

Mazatlan's Salvation Army Children's Home

Those familiar with the Salvation Army "back home" will be pleased to know the extension of that organization's good works reaches beyond the borders and into the lives of children in Mexico.

Founded on the same Christian principals, children's homes serve the world's most innocent – children who have been orphaned or children whose parents are living but are not capable of taking care of them as they would like and certainly, not on a day-to-day basis.

Located just north of Mazatlan in the area known as Venadillo, for just over 10 years, the Salvation Army Children's Home of Mazatlan provides a loving home atmosphere to up to 25 children at a time.

Major Candace "Candi" Frizzell is director of Mazatlan's Salvation Army Children's Home and Lourdes "Lulu" Ramirez has been appointed associate officer.

The two received their Mazatlan assignments when the former directors of the children's home, Israel and Victoria Garcia, were reassigned to Merida in the Yucatan. Reassignment every few years is customary in Salvation Army service.

Born in Detroit, Minnesota, Major Frizzell attended college in Prescott, Arizona and thought at the time that she "wanted to be a social worker."

In 1973, while attending college, she and a friend were strolling along a street in Prescott and saw a Salvation Army facility on the corner. The two were invited in and that invitation, she explains, forever changed her life.

Taking a job as a television reporter for ABC's Phoenix affiliate, KTVC, in the mid-1970s, Major Frizzell reflects, "I felt helpless reporting on stories of those in need and not being able to do anything about it." That led her to conclude, "I couldn't just report on people's sad lives and do nothing to help them."

So, in 1976, she entered the Salvation Army seminary near Los Angeles and was ordained in 1978. "Major Candi" as she is known around Mazatlan, has served in California, Arizona, New Mexico, Washington, Alaska and Russia – where she served for three years.

Associate Officer Ramirez has served in the Salvation Army for 10 years, most recently, at a children's home in Chihuahua, Mexico.

Both officers say the support the Salvation Army Children's Home in Mazatlan receives "is so much more meaningful" than other areas where children's homes exist.

"To come here and have fresh, nourishing food provided for our children each week and have them start school with the school supplies, shoes and uniforms they need that Tres Islas Orphanage Fund donations provide, has been so helpful," Major Frizzell said, speaking for both of them. "Other children's homes," she explains, "don't have such wonderful donors like Tres Islas donors and I don't know what we would have done without the weekly food purchases as well as their buying the children's school supplies, shoes, uniforms and backpacks."

Each week, thanks to donations, the Tres Islas Orphanage Fund buys \$150.00 U.S. dollars worth of food for the children. Each August, again, thanks

to donations, the Fund purchases the children their school supplies, shoes, uniforms and backpacks. The total cost runs right at \$1,600.00 annually.

If you would like to help support these youngsters, please download a Tres Islas donation form located on the Tres Islas Home Webpage, complete it and mail it and your donation to the address on the form.

One hundred percent of every donation goes to first help feed and educate the children, then make necessary improvements to their homes, the orphanages. Nothing is taken from any donation neither for administration costs nor for salaries. All endeavors made on behalf of the children are done on a volunteer, goodwill basis. You may also designate, on the donation form, where you'd like your donation to be utilized to help the children.

When she learned she was being assigned to Mazatlan, Major Frizzell said she began searching the Internet to learn more about the community.

"Right away the *Pacific Pearl* webpage came up – and it was a big help to me," she explains, "introducing me to Mazatlan. Along with the *Pacific Pearl*, was information on how Tres Islas helps the orphanages and I knew this was a community of support and caring."

Each Christmas season Mazatlan residents and visitors delight to the dances performed by the children who reside at the Salvation Army Children's Home or in the nearby Venadillo community. The dances showcase the elaborate indigenous dances from Mexico's vast historic cultures and regions. Older children teach the younger children the dances. Part of learning the intricate dance steps from each region in Mexico includes the children learning history about that region and performing in authentic, brilliant-colored costuming.

Major Frizzell is the mother of a 24-year old son, Sam, who is enlisted the U.S. Marine Corps. He has served in Iraq and is now on his second tour of duty there. Her daughter, Colleen, 22, attends college in Sacramento, CA where she is majoring in child development and works part-time for the Salvation Army.

Although this is Major Frizzell's first Salvation Army assignment in Mazatlan, it isn't her first visit to the 'Pearl of the Pacific.'

"Thirty-five years ago when I visited Mazatlan with friends on vacation," she shares, "I had no thought whatsoever of living here. When I look back at my time here 35 years ago and think that I now live here, and the plan that God had for my life, I just smile."