

NEWSLETTER

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Shining Light Children's Home

REFLECTIONS ON THE BIRTH OF CHRIST

by JanaLou Lehman

The night of the Christmas program nears! The children have spent many hours preparing for this program. Janalou Lehman, Missy Brunk, Larita Stauffer, and Susana Olivares have worked hard to bring order to the displays. The children have faithfully gathered in the dining room every day to practice, taking their places diligently and putting their hearts into making it work. Keeping it fun and creative, they ironed out last-minute details.

Anticipation mounts as the children file into their seats in the back. Visitors, caregivers, and parents take their seats close to the front where the crude stable stands. Sarai and Erica pose as cows near the manger while a curtain hides the awaiting scenes in the other corner.

Lights dim and the curtain opens! Mary works in her humble home, mixing up goodies when Angel Gabriel arrives with news that exchanges her dreams for a better plan. She runs to Elizabeth's house to share her good news and help Elizabeth for six months until John's birth.

They leave the scene and the curtain closes. Soon Joseph and Mary enter the back. They go to an inn, but the keeper has no room. He shuts the door, and then opens it a crack to say, "I have a stable if you wish to rest awhile." They gratefully follow him to the stable and prepare to stay the night. The long-awaited baby Jesus makes His appearance into this sinful world.

The English school children's voices fill the room as they sing, "Jesus, Joy of the Highest Heaven." Oh, the peacefulness of Bethlehem as they welcomed this new King! The quietness is shattered as sheep and shepherds enter the scene. Their charming antics bring smiles to the onlookers.

Six students from the older school grades enthusiastically present, "What Child Is This?" Silence again fills Bethlehem until an angel

suddenly appears with tidings of great joy, followed by a choir of angels singing, "Angels We Have Heard on High."

The shepherds decide to go and find out if it is true! They find the baby in a lowly manger filled with scratchy hay. They sweetly sing, "Away in a Manger," and hold baby Jesus before returning to their fields and responsibilities, blessed to have seen their King. The scene closes with an English song, "O Shepherd Boy," by three soloists from Missy's class.

King Herod, seated on his throne surrounded by power and dignity, has no idea who has come to rule this world. He only thinks of himself as he tells his maid to pour a glass of wine. He sips slowly as his royal guards await his command. One of them carelessly asks, "Do you think there will be another king?"

King Herod stands and drops his goblet, exclaiming indignantly, "I am the king, and there is no king greater than I!" Sitting down, he commands, "Fan me!" They fan him with big palm branches,



LESSONS FROM A HAMSTER WHEEL

Have you ever watched a hamster run in a hamster wheel? While we may laugh at the silly animal, how many of us get caught in our own version of the hamster wheel?

Hamster wheels can teach us an amazing life lesson. Vision is the key to escaping from the endless hamster wheel trap.

Getting off the hamster wheel requires getting out of our comfort zones. Shining Light Children's Home is a result of many people over the last twelve years who were willing to get out of their comfort zones and engage in a vision.

If you have in any way served at or sponsored SLCH, I want to personally thank you for your labor of love. Without you this work is not possible.

I recently heard Philip Horst say something like this: "A vision that cannot be articulated in a concise statement is no vision." His statement triggered the thoughts I want to share in this editorial.

SLCH started with a small group of concerned, interested, and committed brothers. These men shared a vision of what would be possible in Baja California, Mexico, working with the vast number of children who are victims of the sin results when people do not know Jesus. The hamster wheel of sin keeps people in darkness and despair, making it almost impossible for children to rise out of their situation.

I want to share the SLCH vision and mission with you.

OUR VISION IS:

Abandoned, victim Baja children who grow up to be Kingdom builders and make the local bride of Christ beautiful.

OUR MISSION IS:

- To provide the infrastructure and organization needed to be recognized by DIF, the government social services program.
- To provide a spiritual oasis where Baja children can be nurtured physically, emotionally, and spiritually.
- To provide a safe environment for Kingdom builders to make a difference in a child's life.

We are excited that the latest building project is underway. This building will provide the needed infrastructure for education, vocational training, and a meeting place for Sunday morning church services.

For years we have been asked, "How are you going to provide for these children after they graduate?" This building project will help us achieve the following:

- Good quality Pre-K through high school education
- Vocational training and education
- Community events that expand the child's horizons
- Meeting place for Sunday church services hosted by local church

We will be sending out regular updates on this project. If you have any additional questions please call or email Leland Ulrich at 817-822-6760 or email lelandulrich@gmail.com.



bringing comfort and dignity back to the throne room.

The youth girls begin singing, "We Three Kings," as the wise men arrive, seeking this thing that has been spoken of by the prophets. Arriving at the king's court, they inquire if he has heard or seen of this new King. King Herod sends them on with instructions to return and tell him where the baby is. The wise men come to the place where baby Jesus is. They give Him gifts and worship Him. When they have finished, they hurry away, returning to their country another way.

The children did an awesome job, and as director, I am elated they did so well. They did a lot better than I expected after our first practice. In the end, I enjoyed the program as much as they did. How happy we are that we have something to sing about, something special enough to spend hours on.

The reason for this is because Jesus did come, He came as a poor baby with no place of dignity. I can't thank Him enough for His sacrifice, the greatest gift of all. May we be like Jesus and give of ourselves in service in the lowly places of this world.



LISA'S JOYS AND SORROWS

by Carl and Lisa Klassen

In January 2013 I arrived at Shining Light for a year of service. I felt like I was facing the unknown. I had never been to the Home and I didn't know anyone there. All I knew was that I had always wanted to go somewhere to help children, and I felt that God was leading me to SLCH.

Little did I know how life-changing this step would be. The drive to the Home that night was rainy, dark, and cold. It felt like we were driving miles into the sticks. When we finally drove up to the Home, I was welcomed by noisy, excited children crowding around to see the new girl.

The following weeks were full of learning—new faces, new names, new friends, and new responsibility. I became familiar with the girls who would soon be in my care and worked with them in their room. Two weeks later I was on my own. My tender heart went out to the girls as I watched them say goodbye to their “mama” and continue on with life.

The days seemed to fly by with never a dull moment. With six girls, there was never a lack of things to do. The girls ranged in age from five to twelve, in addition to a five-month-old boy. His colic often kept me up at night, adding a special challenge to my adjustments. Nevertheless, I fell in love with my children, and above all I wanted to ease the pain and confusion in their young hearts. There are so many sad stories . . .

As the girls ran off the school in the morning, the place grew quieter, and I was left to clean, do laundry, and watch the baby. Mending and sewing were squeezed in here and there. After school I often enjoyed doing something fun with the girls like packing a snack, going on a walk, or just sitting outside talking or playing games.

Along with the good times were the days when they would try me out to see if I really meant what I said. They would try to see how much they could get by with. But the good days far outshone the not-so-good ones.

Ten months later as life was happily flying along, I heard that my little boy was leaving to live with his grandparents. Time seemed to stand still, but at the same time, the few days we had left didn't seem long enough. This was a very hard experience for the girls. “He was our baby!” they said.

My heart broke as I watched them, knowing there was nothing I could do to protect them from yet another heartbreak as a loved one left their lives. Sometime later my seven-year-old girl moved in with her mother who came back to live at the Home. We missed not having her with us as much.

When my first year was up, it wasn't hard to commit to staying another year. I loved the job and I had many friends. I had the

opportunity to care for a preemie straight from the hospital. He wasn't much more than skin and bones, born early because of a drug overdose. He took lots of my time as I coaxed him to drink a little every hour. I was very busy trying to keep up with everything else as well. He grew fast and brought lots of sunshine into our lives.

One-year-old Victoria moved into our room a little while later to be closer to her two older sisters. They were delighted to have her with them. A few short months later our baby boy left to live with his uncle's family. It was a difficult good-bye for all of us.

A special friend came into my life that summer. He had moved down to join the church and help at the Home. Dating was bittersweet. I knew I would have to leave the girls eventually, making it hard to enjoy at times. This was hard on the girls as well.

I decided to discontinue at Shining Light when my second year was up. It was extremely difficult to leave these girls who I had come to love as my own family. Hearing them beg, “Mami, please don't leave us! We want you to stay for always!” was almost more than I could bear. At the same time, I knew I wanted this, and a peace that this was from God urged me onward.

Rachel Hostetler came to take my place. She was very understanding, making it easier to move on. I spent several months in the States with my family. In April 2016 Carl and I got engaged and started building our house in Mexico. Wedding plans and helping on the house helped keep me busy.

We decided to have our wedding in Mexico for the sake of the children and those who couldn't go to the States. There was much excitement and much trusting God with the details, especially because it was the first wedding for Shining Light.

The big day was in the warm month of August. We were blessed with many friends and family who came from the States. It was so much fun to see the children's excitement. It was the first wedding some of them had ever seen! Walking into church Sunday morning after we returned from our honeymoon felt like we were home.

Over a year later, we still live in Mexico. We love our church family, though it is small, and feel a calling to the great work around us. I still get to see the girls and we are still friends, but time moves on and they move on with it. I am happy to still be a part of their lives. Pray for them. Pray that all the children may grow up to truly love the Lord and want to serve him.

Pray also for that the church will always be a shining light to the community, and that more souls could be saved.

If God is calling you to the mission field, go—and go with all your heart. Just be prepared for Him to completely change your life!



FAREWELL JOANNA!

Joanna Zimmerman from Michigan was here for two months. We are grateful for her faithful service in the kitchen. We all miss her good American cooking.



SIBLINGS TOGETHER AT LAST!

The Perez Hernandez sibling group is complete at last. Angelica arrived November 30, joining here five older siblings; Dulce, David, Myriam, Alex, And Victoria.

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SLCH FINANCIAL REPORT

Income & Expense Jan 1 -- June 31, 2013

Leland Ulrich - Board Chairman
Corey Yoder - Treasurer
Lorne Hershberger - Secretary
Herb Miller - Board Member/
PR Coordinator
Myron Bontrager - Board Member
Mike Yoder - Board Member

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Previous Fund Balances

General Fund	\$27,664.08
Child Sponsorship	\$10,177.00
Home Building Project	\$1,843.81
Water Well Project	
Beginning Balance	\$39,684.89

Income / Contributions

General Fund	\$86,690.25
Child Sponsorships	\$44,762.50
Interest	\$4.61
Total General Income	\$131,457.36

Other Income

Land, Building & Well & Elect. Projects	\$11,000.00
Total Other Income	\$11,000.00

Total Income

\$142,457.36

General Expenses

Bank Fees	\$964.08
Professional Fees	\$7,585.51
Transfer to SLCH in Mexico	\$111,931.17
Total General Expenses	\$120,480.76

Net General Income

\$10,976.60

Other Expense

Loan Payment	\$19,000.00
Building Improvements	\$8,638.00
Total Other Expense	\$27,638.00

Net Other Income

\$(16,638.00)

Net Income

\$(5,661.40)

Fund Balances

General Fund	\$24,878.18
Child Sponsorship	\$8,939.50
Home Building Project	\$205.81
Ending Balance	\$34,023.49

Loans

Loan 1# Previous Balance	\$46,501.00
Loan Payment	\$19,000.00
Loan 1# Balance	\$27,501.00
Wind & Solar Electric Project Loan Bal.	\$8,000.00
Loan Payment	\$4,000.00
Wind & Solar Electric Project Loan Bal.	\$4,000.00
Total Loan Balance	\$31,501.00