



It is possible to create a world in which fewer innocent children suffer. Camus

one child

30 years of loving children.

1st Quarter 2005

Construction Day!

Great Response and Turnout for Emergency Repair Work

You might have seen the little blurb at the end of last quarter's newsletter creating an opportunity for anyone who wanted to help on a construction day for a school in Mexico whose roof had been damaged in the intense rains this winter. After two delays due to additional rain, the morning of February 26 dawned clear, and 14 volunteers from all over Southern California gathered on the US side of the border to regroup and get our materials and gear into five off-road-worthy vehicles. Two of the volunteers had responded directly to the article in the newsletter, which was great for me to know that you're really reading the words here!

We drove about 10 or 15 miles into the hills past the colonias where our nutrition centers are located to an "ejido," which loosely translates as a "ranch" or "farm," but signifies an unincorporated area where people have set up housing, but no utilities of any kind have been installed. No water, electricity, gas, sewage... The people of the ejido live as if camping in shacks or small dwellings made of garage doors or whatever materials can be gleaned. This is Maricela's neighborhood, whose house has become our newest dining room, feeding 80 to 90 children breakfast every Saturday morning.



Part of the tar-wall team hard at work.



Almost done with the new roof.

As the school, about 5 miles from Maricela's, came into view, it was nestled among beautiful green hillsides covered in yellow flowers. The rain had destroyed the roof, but made the hills look like Ireland. We got right to work, digging out a trench around the entire foundation in preparation for a complete tar paper wrap. Others went aloft, tearing out

the old roofing paper and sections of plywood, rebuilding the roof, constructing a new eaves, replacing plywood sheets. Then the glue guns came out, and the black tar paper went up around the walls of the building while the Henry's roofing tar buckets went up the ladders, and the green roofing paper rolls starting unfurling. Black and green were the colors of the cold, cloudy day.



Our littlest helper from right next door.

We'd brought two gas-powered generators, but both quit working early on, so power tools were out by early afternoon. We had to actually cut roofing nails off the power hammer belts to hand nail the roofing paper down. Primitive, but effective eventually. Just as the sun was going down, the last roll of green paper also went down, and we started gathering and cleaning tools and repacking the vehicles. The 14 of us had been joined by 6 to 8 locals off and on during the day, who helped tremendously with heavy work--along with Maricela's husband and son who were with us all day long. We drove them home in pitch black darkness--and I mean pitch black, as you'd see over the ocean at night. We in the US are not familiar with the kind of darkness that falls when no electric lights of any kind are shining.

I can still see the circle of faces in the wavering light of two yellow candles as we prayed good-night in Maricela's little bedroom/kitchen/living room. It was one of those movie-like moments where



One of the many thank you notes with wonderful drawings from the kids. Look at the detail!

all the frenzied details of the day are crystallized, accounted for, made sense of... Thanks to everyone who made this day go--by being there or providing building materials--the school is dry!

St. Michael's Angels

St. Michael and All Angels Church in Corona del Mar, CA has been one of our staunchest supporters for the last 10 years. Here's a message from Frances Haynes...

About ten years ago, Paul Weiss contacted us about an organization he ran for poor children and a program which consisted of collecting specified amounts of certain food items to feed 300 children in Tijuana for a month. This project caught my attention and seemed like something St. Michaels could do. So, we tried it, and for the last nine years, we have collected a over 2300 pounds of food eight times, and when you add that up, thats roughly 20,000 pounds of food we've taken to the kids.

From my heart to yours, if you've had the opportunity to deliver the food, you know what a difference it makes to them and to you--you're not the same when you come home--you think you go to

give them food, but you end up giving your heart.

We've had some special angels along the way-- I'll mention just a few: One year



A few more young angels.

Jim Hall pulled off his beautiful Pittsburgh Steelers sweater and gave it to a boy who (I am sure) had never received such a present in his life. At first the confusion on his face showed he didn't understand that the sweater was his to keep, but after a few seconds, he realized, and the light in his eyes was something we will never forget. He was transformed in that moment, and so were we. Another year Murry McClaren threw herself in harm's way as one of our cars sat on the edge of a precipitously steep hill and was about three inches from sliding down. If Murry hadn't done what she did and stopped the car at that exact moment, we'd have had a terrible accident that day! Two years ago when we realized that Olivia's (the head of the program in Mexico) car could only go about 15 miles an hour spitting black exhaust fumes out the back, we decided it was time to do something about it. Thanks to Lynne Ruedy and her generous son and daughter-in-law, a Ford Explorer was donated to Olivia within months. Olivia said it was the nicest car she has ever driven. We were blessed to take 48 people on September 1, 2004 to deliver the food-- the largest group that's gone with us yet.

I wrote this verse in May of 1997 after we visited Tijuana. It still rings true for me, and so I share it with you now...

It's hard to really know how you might be touched when you look at faces of children who are abandoned, lonely and hungry.

They live in dwellings built on hillsides on the place that used to be the city dump-- in shacks we wouldn't use to store our tools.

They run to greet us when we pull up in our big silver and orange truck. They know we have brought them food and they help us--even the little two year olds-- carry it inside.

They smile at us some though frightened when we first arrive but soon unafraid when they see our smiles.

Jim takes off his fine "Steelers" sweater and hands it to a teenage boy as a gift. He stares for a minute finally comprehending it is for him to keep. His eyes brighten and he smiles for the first time from his heart.

They are beautiful and we fall in love.

We bring food to them a helpful and most needed commodity. They bring us Gods important reminder-- We are all one people.

We leave with our empty truck and full hearts. The exchange has been made.

Frances Haynes



Not quite all the angels at St. Michael's.

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One Child is the quarterly newsletter of Children of The Americas.

Our work began in Santa Teresita Orphanage in Tijuana, Mexico on March 31, 1974. Paul Weiss and his friends founded an interfaith organization, Los Ninos, to help the girls of Santa Teresita. The work and the dream grew and by January, 1984, a new structure was needed. Children of The Americas was created to match the work with the expanding dream to reach children throughout our hemisphere, but especially kids in the US and Mexico. Help us continue to create hope, one child at a time.

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Give a man a fish, and you feed him for a day. Teach him to fish, and you feed him for a lifetime. With your help, we've been teaching children to fish for 30 years. That's a lot of fish!



Please Join us at TAM every morning for two minutes of prayer for all children.

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