

HOGAR INFANTIL

May 2005

Going Home.....

"Back to his boyhood roots at Hogar"

By Neto Morgan

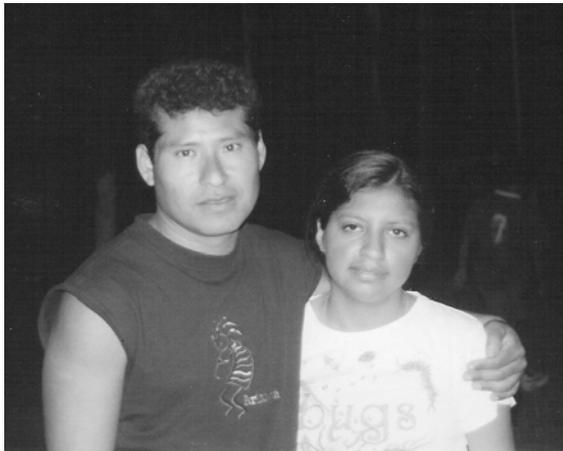
A month ago I went to Chiapas, Mexico, to visit my brothers and sisters at Hogar Infantil. The ranch is very happy and alive with many new kids, and some who I knew as children are now adolescents. No matter how much time passes, my heart still belongs to this beautiful place. I had the pleasure of talking with many of the students at Hogar and there is a strong presence of optimism and many hopes for the future. Many of the kids are making huge efforts in school and at home, doing their part to contribute to the good of the ranch community. Of course there are always some young people who unfortunately don't know how to appreciate what they have, and they decide to take a different road, leaving Hogar.

During my stay at Hogar, I spoke with the students about my experiences living in Oregon for nearly four years now. I've told them about the good times and the not so good, like seeing it rain day after day for months without seeing the sun. But, it's the difficult times that teach us to see clearly which of the paths ahead of us we are to choose. When I tell of my experiences, many excited listeners form a circle around me to hear better, and I feel a sense of deep satisfaction to be home again, even if it is only for a few short weeks.



I also had the opportunity to speak with Carlos a great deal and accompany him to a couple of conferences with SEDESOL (the government program from which Carlos has received wonderful support). Carlos is working very hard to help guide the students in their studies and also to encourage the ones who graduate to continue on their paths with purpose and direction.

For me these three weeks that I was able to share with my Hogar family were a wonderful experience. But to tell the truth, after just a couple of days at Hogar Infantil I missed my son, Eric, my wife, my in-laws and my new friends in Oregon so much that I have come to the realization that my heart is now in two places.



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"A PLACE OF SHARING"

A Terrible Fall

*Adapted from a story by
Virginia del Carmen González Toledo*

What started out as an afternoon run turned to tragedy for Virginia del Carmen when she took a terrible fall. What appeared to be a short jump across a ditch turned into a fall of twenty feet into the side of the ditch. Her body crumbled on impact. Vicky's (for short) back and neck were hurt, but the worst was her right ankle that hung loosely and twisted. Pain and fear set in.

Luckily, this happened near Hogar Infantil, where Vicky worked as a tutor and dance instructor for the girls. She was running with her sister and boyfriend, Juan Ovilla, a law student who grew up at Hogar. They ran to get help at Hogar Infantil, loaded her in a van and took her home. Her father was very upset and her mother speechless. They took Vicky to a *sobandero* (a traditional healer who sets bones by massage and manipulation) who said that her leg was broken, but he could rub it back into place. After rubbing the swollen leg and ankle, he put vapor rub on it and a tight bandage. He said it would be fine and that Vicky should get some rest.

This was just the beginning of an ordeal that would last for weeks. Vicky almost perished. Her fever was high. Blisters from the vapor rub under bandages covered her purple swollen ankle. Someone who loved to run and dance now had to be carried to the bathroom.

Vicky's uncle, who is a doctor, insisted that she be taken to the hospital, but her father was terrified of the high costs of orthopedic surgery, so he instead repeatedly took her to less qualified therapists and healers. This always had painful, futile results. One person seeing the ankle and Vicky's physical condition with spine and neck injuries recommended immediate amputation. It was difficult for Vicky to maintain any hope. Her pillow was moist with tears most of the time. She prayed to walk again one day.



Dr. Phillip & Ingrid Zeeck

Slowly the twisted bones fused, and the ankle turned down and outward, but Vicky got better. With crutches she could get around and go to the bathroom alone. One of the first places she went was to Hogar Infantil to see if the director would allow her to return to working with kids. Her dreams of finishing college had vanished, but she had the healing powers of Hogar's children. They ran and danced for her. At times, this was the only thing that gave her a sense of purpose in life.

Carlos Macías, Hogar's director, was very concerned about Vicky. She had plans to marry Juan Ovilla, who had then completed law school. Her scholarship at the university was restored and she returned to her studies. She could even get around without the crutches. Yet, Carlos knew it could be better.

Carlos contacted Hogar President, David Guinn. He immediately thought of Dr. Phillip Zeeck who had visited the ranch many times. Phillip had been one of David's roommates in college, and they have maintained a close friendship since. He is now an orthopedic surgeon. X-rays were sent to Texas so that Dr. Zeeck could study them. To break the fused bones and reset them would take a lot of time and much post-operative care. An operation in the states wasn't practical.

Vicky at least now had some hope of getting some real help. She prayed that Dr. Zeeck could examine the ankle and do something for her. Finally the day she dreamed about came. Dr. Zeeck and his wife, Ingrid flew with David Guinn to the ranch in Dr. Zeeck's plane.

Dr. Zeeck was able to find a person who made special orthopedic boots for this type of injury. They designed a boot with a high heel and strong ankle support. Finally something worked wonderfully for Vicky! Thanks to the help of Carlos Macias, David Guinn and Dr. Zeeck, Vicky now dances, laughs, and lives an active life. She happily married Ovilla, and she will always be grateful for those who supported her in this difficult journey.

We wish to thank the Zeeck's for their continued love and support of Hogar..... You can see this story in its entirety and in Virginia's own words on our web site www.hogarinfantil.org.

RANCH NEWS

by Carlos Macias

Here at Hogar Infantil we have recently had problems with our water system, resulting in frequent water shortages. After looking at many solutions, we determined that we could remedy this problem with a larger underground pipeline to replace the existing one. We are finally finished with this project, thanks to the help of our older boys here at the ranch. The new tubing is in and we are now receiving all the water we need. We feel this will result in plentiful water during the dry season. The hard workers were rewarded with two trips to the movies in nearby Tuxtla Gutierrez. I am very grateful to these young men for their hard work. Because of them we were able to keep the cost of this project down to a minimum.

Our chapel is almost finished. The only things left to complete is the installation of the stained glass windows and the wooden furniture, which are to be delivered this week. We expect that by May 20th it will be totally finished. It is very beautiful, and we plan on the grand inauguration being the mass for the *quinceañeras*, Sandra and Lucía, as we celebrate their 15th birthdays this summer. This will take place on August 27, and we wish to extend a cordial invitation to any of you who would like to come. It would be an honor for us to share this special tradition with our Hogar family from abroad, and we promise you will have a wonderful time!

May 10th is Mother's Day in Mexico, and it is always a special time to show our mothers how much we appreciate all they do for us. We had a wonderful celebration dinner for our staff members who are mothers

or who care for our children by serving as house mothers or cooks. They give our children much of their time and love, and we honor them for their dedication.



Each spring brings with it great cause for celebration, as we congratulate our boys and girls on graduating from primary, secondary and high school. This year we have 17 proud graduates. Luis Enrique, Leonardo, Mario, Cecilia, Karen and Amayrani are graduating from primary school.

For their completion of secondary (junior high) school we take our hats off to Williams, Jorge, Abelín, Agustín, Marlene, Sandra, María del Rosario, Cecilia, and Lucía. Our two graduates from *prepa* (high school), Johanna and Martha, have proven to be especially dedicated students. We are very proud of their success and hard work, and we hope to support them in their future studies.

We ask that you keep all of these children in your prayers, as we will keep you in ours. May you feel the blessings in your life every day.

¡Hasta pronto! or Until Later!



Who Won? You Did!!!!

by Ron Speck

The cooperation, affection, and support the Hogar children show each other is truly heartwarming. During my recent visit to Hogar Infantil 17 children ages 7-15 were engaged in a post dinner game of kickball. This evening event started when one child held up a ball and asked who wanted to join in. The game, without adult supervision, lasted for over an hour. During this fun filled event there was not a single argument about who was safely on base, who was out, or if it was a "score" or not. Can you imagine such an event in your neighborhood? Simultaneously there were four other groups of kids either watching the game or just talking to

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Changes to the U.S. Board of Directors

by Katie Morgan Carrasco

As you may notice in the listing of unpaid officers for the Hogar Infantil Board of Directors, we have had some recent changes. The Board wishes to honor the following:

Our newest Board member is David Pease, who lives and works in Texas as an attorney specializing in employment, ethics and government contracts. His family has a long history of support for and involvement with Hogar Infantil. While studying law in Arkansas, David used his skills and knowledge of legal matters in volunteer service for several non-profit agencies. We can see that this was just him “revving the engines” in preparation for his plunge into the many tasks he has already volunteered for as a Board member. In 1998, while still working on his Undergraduate Degree, David first designed our web page and has maintained and updated it ever since, and he has more recently volunteered to be the publisher of the Hogar newsletter. His experience organizing fundraisers and community

projects will be very helpful to the Hogar Board. We are excited to welcome such a warm-hearted and dedicated person to the Hogar Infantil Board of Directors.

We also wish to sincerely thank Bob Herlocker for the many years of service he has dedicated to Hogar Infantil. After over 20 years as member and treasurer for Hogar Infantil, Bob has decided to retire. Bob’s financial expertise and insistence on accurate reporting and documentation were things that those on the board knew they could count on. He has also been instrumental in involving the RV community with the ranch, encouraging visits and easy access for people traveling in RVs. Many warm friendships between travelers and Hogar’s children have resulted from Bob’s influence. He will be greatly missed, not only for his skills and knowledge but also for his genuine concern for the children of Hogar Infantil.

Who Won? You Did!!!! *continued*

each other building their Hogar family relationships. As the game progressed with tons of energy, laughing and smiling faces a question came to my mind. I asked myself, “If these children were not here on the Ranch, what would they be doing right now?” Some possibilities that came to my mind were; sleeping on



a dirt floor, no home at all, being abused, hungry, and more. As the game wrapped up there wasn’t any mention of a score or who won, the children just wandered off to bed at the call of their housemothers.

So who did win? You have won! Through your generous donations of money, prayers and gifts these children have the chance to break out of the poverty cycle and lead healthy, productive lives.

See Us Online

Next time you are online, please check out:

www.hogarinfantil.org

While it is a constant work in progress, the web site gives us a chance to offer you an even closer link to Hogar and its happenings. Here you can find more stories and information about the happenings at Hogar including: meeting some of our new residents; catching up with some old newsletters; joining our email list to be informed of happenings at the ranch; and much much more....

Please feel free to pass the location on to others who may be interested.

Email us at contacthogar@hogarinfantil.org

Donor Meeting Announcement:

With the all the exciting new happenings at Hogar, the Board has decided to hold a separate Donor Meeting this year. This is so we can show all of our wonderful donors a deeper look into Hogar, as well as, get input on issues such as our new Dorm Project. It will be held in beautiful and fun-filled Eureka Springs, Arkansas this fall, date TBA. If you would be interested in attending, please contact David Guinn at 817-279-7186 or mail to P.O. Box 1835 Granbury, Texas 76048.