

HOGAR INFANTIL

Summer 2013

Ranch News

Happy summer to all—what’s left of it, anyway! Just like their counterparts in the US, Hogar’s youth and children are at the beginning of their school year. In Mexico, school generally starts a couple of weeks earlier than we do, so they have been in school long enough to be settled into a routine. Tomato and pepper plants are growing well, and the farm is running smoothly.

Hogar had a fruitful summer, we welcomed many visitors for our annual quinceañera celebration. A great time was had by all, especially our three young women who got to wear makeup and heels for the first time as we honored their entering into womanhood. You can read faithful Hogar friend, Susan Otto’s account of the festivities on page 3.

We are also getting closer to digging a private well on the ranch property. This would eliminate a problem Hogar has faced for decades: an unreliable water supply. We hope to have good news about this very soon! Until then we wish you many blessings and thank you for your presence.



Two girls share a giggle and a hug while waiting to leave for school.

Inside this issue:

Ranch News.....	1
Explanation.....	2
Quinceañera.....	3
Water	4

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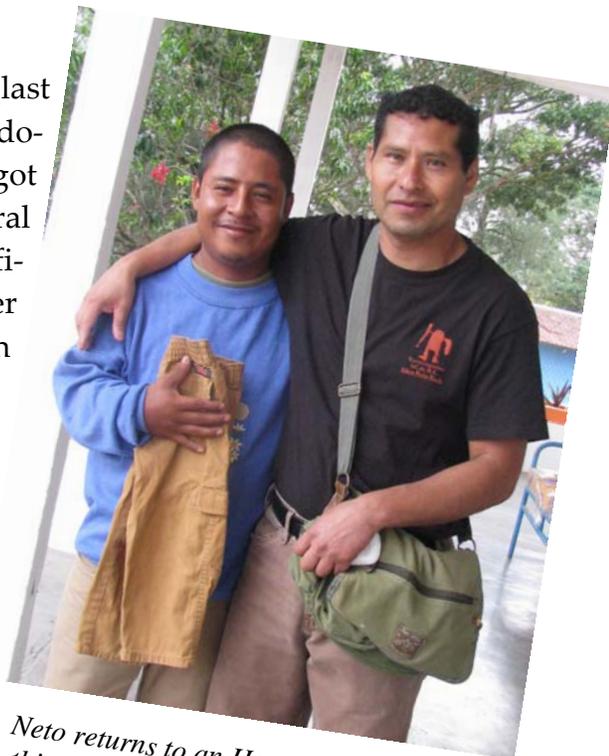
“A PLACE OF SHARING”

Explanation (not excuse!)

By David Guinn

Taking the challenge from "Money Matters" (last newsletter) to tell friends about Hogar's need for new donors, a long time Hogar supporter did just that and got friends to make a donation this summer. It took several weeks before their checks were deposited and they finally got an acknowledgement. The long time supporter called me for an explanation of why this happened with money being so urgently needed.

I offered the following explanation, which is just that and not an excuse. Donations and receipts are handled by un-paid volunteers who do the work in free time. With lives of their own, work, family, and summer vacations the process may take several weeks. We keep a pad of money and make sure that there is enough to cover the monthly stipend



Neto returns to an Hogar graduate something he saved from years ago—a pair of tiny pants that he used to wear while in Hogar's care!



Cindy gets to know a new friend on a visit to the ranch

at the beginning of each month. For the most part Hogar does live "hand to mouth", but we keep enough food on the table.

In our next newsletter we would like to introduce the behind-the-scenes workers and let you know what their tasks are. They work for the good of the Children and enjoy the blessing of being part of the love bridge between you, the donors, and the wonderful kids whose full and vibrant lives you make possible.

“A PLACE OF SHARING”

Quinceañera

by Susan Otto

This year was my sixth trip to Hogar Infantil. As a teacher, I usually visit Hogar as soon as the school year ends, and before summer school starts. Over the years I have seen decorations being made, dresses being purchased, and plenty of dance rehearsals, but I had never seen the actual *quinceañera*. I was so honored to be a part of this amazing celebration this year. In the days leading up to the celebration, the whole campus was cleaned and the lawn mowed (by tractor, lawn mower and machetes too!) Decorations were hand made and preparations were underway in the kitchen. Every day the girls and their escorts practiced the dances. When the day finally arrived the kitchen went into full swing. Veggies were chopped, piles of macaroni were boiled for salad, and the wood fired clay oven outside was filled with the most delicious pork (I may have walked by while they were checking the progress of the meat!) The girls spent the day getting ready and when their hair and make up were perfect they donned their beautiful gowns and walked to the chapel for the mass. Padre Francisco spoke of the challenges that they would face, the value of their education and the time that they spent growing and learning with their brothers and sisters at Hogar. Then it was time to celebrate! There were toasts and speeches and beautiful choreographed dancing and many plates of amazing food! The night was full of loud music, dancing, hugs and photos. It was a beautiful night to remember.



Hogar's three young women who turned 15 years old this year, along with their "chambalanes" and Padre Francisco

Water of Life

by Leslie Guinn

I grew up in western New York, where water was never an issue except when it rained on your picnic. We lived near abundant sources of water from nearby lakes, and the only time we ever used a sprinkler was for the kids to play on hot summer days. It took living in Texas for me to truly appreciate water.

It rained this morning, not a lot, but enough to bless the summer sun-parched earth. Not nearly enough to replenish our lake which is down to record-breaking levels after several years of drought. Water has always been an issue at Hogar Infantil, also. Chiapas has very distinct wet and dry seasons. During the dry season water for children, garden and livestock at Hogar becomes a critical issue. About 18 months ago a water purification system was installed to ensure that the water for drinking was healthy and did not contain unhealthy bacteria and parasites. This was a wonderful step forward, but it did not ensure the source of water.

When water is in short supply, the water that is purchased from local sources becomes very expensive. There have been occasions when the children have had to form bucket brigades to haul water up to the dormitories in order to bathe and flush toilets. We have always dreamed of our own water well that would give us independence from outside water suppliers.

A number of years ago we hired some well diggers who tried in vain to hand dig a well. Recently, we hired an engineering company to do a water feasibility survey. They believe there is an aquifer at about 100 meters (300 feet). We have received a cost estimate of \$20,000 to drill the well on the property. We are in the process of making grant applications to help with the cost. Hopefully we will be able to report in the near future that Hogar will have been blessed with life-giving water.



Water is not only essential for Hogar's children but also for the health of the farm animals.

“A PLACE OF SHARING”