

January 31, 2008

Greetings from Albuquerque!

We hope that you all had a merry Christmas and are enjoying God's blessings in this new year. In mid-December, we temporarily moved up to Albuquerque, New Mexico, to anticipate the upcoming birth of our son. We are excited to share that Joel Emmanuel Robles was born on December 31, 2007, weighing 6 lbs. 11 oz. Because of Emmis' features, Emmis and I were expecting Joel to be a dark-skinned baby with lots of dark hair and brown eyes, so we were quite surprised to see that Joel has fair skin, a very small amount of light brown hair, and deep blue eyes! Despite arriving two weeks early, Joel is a healthy, beautiful baby. We are amazed by how much he seems to grow every day! Emmis is wonderful with the baby and is such a huge help to me; being a dad definitely seems to come naturally to him.

We have been enjoying spending time with my family while we are here in Albuquerque. It's great to be so close to them, since everyone seems to need a daily "fix" of the new baby. Living with my sister Kara and her husband Jotham has truly been a blessing, and I am so thankful to God for giving me such a loving, supportive family! During our time here, Emmis has been volunteering at Albuquerque Rescue Mission, where he helps to prepare and serve meals, pick up food donations from different stores, etc. He likes serving at this ministry because he is able to very tangibly meet the needs of people in hardship. We have also found a Spanish-speaking church here in Albuquerque that reminds us of our church in Juarez. The majority of the people there are from some part of the Mexican state of Chihuahua, where Juarez is located, and they have been very welcoming and genuine. We no longer feel like visitors even though we've only been attending for about a month.

Down at the children's home, things are going very well. After we left, my sister Jessica and her good friend Abbie spent about six weeks helping Pastor Julian and Beatriz run the place. During this time, six additional children came to live at the orphanage! We now have a total of 11 kids, ranging in ages 3 to 9. Siblings **Jorge** (9), **Jose** (8), **Esmeralda** (4), and **Perla** (3), were taken straight from their abusive home to our children's home in December. Siblings **María** (6) and **Victor** (4) were transferred to our home from another orphanage in January. Having 11 children has been a challenge for everyone involved, but also a huge blessing. They are all beautiful, precious children who are now being loved and cared for and are learning about Jesus. The new kids already call Emmis "papá" and they pray daily for little baby Joel, their new "hermanito." We are so grateful to Pastor Julian, Beatriz, Jessica, and Abbie for giving of their time and efforts to operate the children's home. We would also like to thank Hardee Town Baptist Church of Florida, City Church of Albuquerque, and Christine Duke & friends for all of the Christmas presents and stockings that they sent down for the children. A huge thank you also to Ron Keith who recently donated a very nice 15-passenger van.

On January 22, Raul and Monica Rodriquez and their 5-year-old daughter Gracie arrived at the orphanage. Their 13-year-old daughter Audrey will soon join them. The Lord answered their prayers and ours by calling them to move from their home in Arkansas to Juarez to serve full-time at the children's home. They will be running it during the remainder of our absence and will seek the Lord's direction as to how long to stay thereafter. Raul and Monica and their family have such a strong desire to serve the Lord, and we thank God for them. Please pray for God to give them strength and wisdom, as well as love and joy in working with the

children. Emmis and I communicate daily with them as they learn the ropes of running the children's home, and we love to talk on the phone to each of the kids also. We know that it is God's will for us to be in Albuquerque right now, but we dearly miss the kids and we are looking forward to returning to Juarez in several months.

We would like to thank you all for your continued prayers and support for us and for the children's home. Because of you, we are able to continue making a difference in the lives of hurting children as we love them, care for them, and teach them about the love of Christ. However, we are still in need of more monthly financial support, especially in light of our increased number of children and our desire to be able to eventually receive even more. For those of you who do not currently financially support the children's home, we encourage you to make a commitment to sending in a financial contribution on a monthly basis. Allow the Lord to use you through your giving to be a part of this important ministry. All donations are tax-deductible and can be sent to the following address:

Rivers of Mercy Children's Home  
Bridge the Gap International  
P.O. Box 702558  
Tulsa, OK 74170-2558

Credit card donations may also be made online at our website, [www.riverofmercy.org](http://www.riverofmercy.org). May the Lord continue to provide for us so that we may continue to demonstrate Christ-like mercy to children in need.

In Christ,  
Emmis, Kristin, & Joel Robles

