

Hello and happy Fall from all of us here at Rivers of Mercy Children's Home!

I have been meaning to write this newsletter for quite some time now in order to share with you all an update of what has been going on in the ministry. My apologies for this being so late—I just realized that the last newsletter I sent out was in July! Hopefully you'll understand, considering that we have twenty-five kids. :)

We are doing well, and, as always, are very busy. As I mentioned above, we currently have twenty-five children, including our almost 2-year old son Joel. We have had the same children for many months now, children that will probably be with us until they are eventually adopted. In a way this is very advantageous, as we are able to invest more spiritual, moral, and academic teaching in these children since they have been here for long periods of time. In fact, one of the greatest blessings we have experienced this year has been the spiritual growth in the children. We saw first-hand as they heard and understood for the first time foundational Biblical truths, as they later asked Christ to be their personal Savior, as they have learned to confess sin to God on a continual basis, as they have made the decision to be baptized, and more. We are excited and privileged to be used by God to teach children to know, love, and obey Him.

I'd like to share a few highlights (and photos) from each month since the previous newsletter. In **August**, we received a large sibling group of children, an "exterior case," meaning that the children were not from DIF (the social services). They were children of a single mother who had just been abandoned by her husband, leaving her alone and jobless with six children under the age of seven. We were able to receive five of the children, with the hope that this would give the mother the opportunity to find a job and get back on her feet.

The youngest of these siblings was tiny, malnourished, 4-month-old baby Santiago. Due to several illnesses that he arrived with, which were made worse by his severe malnourishment, we spent over a week in the hospital with him here in Juarez, which was a trying experience, to say the least. During his stay in the hospital, DIF was informed about the situation, and after doing a thorough investigation of the mother, deemed her incapable of having full-time custody of the children based on the conditions in which they had been living and her inability to meet their critical needs. During this time DIF took over full legal custody of all six children. Santiago did improve by the end of his hospital stay, but unfortunately, DIF did not allow us to keep him here at our orphanage due to his young age. However, we do have his five older siblings: Brian (7), Diana (6), Tereso (3), Jose (2), and Alex (1). Although we are always thinking about and wondering about little Santiago, we thank God for sending him to us at just the right time, as we believe God used us to save his life.



The main event in **September** was the celebration of Mexican Independence Day on September 16<sup>th</sup>. Every year, Emmis' dad, Pastor Julian, holds a huge "fiesta" at his church to celebrate the occasion. Everyone dresses up in traditional Mexican attire, and there is lots of food and games. We have taken on the challenge every year of outfitting all of our children with appropriate, old-world costumes (see photo). The kids were so excited about this event and had a great time!



In **October**, Emmis and I and our son Joel were able to go on a much-needed, week-long vacation that had been months in the planning! Heritage Christian Fellowship in Albuquerque, NM, made this possible by sending down four amazing people to help at the orphanage while we were away. They did an excellent job with the kids and they had such a wonderful, memorable time! Meanwhile, we were able to spend several days in Rio Rancho, my hometown, and then several days in the snowy mountains of Red River, NM with all of my immediate family. We were truly able to rest and relax.

Finally, the highlight of this month (**November**) has been the baptism of six of our children. For an entire week, we taught the children lessons about what the Bible teaches about baptism. At the end of the week, six of the older children wished to be baptized and were able to explain to us that baptism shows that they have received Christ as their Savior and want to follow and obey Him. Emmis then baptized **Azucena, Samuel, Paola, Danny, Giselle, and Maria** in a small plastic pool outside the orphanage. We are filled with joy to see these children's commitment to follow Christ.



We are so blessed by how the Lord continually provides for our needs through donated food and material goods; hard-working volunteers; and churches, families, and friends who so faithfully support us. Mary "Grandma" Dumas has been a full-time volunteer here for over a year now, and definitely has the Lord's anointing, since she works way too hard for a person her age, yet always seems to have renewed strength and joy for each day. Nineteen-year-old A.J. also remains here as a full-time volunteer. He really loves the kids and enjoys working the evening shift with them every day. This month, University United Methodist Church of Las Cruces donated a 15-passenger van to our ministry, which is just what we needed (we only had one before). It is an older vehicle, but it runs great. May God bless all of you for your generous support of this ministry. We are pressing on with our plans to begin a Christian school here on the orphanage property within the next several years. We are confident that as we continue to be obedient to the Lord's will, He will continue to open doors and accomplish His plans through us.

We so appreciate your continued prayers and support.

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