

NEWSLETTER

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Shining Light Children's Home

A BLESSED EXPERIENCE

Long-term caregiver report

IN MAY 2015, GOD LED ME to Shining Light Children's Home. It was a big step for me, but I'm so glad I took it.

I didn't know one person here when I came. Everything was strangely unfamiliar, and waves of homesickness and loneliness threatened to drown me. But it wasn't long until the sea of strange faces became familiar and like family.

The language was a barrier at first, but the children helped me to learn it quickly. They also got some good laughs out of my mistakes. I still have a lot to learn, but am thankful that I can communicate better.

My job as floater is pretty much just that, floating around doing different things. I help make meals in the kitchen, clean, sew, take care of children for the moms, and do any other odd jobs that need to be done. It may also be baking cookies with an eleven-year-old or taking a walk with one of the older girls.

I enjoy caring for the children when their moms leave for a vacation or take a day off. It can be playing games with them, helping them with homework after school, or just snuggling a little one. They are hungry for love and acceptance, and don't hesitate to give you a big bear hug. Caring for them is not without its challenges, but they have taught me so much. They have helped me see how blessed I really am to have a Christian home and upbringing.

I thank God for leading me here. It has been a good and stretching experience. My prayer is that I can in some way be a blessing to the people here in Mexico in return for the blessing that they have been to me.

- Sabrina Miller



MEET IMELDA



IMELDA WITH HER FRIEND WILLIAM

HELLO, I AM IMELDA. I am 14 years old, and my birthday is August 14, 2001. I live at a children's home that teaches me about God and teaches me how to live. I stay here because there are a lot of wonderful blessings and people who want to teach me the Word of God.

I also love horses. We used to have one here named Pinta. She was my friend

and a beautiful animal that God created for me. I really like riding horses too. I would love to have one for my fifteenth birthday, but God has it all in His hands. I want to work with horses and would love to take care of a bunch of horses!

I like to leave with Greiven when I can, because he drives fast and safe! I like that Grace Yoder takes care of me. She is sweet and is a special person to me.

They taught me how to cook here. I also know how to make bread, and lots more!

When I came I was 11 years old. I came on July 8, 2013, and I've been here almost three years. One thing I don't like at all is reading. The only books I've read in my life are Cindy and Lucy Winchester!

With love,

- Imelda Maria

IMPACT OF CHANGING POLICIES

By Leland Ulrich, Board Chairman

IN THE LAST NEWSLETTER I addressed a number of policy updates based on changing government requirements. I'll give you a little background on why there seems to be a sudden burst of new regulation coming from the government. It is mostly a high-level political play designed to bring Mexico into what is expected by United Nations members. Situations like these are closely monitored by world organizations such as UNICEF, IMF, and IACHR. Read the following article published in IPS News in 2014 for a deeper understanding of the changes we are facing. Many of these changes do not affect SLCH's core reason for existence. Thus we have worked hard to comply wherever we can to gain a level of trust and respect that will help us in areas where it would be problematic for us as Anabaptist people to comply.

MEXICO CITY, Aug 18 2014 (IPS) - Homes for orphans or children in vulnerable situations in Mexico lack the necessary state regulation and supervision, which leads to scandalous human rights violations. In this country of 118 million people, with some 45 million children under the age of 18, there are around 700 public and private homes providing shelter to 30,000 children. But the Red Latinoamericana de Acogimiento Familiar (Latin American Foster Care Network) estimates that there are roughly 400,000 children in Mexico without parental care, including 100,000 who live on the streets. The latest scandal over how these institutions are run broke out on Jul. 15, when the attorney general's office announced that

596 people, including 458 children, were rescued from the "La Gran Familia" shelter in Zamora, a city in the western state of Michoacán. They were living in squalid conditions, in rooms infested with cockroaches and rats, according to the authorities. "The state is 30 years behind in terms of guaranteeing the rights of children in public policies," said Martín Pérez, executive director of the Mexican Network for the Rights of Children. "The state has never supervised these establishments; every once in a while something comes to light and it remembers them and turns its attention to them." *Edited by Estrella Gutiérrez/Translated by Stephanie Wildes*

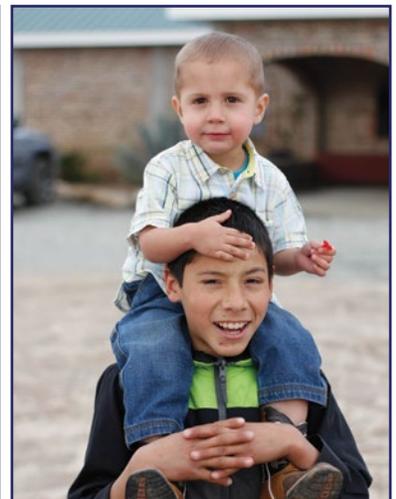
IN THIS COUNTRY OF 118 MILLION PEOPLE, THERE ARE AROUND 700 PUBLIC AND PRIVATE HOMES PROVIDING SHELTER TO 30,000 CHILDREN. BUT THE LATIN AMERICAN FOSTER CARE NETWORK ESTIMATES THAT THERE ARE ROUGHLY 400,000 CHILDREN IN MEXICO WITHOUT PARENTAL CARE, INCLUDING 100,000 WHO LIVE ON THE STREETS.



VISITORS LAVERTA AND MICHELLE SEW DRESSES



AFTER TWO YEARS OF LIVING HERE, SARAI LEFT AND IS NOW LIVING WITH HER MOM



ALFREDO AND KEINER HAVING FUN

The new laws and the increased government oversight are a result of the work of these organizations. So far we have been able to comply with most items. It has made a lot of extra work and changes in the way we operate. Two outstanding issues facing us:

Church services at the Home

Many of our children have restrictions placed against any relative or acquaintance having visiting rights. Using the Children's Home facility for Sunday morning services by the local church creates a problem we need to address.

Inadequate school facilities

Several years ago, the government granted us the license to run our own school, and several of our teachers were able to become certified to teach in Mexico. This has made it possible for us to have our own school. However our facilities are no longer adequate. We have outgrown the school building and are using a bedroom and storage building for the overflow.

We are considering an off-campus church and school building. The local brotherhood has taken up the cause and is willing to take charge of the project. Since the largest portion of the building will be for the SLCH school, the board is proposing that SLCH assist the local brotherhood in the project. The cost for this project will be approximately \$250,000. The land has already been donated. If you have an interest in donating contact Leland Ulrich at lelandulrich@gmail.com.

PRAYER NEEDS

- Pray for the Greivens as they take some of the older girls on a trip to Costa Rica.
- Pray for the staff, for wisdom to help with the emotional side of the children's trauma and hurts.
- Pray for the need for caretakers for the older boys.
- Pray for the church and school facility building project.



WELL WORTH THE TIME

Short-term missions report

THE TWO WEEKS WE SPENT at SLCH were well worth the time! It is obvious God is at work in the lives of the children here in these arid but beautiful mountains.

We sewed dresses and slips during our stay, and also pieced a comfort, knotting it with the help of the older girls—and Alfredo! We helped organize the attic, which turned out to be an interesting project.

Highlights of our stay include playing with the children, singing with them in Spanish and English, walking to the border, and making the trip to Tijuana. Seeing the city and the ocean made the day enjoyable and interesting, although it was a bit chilly!

I believe we three can each say we were blessed by the experience and are grateful we had the opportunity!

Many thanks to the staff for all they did to make our stay enjoyable. May God continue to bless the work in Tecate!

*-Michelle Horst, Rosanne Weaver,
and Gloria Weaver*

**WORKING ON THE
FRONT GATE**

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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FRONT GATE: BEFORE



FRONT GATE: AFTER

