



Rivers of Mercy Children's Home
... a Christ-centered orphanage in the Juarez, Mexico colonia of Anapra

July 24, 2009

Warm summer greetings (literally) from all of us at Rivers of Mercy Children's Home in Juarez, Mexico!

We are so grateful for your prayers and support, which God uses to continue to bless and enlarge this ministry. There are currently 24 children living at the orphanage, which is the largest number of children we have ever had at one time. Eight of the children are from needy families in the community, and 16 are from DIF (the Mexican social services). We haven't had any children leave us (either through adoption or through returning to their original families) in several months. It is likely that most of our 24 children will be here long-term, since many of them will not leave us until they are adopted one day. All of our kids are very accustomed to living at the orphanage, are happy here, and most importantly, know Jesus.

Summer vacation from public school was official at the end of June; however, our kids stopped attending a couple of weeks early due to an outbreak of chicken pox here at the orphanage! Very few of the children had received important vaccinations, so some of the kids got very severe cases of chicken pox. June was a rough month due to different illnesses among the kids, but the Lord gave us the strength to get through that ordeal, and currently all of them are healthy. We don't know what we would have done without the help of our full-time volunteers; Mary, Rachel, and 18-year-old A.J. from New Mexico. They truly are a God-send. Thanks also to our summer volunteers, Kelley from Minnesota and Colleen from Illinois—the kids love you! We continue to teach the children school here at the orphanage all summer long in order to prepare them for starting public school in August. They learn so much here with us—many of them now read and write excellently, and others are quickly learning! Some of our children even did well enough that they have even been offered scholarships to assist them in continuing their education (public school in Mexico is not free).



In addition to teaching stories from the Bible, over the past several months we have also taught real-life stories about missionaries who labored in different parts of the world. We taught them about Jim Elliot and they had fun making straw huts like the Aucas in Ecuador. They also made paper dragons and attempted to eat Chinese food like the Chinese people to whom Hudson Taylor ministered. The kids also re-enacted trudging through the mud and rain of the jungle like Mary Slessor did during her years laboring in Nigeria, Africa. It has been amazing to us to see the children's excitement and willingness regarding answering God's call to take the gospel to all parts of the world. In addition, we have recently been teaching a series of lessons that we created about what the Bible teaches about drugs, alcohol, our bodies (what is appropriate and what is sin), and much more. Some might think that these topics may not be appropriate for such young children, but sadly enough, many of them already have experienced things like sexual abuse and alcoholic parents in their young lives. We are striving to raise wise children in a corrupt world.

"Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?' And I said, 'Here I am. Send me!'" Isaiah 6:8



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Paola (7) and Samuel (8) are siblings who arrived at the orphanage several months ago and who truly exemplify our purpose for all of the children who come through the doors of this ministry. They were taken away from their mom, who was a single mother, due to neglect. They had never been registered after birth, have no birth certificates, have never attended school, and often had to beg neighbors for food in order to eat. When they first arrived at the orphanage, they were sad, withdrawn, and cried every night at bedtime because of the trauma of being removed from their mother and taken to live in a new, unfamiliar place. However, over the next couple of weeks, Samuel and Paola heard and understood the message of the gospel, and with tears pouring down their cheeks one night, they prayed to receive Christ as their personal Savior. He was the loving Father that they so longed for, and they desperately needed to know that He loved them and had a plan for them, which was always for their good. Paola and Samuel are now happier children who trust that God has a reason for them being here. They now pray for their mother and are eagerly learning in school here at the orphanage.



Meanwhile, Emmis and I just celebrated our third wedding anniversary, and were able to get away for one night to a hotel here in Juarez. I am so thankful to the Lord for Emmis; God truly has formed him into a wise, capable leader of his family and director of this ministry. I always say that he is the perfect man to be the father to so many children! Our son, Joel, is eighteen months old and runs around the orphanage interacting with the other children, just like one of them! He already says approximately thirty words, in English & Spanish!

We want to thank you all so much for your donations, financial support, and continued prayers, which allow us to continue to offer a loving and safe home to many suffering children, and most importantly, to share the gospel with them. We are so encouraged by your generosity and your desire to help in every way that you can.

With much love,

Emmis, Kristin, & Joel

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