grounds in 1975. Fr. Tovar immediately knew his prayerful walk had been divinely answered.

Over the years, Fr. Tovar helped approximately 1,000 boys find the home they deserved - at Hogar San Pablo.

After each Sunday's mass, Fr. Tovar would set aside money from the weekly offerings for treats for the boys during the week – no matter how little else they had. He shared that as a boy, his family was so poor that he rarely received any sweets. He always made sure the boys had a coin or two for a soda or ice cream – so they would know they were special and deserving of something good.

In 2006, members of the Tres Islas Orphanage Fund, which provides food, school, medical assistance and structural upgrades to Mazatlan's orphanages, approached Fr. Tovar about renaming Hogar San Pablo in his honor. Initially somewhat embarrassed at the thought of having a facility named in his honor, the humble priest politely declined.

When orphanage fund members returned the next day with renowned professor of English Gabino "Teacher Gabino" Covarrubias, Fr. Tovar began verbally objecting to the offer of recognition before Teacher Gabino even entered the priest's office.

"I understood what she said – every word!" he explained in Spanish to the professor. "She didn't need to bring you to interpret because I didn't understand her – I did – but what would people think of me if I allowed a building to be named in my honor? How self-serving that would be!" he explained, adding, "The only thing that matters is the boys, not me, not me."

After explaining that Fr. Tovar's good works would live on to inspire others and would be helpful to the boys who grew up there because it would be named after the man who was the boys' father figure as well as their spiritual figure, and would tell boys coming there in the future that a man loved them very much – enough to create this home for them – something they need to know, a big smile crossed Fr. Tovar's face as he bowed his head nodding and humbly agreed.

Not long after, in front of a newly-painted sign, "Father Tovar's Home for Boys Hogar San Pablo, A.C., . . . Established 1975" and surrounded by many of the boys he raised over the years who had since become fine young men and returned for the occasion, Fr. Tovar cut the loving yellow ribbon to initiate renaming of the orphanage in his honor.

Knowing his work on earth would soon be over, Fr. Tovar selected Fr. Arnoldo Villa Peinado of Escuinapa to assume his role as principal caregiver for the boys. Fr. Arnoldo has already begun his endeavors, working hand-in-hand with the Tres Islas Orphanage Fund to ensure that life continues for the boys exactly as Fr. Tovar envisioned and devoted his life to ensuring.

Fr. Tovar's ashes are interned at the orphanage, immediately behind the chapel, so he can be close to the boys to whom he devoted his life.

A little-known fact about Fr. Tovar was that he spoke fairly-good English – but only to those with whom he felt comfortable and held as close confidants.

In paying tribute to Fr. Tovar, perhaps the best closing accolade would be one, in part, that he shared with the founder of the Tres Islas Orphanage Fund when she would leave for a while. It was a lovely song he would sing in English, although the gender in it will be changed to honor Fr. Tovar from all of us whose lives he graced:

“When I must say goodbye to my friend, I am so sad, because he is my friend, my dear friend and part of me. . .that I will miss. . .but when I must say goodbye to my friend, I know, at least I am saying goodbye to my FRIEND. . .

Vaya con Dios Padre Tovar y gracias por todo. Your good heart was in Heaven long before your sweet soul ever left the earth.

+ + +



**Robert H. Whitney**  
**March 10, 1919 – June 7, 2009**



Over the years, many of you have kindly complimented us for our detailed reporting of each orphanage's expenditures. The credit for Donelle's part goes to one gentleman, Robert H. Whitney, of Cheyenne, Wyoming, her first employer when she entered the full-time work force.

If you've ever been to Wyoming, chances are you've driven across one of the expansive bridges Mr. Whitney designed. And, our modern-day addressing system that has saved countless lives, because it's design allows emergency vehicles to reach those in need, can in part be credited to Mr. Whitney who worked endless hours crafting and implementing the address system for Laramie County, Wyoming that became a model used by counties throughout the nation.

Then there are the beautiful maps he made, each hand-made, depicting homes and business and their addresses that all perfectly correlated with one another from one end of the county to the other – that are utilized by emergency services to this day.

It was that sense of articulate dedication and pride of workmanship that he represented in each of his daily assignments over 14 years as the county's engineer that cast an ever-lasting impression upon Donelle.

Widely-respected for his accuracy, no one ever challenged his work. Everyone knew if Mr. Whitney did it, it was perfect. It had the "Whitney Stamp of Approval" before it was ever presented. It was that way with everything he did in life – both professionally and personally.

But there was something else about Mr. Whitney that had an indelible impact on Donelle: his love of his family.

Mr. Whitney spotted what would be his future wife at a bowling alley in the early 1940s and was immediately smitten with her intelligence, classic mannerisms and beauty. Learning she belonged to the local Methodist church, he joined that church and began attending the same Sunday school class as her. They were soon married and had three children, Alan, John and Carol.

It was his love for his entire family – and the deep love he held for his wife that stood out.

Even after 40 years of marriage, he was still completely devoted to her and her to him. If ever there were two "soul mates," it was Mr. and Mrs. Whitney.

They lived on the dairy farm Mr. Whitney's father purchased in 1932. Every so often when Mrs. Whitney would "come to town," Mr. Whitney proudly let the office know of the upcoming event first thing that morning.

"Mom (as he affectionately called her because she was the mother of his children) is coming to town today!" he always exclaimed. "She'll be dropping by the office. Be sure to let me know when she gets here."

Donelle never understood why he always asked to be summoned when Mrs. Whitney arrived. Because during the 14 years they worked together, Donelle never made that call. She didn't have to. Somehow, Mr. Whitney always knew when his beloved arrived. Even if Mrs. Whitney didn't park in front of the building so Mr. Whitney could look out the window of his second-story office and see the car, even though the office door didn't make a noise when it opened for him to hear and give a clue it might be her at the counter, he always "sensed" when his beloved had arrived. Somehow, perhaps because of the depth of their love, he always *just knew* "Mom" was there.

Within moments - minute seconds - of her arrival, steps could be heard bounding - and we do mean bounding - down the stairs. Around the corner he would seemingly fly and then suddenly come to an abrupt halt. At that very moment he would smile unlike any other smile he would share with anyone because he was looking at his wife, standing in front of him, in all of her wonderfulness.

At the same moment, the same type of grandiose grin would plant itself on her face as they lovingly gazed at each other for a few moments, in silence, seemingly spellbound by each others' presence.

And then, each and every time, they would each gently raise their shoulders up just a little - and start giggling. Walking to each other, they would pat each others' hands and enjoy a delightful and tender conversation.

It was always a scene right out of 'The Andy Griffith Show' or 'The Waltons.' It was the stuff that real love, old-fashioned, charming, forever-love is made of - and it was a privilege to watch.

Mr. Whitney was not a man of many words. What he did say, though, when he chose to speak, was worth listening to. His words had substance. And it was the same with his actions. His words had special meaning and his actions signified pure truth and honor. He never exaggerated because he didn't have to. He never lied because, well, you just didn't do that. He was a hard-working, honest, clean, good citizen.

Today words aren't what they used to be. They often don't stand for anything worthwhile and have no significance. Instead, words are often foolishly used and impishly describe what are merely commonplace experiences. That which was once truly special, really isn't any more. And that is sad.

Mr. Whitney didn't have that problem.

Mr. Whitney never loved a French fry or a car. He didn't think tennis shoes or pizzas were amazing. He didn't think the latest hair style or fashion trend - whatever it was at the moment - was incredible.

Oh yes, Mr. Whitney loved, alright.

He loved his wife, Mariella Coates Whitney with all of his heart – the same love that he had for each of his three children, all his grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

He thought God and all His creation was amazing and man flying to and walking on the moon was an incredible sight to behold.

And he taught Donelle well. It was meaningful to Donelle when Mr. Whitney, a Tres Islas Orphanage Fund donor, read the annual report and would make the phone call she so looked forward to.

“Hello, Donelle. (Pause). This is Mr. Whitney. (Longer pause). Good report.”

That said it all: the Whitney Stamp of Approval. The finest complement a person could receive.

Mrs. Whitney passed away in 2005, after sharing almost 62-years of a loving – and perhaps one of the most meaningful marriages that has ever existed – with Mr. Whitney. He greatly missed her every day and spoke prolifically of “Mom” in poignant and pragmatic phrases.

One can only imagine the joyous reunion that occurred in Heaven when Mr. Whitney came bounding through the gates June 7<sup>th</sup> and at last saw his beloved Mariella standing in front of him once again; this time. . . for eternity.

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Benediction at Mr. Whitney’s funeral. . .an applicable prayer honoring his life. . .  
and also for the endeavors of the Tres Islas Orphanage Fund:

Go out into the world in peace.

Have courage.

Hold onto what is good.

Return to no person evil for evil.

Strengthen the fainthearted.

Support the weak.

Help the suffering.

Honor all beings.

- Adapted from Paul’s letter to the Thessalonians

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## Carole Hall



Carole Hall, of Bend, Oregon, passed away Friday, April 10, 2009 after a long and courageous battle with cancer. Her beloved husband, John, and one of her daughters, Monique, were with Carole as she went Home to be with the Lord. John and Carole have been faithful Tres Islas Orphanage Fund donors since the mid-1990s. With Carole's passing, in addition to John, she leaves behind seven children and 11 grandchildren. She was an avid painter who loved Mazatlan, Mexico as much as her home state of Oregon. Carole and John have always made a positive difference in the lives of others wherever they have been.

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### **Hats Off to the Following Businesses. . .**

#### **Mazatlan's *Pacific Pearl* News Magazine**

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

Mike Veselik has been the "eyes and ears" between the English speaking living and visiting community and Mazatlan for 17 years and is a steadfast supporter of the Tres Islas Orphanage Fund - usually publishing at least one story about the Fund and the children each year. Thank you, Mike for helping the Tres Islas Orphanage Fund and all Mazatlan charities!

#### **Mazatlan's *Noroeste* Newspaper**

We are grateful each year for the faithful support of the *Noroeste* newspaper, its owners, editorial staff and photographers for their continued documentation of Tres Islas' Spring Mission Weeks. *Noroeste* always let the good people of Mazatlan know the endeavors of Tres Islas and spotlight all donors and those who come to offer friendship, kindness and help to the children in the orphanages.

#### **EPUERTO, Staples and Oce' North America**

Thank you to the following compassionate companies for their outstanding support of the children and the Tres Islas Orphanage Fund with their kind services:

- † **EPUERTO**, the Fund's Internet provider and webpage host headquartered in Coos Bay, Oregon. You can visit EPUERTO at [www.epuerto.com](http://www.epuerto.com)
- † **Staples** in Roseburg, Oregon for providing the paper on which you read this annual report
- † **Oce' North America, Inc.** in Roseburg, Oregon for providing all copy services used to produce this annual report for you free of charge.

**We sincerely thank each of the above businesses for their generosity in helping us serve the children. . .**

In closing. . .because of you, the Tres Islas Orphanage Fund is heading into its 23<sup>rd</sup> 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 immense gratitude,

Donelle Manton, Founder

Tom Manton, Vice-President

Enclosures – extras – lots and lots of stuff to read and pictures to see – just like always! 😊 😊