



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

30 years of loving children.

2nd Quarter 2008

# Building Things in Baja!

From Workstations to Kitchens, COTA Crew Builds in San Vicente and Vicente Guerrero

Once again, so much has happened in the last three months that we can't get it all in this issue. One major story will have to wait until next issue, but I want to thank Cornerstone Church in San Clemente, CA for the metric ton of food they raised and helped us deliver to the dining rooms on 6/7/08. In addition to the food delivery, we also installed solar lights at a small church in the ejido, and sports toys were distributed and enjoyed by a great group of volunteers and children in the neighborhoods. Look for that story next time.



A kiss from Sandy Mejia in Vicente G.



The crew from L to R: Audry and Mike Morgan, Jack, Brian McCartney, Mike, Rich Gorman, Norm, Sharon Harris, and Sandy Mejia. This was a first trip with us for Jack, Mike and Sandy.

But now here's a great story coming to you from San Vicente and Vicente Guerrero in central Baja. On April 12, we sent a construction crew of 8 down for four days to install new workstations prefabricated by Norm for the workshop at Gabriel House, a home for severely handicapped children in San Vicente, and to build a kitchen and bathroom addition for a home in Vicente Guerrero.

## One Year for Ejido Dining Room

Community Celebrates First Year of Feeding Kids with Fiesta

In April of 2007, we opened our dining room at the Antonio Maria Melendrez public school in Ejido Cardenas--a remote area a few miles south of the colonias in which our other dining rooms are located. The ejidos, a word that literally means "farm," are unincorporated areas of land where originally people simply squatted and built rough homes. Things have changed a bit in that land is now bought and sold, but not as much as we'd like: there are still no utilities or roads or any of the other material signs of community life that we recognize as basic here in the U.S.

All trips like these are incredible experiences, but this crew was impacted in a really deep way--and the work they accomplished was amazing. Especially when you see how much they involved the children...how anything got done is a miracle in itself.



The framing goes up on the concrete pad Norm had laid previous to this trip.

First, here's the story from Vicente Guerrero, where our adopted family lives in a remote area with no utilities whatsoever. The goal was to add a kitchen and bathroom plumbed to a cistern

We have been working at the Melendrez school and in Ejido Cardenas for several years now, repairing the school damaged by rains and upgrading and finishing the interior of classrooms. Then last year, we outfitted one of the classrooms as a dining room, and Leti Garcia and her husband Don Jose took over as managers of the operation and began feeding breakfast to up to 100 children a day 6 days a week. Leti is



Children line up outside the dining room for the fiesta breakfast at the school.

(Continued on Page 2)

(Continued on Page 2)

# Construction in Central Baja

(Continued from Page 1)

mounted on the roof. In three days the crew needed to frame, exterior panel, insulate, drywall, mount the cistern, install windows, paint, and many other tasks. An amazing amount of work was accomplished, with an equally amazing amount of fun.

It's hard for us to imagine the difference water on tap or a flushing toilet makes in our lives--the hours a day it saves in repetitive labor--time that can be spent on refreshment and family. ■

Brian McCartney prepping the roof for the cistern.



Now that's a great color! No homeowners' assoc. here.



Don't try this at home--scorpion by the tail.



Sandy playing with a little one in the newly-installed sink.



Sandy Mejia with the trim paint.



Norm and Mike Morgan aloft.



The all-important cistern.



Dedicating the new addition and the home.

# Ejido 1st Anniversary Fiesta

(Continued from Page 1)

amazing in her devotion to the children, and Don Jose is amazing in that we don't have many men who get involved in this work due to cultural differences. But Jose does repair work and upgrades and helps with the meals in any way he can.

To celebrate their first year of operation, Leti and Jose planned a fiesta for the children, and we were invited too. They went all out with balloons and red tablecloths and special treats for the kids--a rich soup called posole, fried corn tortillas, and a watery, drinkable oatmeal formed the main course.

Once again, Leti and her helpers were thanking us, but we are endlessly grateful to the work and devotion they show every day for the children. It seems we can never outgive them in their generosity. Now, Leti and



Lined up and patiently waiting.

Olivia, our staff person in Mexico, are working to secure a piece of land and community support in order for us to build a bigger dining room that can accommodate more children--more to come



Posole (soup) and fried tortillas--yum!

on this story. So take a look at these photos and see how connected a community without utilities or roads can be. ■



Some of the guests and workers in front of a sign surrounded by children's signatures thanking COTA and welcoming all.: from L to R, Rose, Olivia, Yollie, Don Jose, Leti, Norm, and Chuy and children in front.

# Workstations in San Vicente

## Building Workdesks for Handicapped Kids

COTA has been working Gabriel House for the past year and a half or so, helping them work with the severely handicapped children living there. They had a workshop designed to help the kids do handcraft work as a cottage industry for the home, but they had no workdesks.

Enter Norm, who designed and pre-fabricated banks of workstations in our warehouse and then disassembled them for transport to Gabriel House. Our crew then laid out all the pieces and let the children paint them in prep for reassembly at the workshop. It's amazing any actual work got done with all the fun going on, but the parts were painted, and the next day, everyone piled into vehicles to the workshop.

The workstations are in, and an indelible memory was created for everyone who helped and experienced these children. ■



Well, someone had to do it...



Sometimes you just can't quite contain yourself.

Norm found out that nose painting was part of the deal.

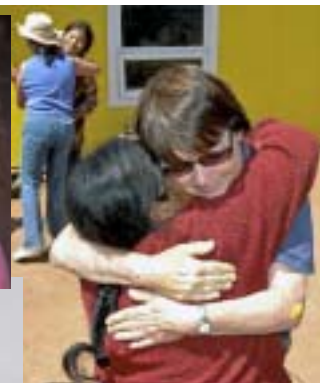


Look at the smile on Sandy's face...

Here they are--beautiful--and the workstations are nice too...

# Faces and Moments

To leave a family or a neighborhood with a new home or dining room is important. Leaving them with hope and smiles and knowing that people care about them is everything. Here are some great moments that were everything... ■



# Solar Lights in VG.

On March 25th, a small crew trekked down to Vicente Guerrero to install the solar lights Norm had pre-rigged for use in the home of one of our adopted families that has no electrical utilities. The experiment was a success, and Sharon Harris reported that the moment the lights went on was almost a religious experience in the eyes of these parents and their children. Amazing how the things we take for granted, that exist in the background fabric of our lives, are still such incomprehensible luxuries for these families



Moments of truth as kids and parents acting like kids try all the lights on for size--and luminosity.



Norm with the solar panel he mounted on the eaves.



Installing the panel to receive the ceiling mounts.

## We Need Your Help!

### Budget Crisis

The summer months are always the hardest for us at COTA. With vacations and other distractions it seems that donations really fall off, but it's right now that we need your help the most. Please help us keep going.

Please consider a special donation right now for the kids. We are beginning our drive for school supplies for the fall at a time when funds are really low--your help can make all the difference! Thanks so much for your help.



### Car Donation Program

You can click on this icon on our website or call the toll-free number, and a tow-truck will be there before you can say Food for Kids!



### Credit Card Gift Authorization

Card Type  Visa  MasterCard  Amex

Card Number \_\_\_\_\_

Gift Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration \_\_\_\_\_ ID Code \_\_\_\_\_

Name (Please Print) \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

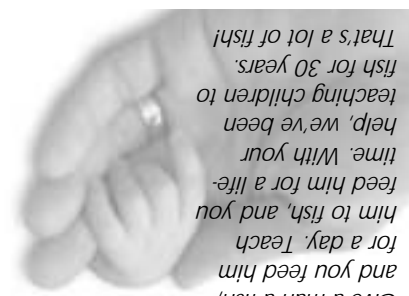
For greater security, we now need the 3-digit ID code from the back of your card. Thanks!



No credit card fees are deducted for Visa and MasterCard gifts.

*Please join us at 7AM every morning for two minutes of prayer for all children.*

*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!*



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 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.

**Board of Trustees**  
 Paul Weiss, Rev. Dave Britsin (Pres), Terre Martin-Santate, Dona Shono, Marian Britsin (Secy), Terry Neville (Treas), Eugene Spann

**Administration**  
 67 Gingham Street, Trabuco Canyon, CA 92679  
 949.709.0673 TEL | 949.709.0674 FAX  
 4kids@americaschildren.org EMAIL  
 www.americaschildren.org WEB



### Address Service Requested

Children of The Americas  
 67 Gingham St. | Trabuco Canyon, CA 92679  
 949-709-0673 TEL | 949-709-0674 FAX

NON-PROFIT ORG.  
 U.S. POSTAGE  
 PAID  
 Permit No. 1181  
 Mission Viejo, CA