

News from Villa Infantil



Dedicated to the life and spirit of Sandra Cartwright

CONTACT:

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Villa Work Continues

VILLA INFANTIL HAS COMPLETED MANY IMPROVEMENTS

In early July 2011, Villa Infantil had its first comprehensive state inspection. The state presented Madre Maria with a list of items that must be met if the Villa is to operate as an orphanage after November. The list seemed impossible to complete, not just because of funds (though raising that much money did seem impossible) but also because of the very narrow window of time allowed to complete the work.

By the end of November the Villa had raised almost all the funds necessary to

complete the work and the majority of the regulations had been met.

Here we are one year later and the work accomplished is amazing. New doorways, alarms, generators, many new safety features and regularly scheduled medical support for the kids are just some of the completed projects..

While ongoing funding is necessary for some of the requirements, the physical plant funding for the project has been met.



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Lunch News

A REPORT FROM GEOFF LONG

For the past several years, Geoff Long has been the volunteer coordinator for the lunch program. Here is a recent report:

Providing the children at the Villa with lunch twice a week has continued very successfully. Our Tuesday and Thursday commitments have been carried out extremely well by our volunteers. At one point we had enough volunteers that we considered adding Wednesday as a third day. Unfortunately, just as we were setting up a schedule, situations oc-

curred that reduced the availability of some of our regulars, so in the end we decided to retain the twice a week schedule. But now with the summer here and so many people gone home, I am pleased to report that we will still have sufficient individuals to bear the load until autumn brings back our volunteers.

As always, it is challenging to find different yet healthy food items for the children. Vegetables are always difficult. It is not uncommon to see all types of vegetables subtly re-

moved and dropped on the floor. My solution is to chop them extremely small and try to mix them in well with whatever sauces I add to the protein. And of course, the kids always prefer cookies to fresh fruit. Each volunteer has their own way to try and get the children to eat as healthy as possible.

It must work, the children are healthy, happy and thriving whenever we visit The Villa with goodies to share.

Please see Page 3 for info on joining the lunch group

Note from the Editor

About 12 years ago I started, quite by accident, an incredibly successful relief drive for Honduran victims of Hurricane Mitch. Because of an amazing network of volunteers, 14 forty foot containers of donated goods found their way to people living in the aftermath of one of the most devastating and deadly hurricanes of the 20th century. I was in awe of how generous people were with their gifts of clothing, food and medicine. Logistically, the operation was a nightmare, with some goods never finding

their way out of customs. When I visited the country several months later, I found bottles of over-the-counter drugs that had obviously been donated on the shelves in small drug stores. I also learned the difference between donating a dollar's worth of American goods and sending a dollar. When a dollar was sent into the community, it was spent in the community benefitting the targeted recipient but also the merchant, his family and the merchants from whom he would buy his food, clothing

and tools. And on and on. Giving dollars does NOT give the warm feeling that giving a tangible item does. And certainly those tangible items help and are very necessary. But now when thinking about donating to any charity, I always consider first the gift of cash. Sadly, I can't picture a child wearing it, but I know in the end, I'm giving more to more people.



Sally

EFAI Once Again Gives Major Grant

Villa Infantil has once again been awarded a major education grant through the generosity of the **Educational Foundation of the Americas**. The Foundation recognizes the importance of bilingual education and has repeatedly awarded grants to the Villa because of its high standards of education.

The EFAI website states their mission as *to improve and stimulate the quality of education in the Hispanic Community of the Americas with specific emphasis on identifying and promot-*

ing model programs and/or educational institutions. Additionally, the directors expect to foster bilingual or trilingual education that will allow this community to participate effectively in modern society and in the global economy.

Visit the foundation's website for more information about their work and see a photo of Ambassador Sanchez with some of the Villa children at a fundraiser last fall.

<http://www.fdn-americas.org/mission.html>

OXXO Grant

Oxxo, a huge chain of 7-11 like stores in Mexico awards charitable grants to non-profits throughout the country. Their generosity to Villa Infantil at the end of last year enabled Madre Maria to complete many of the compliance projects necessary to keep the doors open. Our hearty thanks to Oxxo for the good work they are doing in the community!



Sister Site

Volunteers from Guadalajara have been working hard to get the word out to the Mexican community about Villa Infantil. The volunteers are also helping Madre with much of her clerical work in an effort to give her more free time with the children. The group has created a Spanish language website which can be found at www.villainfantilac.com.mx. The site is currently under construction with more added often.

The group is under the leadership of the sister of a former local priest who was a keen supporter of the Villa.

Please visit our English language website at www.friendsofvillainfantil.org for more information on the Villa, visiting and donating.



THANK YOU VOLUNTEERS!

Thanks to all of you who give of your time and hearts to help the children of Villa Infantil.

You are the best!

Get Involved!

Thanks to the Lunch Group, Sister Blanca can take a break from lunch duty in the kitchen two days a week. As you read in the article on the first page, dedicated members of this group make a delicious lunch for the Villa children on Tuesday and Thursday every week. Over 20 children with very healthy appetites ensure there are no leftovers. If you would like more information on helping the Lunch group, please contact Geoff Long grofflong@yahoo.ca or (376) 766-3993



SPONSORSHIP

Please consider sponsoring or co-sponsoring a child at Villa Infantil . A contribution of \$30.00 USD a month will help provide an education and assist in assuring the general well-being of a child

Sponsors Needed



It seems like costs for everything are going up on a daily basis. Each time we shop for groceries or fill up the vehicles with gas there is momentary sticker shock. And for Villa Infantil it is exactly the same. Tough economic times

for donors means tougher economic times for the Villa. As you may know the Villa runs solely on donations and receives no financial backing from the church.

This year the cost of tuition has risen along with the cost of food, clothing and school supplies. Everything needed to support the children is escalating in cost.

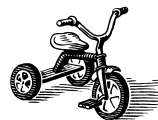
Thankfully there have been very generous grants but there is still a need for sponsors to fill the funding gap.

If you are interested in sponsoring, co-sponsoring, or having your group become a sponsor, please **c o n t a c t** info@friendsofvillainfantil.org for more information. Or visit the Foundation for Lake Chapala **C h a r i t i e s** at www.lakechapalacharities.org/ to make a donation. As always, thanks for your support.

Thank You Sponsors!

On behalf of Madre Maria and the children, we would like to give a special **Thank You** to our wonderful sponsors. You have stayed with us through thick and thin, in spite of a sometimes unfavorable economy on both sides of the border. Your

continued financial support helps provide an education and assists in assuring the general well-being of your sponsored child or children and is **very** much appreciated. We couldn't do it without you!!"



Newsletter Credits

- Geoff Long: Lunch story and photo credits
- Steve Miller: Page 1 Photo
- Barbara Finnerty: editing & proofing
- Pamela Farrell: Photos.
- Sally Pachulski: Photos, Editor



Geoff Long's father visiting with the children at the Villa



School Days



