

HOGAR INFANTIL

SEPTEMBER 2004

“Do They Have A/C?”

DOT AND BILL BELL REPORT ON THEIR HOGAR VISIT

“Why do we want to camp in an Orphanage Mom?” says Adam my eldest son. “Do they have A/C?”

We continued our drive down highway 190 from San Cristobal de Las Casas to Tuxtla Gutierrez, the capital city of Chiapas – the poorest state in México - as Adam continues to argue against this particular stop.



Originally founded as a boy's shelter, the home has grown to accommodate both boys and girls between 6 & 24, providing shelter, food, clothing, medical care, and education. Four decades later, the non-profit society has housed and fed thousands of young Mexicans and helped them develop work skills or given them the opportunity

for a post-secondary education.

The home is located on a ranch near the small town of Ocozacoautla, in the southern State of Chiapas. There are a number of small buildings that cluster together that, with a houseparent, house 12 – 17 young Mexicans each. Currently Hogar is home to 60 or 70 young people and will increase to almost 90 by the time the school year begins.

We pull up the driveway to the main cluster of buildings. Three young girls approximately 12 years old run and scurry to the side of our vehicle playing tag with each other. We see other kids playing in the field – some dangling upside down on swing sets. Others, older teens, congregate towards the rec-room area.

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- *David Guinn—President*
- *Bob Herlocker—Treasurer*
- *Katie Morgan Carrasco—Secretary*
- *Ron Speck—Director*
- *Leslie Guinn—Director*
- *Paul Roach—Director*
- *Johanna Wilson—Director*

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“A PLACE OF SHARING”

As soon as our engine stops we are greeted by a young man in his late teens. "These are the noisy spots," he explains. "If you want more quiet you go there."

"We want the noisy spot mom" said our daughter Dylan looking at the group of teenagers that are near her age. "This will do fine."

Hogar Infantil developed the RV hook-ups so that people could visit and then hopefully choose to support the home for children. The plan has worked



well. Many Campers say that the visit was one of the most rewarding stops on their journey.

The two "noisy" spots have water and electricity. Larger groups can be accommodated but advance notice would be appreciated. A restroom is available with hot showers

You can expect some of the kids to approach you easily. Some are shy, and others just want to try out their English skills. They seem to smile more than kids back home.

Hogar says that payment for staying at this campground is neither expected nor allowed. That is true, but some people leave a donation with the Director. However, it is preferred – that if you do feel like giving support, you do so through the funding agency in the U.S. This is Hogar Infantil, Inc (a U.S. Non-Profit Corporation with no paid employees). Contact Bob Herlocker at bobnpeg2@escapees.com for more info regarding RV and camping spots.

Justine, our eldest daughter has worked with the disadvantaged in both India and Canada. The younger children gravitate to her as she writes in her journal outside on the table. They chatter quickly and quietly in Spanish as if they are telling girl secrets together. Later as she goes for a walk up the hill, a trail of kids

follow behind, laughing and racing as they pass through the field's long grasses. Suddenly, our daughter is "The Pied Piper of Hogar."



Adam has taken out his American football and sends long passes to a Mexican boy far down the field. "He's a natural," says Adam as he throws again, this time more challenging than the last. Soon he has a team of kids tackling and running with him.



Hogar's kids devour a ton of corn tortillas and 240 pounds of dried beans in a typical month. Education costs for public school and college are very inexpensive compared to Canada or the US but with a population hovering around 100, the education budget exceeds \$20,000 annually.

Breaking the cycle of poverty through education has worked for many of the graduates. Many now lead productive supportive lives and have become lawyers, doctors, teachers and engineers. The Director, Carlos Macias, is a graduate of Hogar himself. He has a family of his own now; a wife and two children.

Ron Speck, a volunteer Board member from Salem Oregon, explains that one young American was so impressed with

the home that he went home and raised over \$700 for tools for the orphanage. Ron delivered the tools to Hogar and had enough money left over to purchase an adjustable basketball hoop. Israel Campos is the handy-man around Hogar. He was delighted with the new tools as were the kids with the new basketball hoop that now gives the little ones a chance to make a goal.



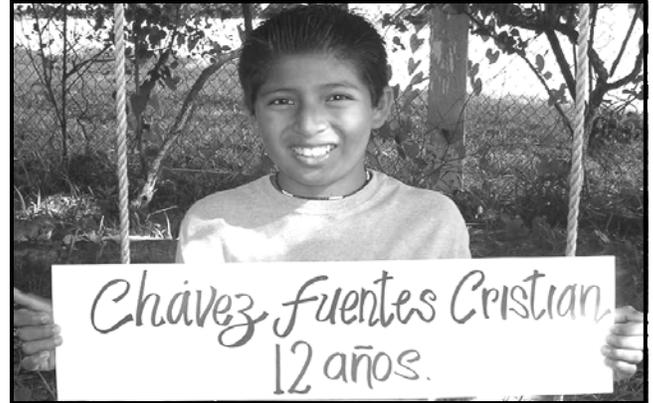
Just after dark the teenagers congregate at the rec-centre. The music is playing but it is not as “noisy” as I was warned. Some of the kids dance, others talk in small groups. A young boy starts to dance swirling and turning like Michael Jackson. My son Adam falls to the pavement doing his own solo dance and begins to do the “worm” to the amazement of the crowd. Everyone laughs into the evening.

Our initially reluctant kids now want to stay. “Just one more day Mom, just one more day please”

Of course, we have to move on, but we catch Adam packing up a bag of his travel clothes to leave for one of his new found amigos.

“They need these more than I do,” he says.

A Better Home for Cristian



Christian is a boy who came to Hogar just over two years ago. He hails from the state of Quintana Roo in the Yucatan Peninsula. He lived in Ciudad De Playa and later moved with his father to Chetumal where they lived with his step-mother.

One day his father went off to work and never returned. Cristian was left alone with a woman who showed him no love. Instead she mistreated and beat him often. Cristian longed for a better home and love.

Once he went into the streets to play with other kids. He knew that he would receive a beating when he got home but he went anyway. The beatings were becoming routine but it was worth it to spend an hour with his friends of the street. At home his step-mother hit him in the head with a stick and opened a bleeding wound. Cristian vowed to run away.

He went to the home of a kindly woman that he knew and she took him to the authorities at an agency called El Instituto de Desarrollo Humano (Human Development Institute). This agency investigated Cristian’s case and made arrangements for him to be brought to Hogar Infantil.

Cristian is quiet, tranquil and studious. He likes to play and makes friends easily, yet something in his eyes reveals his terrible past. It bothers him not to know what happened to his father. He is thankful for the woman who took him to the authorities and helped him to find the better home that he had longed for.

This year he is entering the fourth grade of primary school. His grades have been very good and he hopes to make something of his life so he can help others. His thanks go out to you, the donors, and to God for finding him a better home.

Transitions

On October the 8th the Board of Directors is scheduled to meet in Granbury, Texas at the home of Leslie and David Guinn. We are planning for Hogar's future considering recent changes in the past and future Board's membership. We invite anyone interested to please participate in the meeting.

After eighteen years of faithful service, Kathy Ledesma has stepped down as the Vice President, and Steve Chambers has decided to leave as Chairman. They will be missed. In addition, David Guinn plans to retire from Hogar within the next two years.

Your involvement is very important, and your personal interest could not be undertaken at a more important time. The continuation of Hogar depends upon the involvement of new Board members, and this is a wonderful time to undertake a most fulfilling adventure helping to change the lives of very deserving children.



John Murphrey gets to know Jorgito one of the "Nuevos."

We are happy to announce that John Murphrey and his wife, Anne, will be attending the meeting in October. John will become a new member of the Board of Directors.

John has been our Santa Clause for many years and is deeply involved with the success of Hogar.



Cindy & a friend from HOGAR

One of the most important tasks for Hogar is the administrative duties of acknowledging your donation with a receipt, and sending along a drawing from one of the kids at the ranch.

Cindy Morman has volunteered to take on this important task. Cindy, her daughter, and husband live in Salem Oregon. They became acquainted with Hogar through the work of Westminster Presbyterian Church mission trips over eight years ago. For the last six years Cindy and her daughter have become part of life at the ranch. They provide arts, crafts, and learning games for Hogar's children.

Professionally Cindy is a teacher but part of each summer she is affectionately known as "Tia" Cindy and the love flows to and from the kids. We are thankful for her help and hope that you, the donors, will write her a note of welcome, as she is a most welcome addition to Hogar's team.

If you can attend our Board meeting call or email David Guinn at 817-279-7186 or quinti@aol.com.