

Donelle Manton

Cristina Pena Miranda Herrera receives 'Guardian Angel Award'



Orfanatorio Mazatlán
Director Cristina Peña

Mazatlan's Cristina Pena Miranda Herrera received the Tres Islas Orphanage Fund's 'Guardian Angel Award' during the Fund's Spring Mission Week in May because of her unparalleled dedication helping needy children from all walks of life.

Accepting the honor at Orfanatorio Mazatlán – where Pena has been president for eight years – family members, friends, board members of five Mazatlan orphanages and the children who reside at Orfanatorio Mazatlán gave Pena a standing ovation as she was presented the etched-glass award.

Presented by Tres Islas Orphanage Fund founder, Donelle Manton, and the fund's vice-president, Tom Manton, the

award is engraved with the words, "In honor of your never-ending dedication to all children."

Pena's presence has made a great difference at Orfanatorio Mazatlán – since Pena began her presidency 26 children have been adopted – where before, there were virtually no adoptions. In addition, Pena has taken great strides to ensure the mental and physical welfare of the children is at the highest-possible standard with each child receiving every personal and professional service they may require.

Manton also praised Pena for founding FloreSer orphanage – the first of its kind in this region – dedicated to rescuing children and teenagers who

were forced into prostitution or who have been sexually abused in their own homes.

In accepting the award, Pena said she is honored to serve all children she is given the blessing of helping. She said when she first came to Orfanatorio Mazatlán, the only entity helping the children and the orphanage was the Tres Islas Orphanage Fund. Since that time, she and her board of directors and Tres Islas have forged a deep bond of friendship that is dedicated to working hand-in-hand helping life's neediest: innocent children.

Next Month: Tres Islas Orphanage Fund-Volunteers of the Year Award

Teresa & Christopher Jemio named 'Volunteers of the Year'

Tres Islas Orphanage Fund presents award during spring mission week

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Teresa Jemio and her late son, Christopher, have been named Tres Islas Orphanage Fund's 2011 'Volunteers of the Year.'

Christopher, who died on Christmas in 2005 at the age of 27 from a cerebral hemorrhage, and his mother Teresa, were named this year's recipients because of the significance Christopher's life and memory have had in providing bountiful Christmas dinners to the children in the five orphanages served by the Tres Islas Orphanage Fund.

The Volunteer of the Year plaque was first presented by Cristina Pena and the Board of Directors to all Tres Islas donors to Orfanatorio Mazatlán for over 20 years of service. The plaque has since become a "traveling plaque"

which is awarded to a Tres Islas donor(s) each year for the exceptional difference they've made for children residing in the orphanages.

In 2005, Christopher Jemio and his

girlfriend, Eileen Lindbuchler, trekked from Pennsylvania to Mazatlán where they spent time volunteering at Ciudad de los Niños and presenting the children

A few months after his death, while holding a photo of Christopher (and Eileen with Sister Ofelia, one of the founding nuns of Ciudad de los Niños), Teresa phoned the Tres Islas Orphanage Fund to learn if Ciudad is one of the orphanages the fund serves. She then sent \$250.00 to Tres Islas with a note to "use it where most needed" at Ciudad, and explained that the gift was being sent in honor of Christopher's memory.

When Tres Islas founder Donelle Manton received Teresa's check, she recognized immediately that Ciudad de los Niños didn't have a Christmas dinner sponsor that year – while the other orphanages did. And, the amount to purchase Christmas dinner for each of the orphanages is \$250.00 – the exact amount donated in Christopher's honor.

Donelle phoned Teresa to thank her for her donation and for sharing Christopher's meaningful visit to Ciudad, as well as to make a special request.

Because Christopher volunteered at Ciudad, planned to return but died on Christmas Day, would she permit Tres Islas' Christmas Fund to be named "The Christopher Fund" in Christopher's

honor, and would she like to serve as its chairperson? Teresa agreed – and has kindly spearheaded the fund ever since. And since naming the fund for Christopher and tirelessly raising awareness, the children in all the orphanages Tres Islas serves have dined on delicious and plentiful Christmas dinners.

As part of honoring Teresa and Christopher, Eileen returned to Mazatlán, and Ciudad for the first time since she and Christopher visited in 2005. She stood at Teresa's side as she was presented with the award. Christopher's brother, Rob, traveled from Washington, D.C. for the event.

Upon receiving the award, Teresa said Christopher would be happy his memory was helping children in the orphanages. She said he was well-loved by everyone who knew him because he had a kind and generous heart, especially for those in need. She said sharing her son's legacy is not only beneficial for The Christopher Fund, but hopes it will inspire others to do good as well.

Eileen said when Christopher told her in 2003 he planned to go help an orphanage in Mexico, even though the two had known each other since high school, it was at that moment she fell in love with him.

To learn more how you may help the children in Mazatlan's orphanages – please visit the Tres Islas Orphanage Fund's website: www.orphanagefunds.org



Eileen, Sister Ofelia, Christopher

with soccer balls and cleaning supplies for the nuns. Christopher and Eileen planned to return soon but the unexpected loss of Christopher that Christmas changed everything.