



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

30 years of loving children.

3rd and 4th Quarters 2010/Annual Report 2009

School Backpacks!

School Supplies and Backpacks to Kids in Mexico, California, and New Mexico

Though we do everything from construction projects to health and hygiene assistance, the primary mission of Children of The Americas is to help underserved kids stay in school competitively and get the nutrition they need to enter young adulthood healthy, well-developed, and having the education and marketable skills necessary to end their cycle of poverty. And so our annual backpack and school supply program is also primary in our eyes--and the eyes of these kids, obviously.



Students at Genaro Vasquez school doing what kids do best--having fun with COTA volunteers with backpacks.

get a feel for all the people who came together to make sure kids get the tools they need to learn--and to meet all the **kids in Mexico, the U.S., and this year, even Afghanistan** who received backpacks and big smiles.

This year, packs went to children in five separate locations in Mexico: three public schools and the neighborhoods surrounding our two free-standing nutrition centers. But additionally, packs went to children at Jefferson Elementary, an underserved school in Santa Ana, CA and to kids in the Albuquerque, NM school district through a brand new COTA affiliate there. We also sent packs to children of deployed Marines living at Camp Pendleton--some of which went with Marines to Afghanistan to be given to specific children who really needed them...



Another nino with his backpack heading home.

This year, we hit a good number, **filling over 850 backpacks** with a year's worth of school supplies for kids who really need them.

As always, we have scores of people to thank for all this, so take a look at the stories here to



Two ninos, students, at Pedro de Gante school with their new backpacks full of school supplies.

Backpacks for U.S. Kids

School Supplies for Underserved Students in Santa Ana, CA

Two years ago, COTA "adopted" Jefferson Elementary School in a financially underserved area of Santa Ana, CA. Now with CA state budget shortfalls and general economic recession, our help is needed more than ever. COTA delivered nearly 100 backpacks full of supplies and additional school materials for students and their classrooms, some of which was donated by JAKKS Pacific, one of the largest toy distributors in the U.S.



Two middle schoolers at Jefferson Elementary help unload backpacks for the neediest kids.

Our friend and liason at Jefferson, Casey McCartin, a 3rd grade teacher there, wrote a great letter to thank us and our donors:

Dear Children of the Americas,

I would like to take the opportunity to thank you for your generous donation of back packs and school supplies. Our students were

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School Supplies for Kids

(Continued from Page 1)

On these pages, you'll meet not only the children who received the packs so enthusiastically, but also those who brought them and packed them and bought the supplies and donated toward their purchase.

It's not enough to keep children in school if they don't have the tools they need to be competitive, and beyond helping the children, more and more the teachers, the classrooms, and the schools themselves need help as government budgets dry up. COTA tries to step into that gap and help all parties for the children's sake--getting supplies to teachers and classrooms, and even by building computer labs when possible. ■



Gene Spann--our treasurer and a board member pulling packs out of the van for patient kids.



A happy nina with her new pack at Genaro Vasquez.



Students filing back to class at Pedro de Gante school in Tecolote with new packs.



An elementary teacher and her class lining up behind the COTA vans at Genaro Vasquez school.



Second graders at Pedro de Gante, showing their appreciation and energy.



Girls from Pedro de Gante with packs. Uniforms are mandatory in Mexican schools. COTA has helped provide them as needed.



Our Dave Rust getting paid well for his delivery efforts--in tortillas...good trade



Karla, daughter of our Mexico coordinator, directing traffic at Antonio Melendrez school in Ejido Cardenas.



Beautiful middle-schooler with her supplies.



Discussing new packs and day's events.



Leti Garcia (2nd from R) and her Ejido nutrition staff.



A New Nutrition and Day Care Center!

We've been reporting for months now that we received a donation of two parcels of land

immediately adjacent to the Antonio Maria Melendrez public school in Ejido Cardenas for the **specific purpose of building a new dining room and day care center.**

Our Norm Kremiller then drew up plans that included a **Phase II second story to provide a women's shelter** that could house up to six women with their children in separate quarters.

The good news now is that the **Phase I first story, nutrition/day care center is fully funded** through two generous

donors, plans and permits are secured, and we're only waiting for final surveying of the land to break ground—hopefully within 30 days. This project will have a huge impact on the quality of life for families as mothers can drop their children at school or day care as they walk to work in the factories around La Gloria knowing their kids are in good hands.

For this major project in 2011, we need both skilled and non-skilled labor in Mexico, help with electrical, plumbing, etc. **Please call 949-293-4259 if you'd like more info.**

And, **we need your help to fund the Phase II, second story womens' shelter**, so please consider helping us continue to make life better for our kids!



Dave Brisbin, Norm Kremiller, and COTA leaders stand on land donated for the new Nutrition/Day Care center with inset of a preliminary sketch of the new building.

La Isla and COTA Partner for Kids

CA-Based Clothing Designer Helping Children Through COTA

A few months ago, we received a call from Enrique Sanchez-Rivera, the founder and CEO of a sports clothing designer and manufacturer based in Santa Barbara, CA. Enrique told us that he was born and raised in Colombia, South America and was so grateful that he was able to build his business and his dream that he wanted to give something back to children who need help to get the same chances in life.

From their website, Enrique's company, La Isla, *"is an internationally recognized swimwear company which focuses on the design and manufacture of ultra-high quality beachwear and apparel. The brand is known primarily for its perfect fit, beautiful European and South American fabrics, and unique hand embroidery designs. La Isla has its manufacturing facility in Cali, Colombia, and global headquarters in Santa Barbara, California."*

Throughout the years, La Isla has been featured and recognized in publications like Sports Illustrated, Sports Illustrated Portfolio, InStyle, Marie Claire, Seventeen, Foam, Maxim, Surfing Magazine, Transworld Surf, Bazaar, Zink!, and other media like The David Letterman show and E! entertainment channel."

Enrique suggested that we implement a program where clothing tags on each item tell shoppers that a portion of their purchase of La Isla clothing goes to support the children with whom COTA works.



La Isla is a family-owned and operated clothing designer and manufacturer based in Santa Barbara, CA.



LATEST NEWS



Children of The Americas

Some Questions for Children of The Americas

- 1. Who are you?**
Children of the Americas is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization m...

[Read more](#)

Screen shot of the COTA page header from La Isla's webpage.

The program is now in place, and COTA has an extended profile and FAQ on La Isla's site News page to educate shoppers on our work.

It gives us great hope for our kids when businesses like La Isla and entrepreneurs like Enrique care enough to see the most vulnerable among us and to respond to their need. We are extremely grateful to Enrique and La Isla for the chance they will be giving our kids to live their dreams as well.

And when you're considering beachwear and outdoor apparel, please consider La Isla. You can find them on the web at-- **www.laislabrand.com.** You'll be helping kids at the same time. ■

The New Mexico Connection

Supporter Builds New COTA Affiliate Org in Albuquerque Area

Laura Burnett, from New Mexico, has been a COTA supporter for years. After sending packs from CA to needy kids in NM, it became obvious it would much more efficient to work locally.

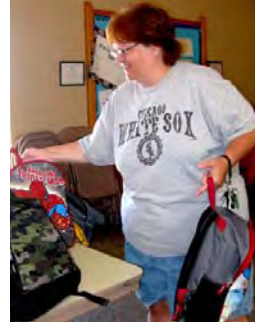
Laura and her group formed Help=Hope in 2009, a group working under COTA's 501c3 umbrella to make a positive impact for NM kids. This year, they collected and distributed **202 backpacks to New Mexico students**



through 6 schools, 2 companies, a food pantry, and ABQ Healthcare for the Homeless--as well as directly to several individual families.

About 30 volunteers, ranging in age from 5 to 87 years old, helped assemble the backpacks, and since then, feedback has been overwhelming: a teacher told of a 4th grade boy who hadn't had a new backpack since first grade and was **THRILLED** to have a new one; a grandfather contacted Healthcare for the Homeless in hope they may have a

few supplies for his granddaughter-- "somehow" they had one backpack left, and she would have what she needed and would fit in with the other kids; a couple who are 74 and 68 years old and had adopted



Laura Burnett at work.



The packs stack up at the NM assembly party.



Young and old alike on the assembly line.

four young children received packs for three of their kids through their school. There have also been handwritten notes from students expressing their gratitude for the new supplies and backpacks.

People like Laura and her gang make kids' worlds go round. We're proud to have them as part of our family--to support them as best we can! ■



The whole pack-stuffing gang with their packs.

Packing the Packs

This year's CA backpack assembly party was probably the most organized and well planned yet--or maybe we're just getting really good at this. Working through the afternoon, we were actually finished with set up by 5:30 and by 6PM we had over 30 volunteers with us. We completely assembled and bagged **546 backpacks** by 7:30, a new speed record, I think. But that was just day one, we assembled **another 100 packs** a week later with a second, smaller crew. Take a look... ■



Working through piles of supplies filling packs.



Leo Lipert loading into storage for shipment.



Our 1st crew--or the part left at the bitter end.



Dave Rust bringing in a van load of supplies, and Norm Kremiller unloading another.



A sea of bagged packs ready for transport.



Karen Wilde (R) with her crew of interns from Living Hope Church--our 2nd crew.

Helping U.S. Children

(Continued from Page 1)

greatly thrilled to receive new backpacks and school supplies. During these difficult economic times, school supplies are often not a priority when underprivileged families are struggling to meet basic living expenses. The Jefferson staff and students appreciate all your efforts and are very grateful for your support and generosity.

Yet again, please know that we really appreciate your kindness.

When you see the faces of these students and their teachers, it really is all the thanks we need, but the letter is nice too.

As our schools continue to struggle through the current economic crisis, we are now researching new ways to partner with schools and other organizations here in the U.S.--as we're now doing in CA and in New Mexico (see story page 4)--to keep as many children as possible from falling through the safety net.

Working with our schools is a first line of defense, but we know we'll find others as we keep talking to those who are working with kids becoming increasingly at risk in the U.S. Thanks for your continued support as we work harder for U.S. kids. ■



Casey McCartin, checking out backpack contents with the kids.



Casey's class helping unload the COTA vans.



Much more fun than work, we think.



Everyone's helping unload the vans.



Packs weigh more than he does....



Students at their desks before receiving packs.



Students were chosen by their teachers based on need to receive packs and other materials.

TLC Brings Food for Kids

Trinity Lutheran Church Delivers a Metric Ton of Food for Kids in the Colonias

Dona Shono, one of our board members, led a great group from Trinity Lutheran Church in Manhattan Beach to gather a metric ton of food for our kids. This is the second ton TLC has gathered for COTA kids, and we are eternally grateful. Our staffer, Dave Rust, met the TLC group at our warehouse to receive the food and took it later to the border to be distributed among our five dining rooms. The food should last up to six weeks. Thanks, TLC! ■



Our Dave Rust with Dona and Jo.



Dona Shono (c) with Jo Toomata and Dan Brumett with their metric ton of food for COTA nutrition centers.

Packs to Marine Kids and Beyond

COTA Delivers Backpacks for Children of Deployed Marines and Afghan Children

For two years, COTA has been supporting the children of deployed Marines at Camp Pendleton. This year, Marines expressed interest in also providing school supplies for children within their operations in Afghanistan. Although outside our American-hemisphere mandate, how could we refuse? Cynthia Martinez, our partner and liaison to the Marines wrote:

On behalf of our troops serving in Afghanistan, we would like to thank Children of The Americas for the backpacks they donated for children in Afghanistan. Words cannot express how your donation is effecting the lives of the Afghan children who want to learn. The Taliban does not want these children educated and bombed their schools. After 10 years, the children are back in school thanks to our Armed forces and wonderful organizations like Children of The Americas that are supporting our troops' efforts to help the Afghan children.

Helping to educate the Afghan children is also helping the war effort. These children and their parents understand that our troops are helping them, giving their children hope for a better future. General Mills loves these little ones, and



Major General Mills with Afghan children who received COTA backpacks. General Mills commands over 31,000 Marines, sailors, and NATO forces based at Camp Leatherneck, Helmand Province, Afghanistan.

he and his troops have done an outstanding job and have made great progress in Afghanistan. Thank you again for supporting our troops!

In another message, we learned that the Afghan children just love their backpacks and wear them all the time--like fashion accessories... It's amazing how the most improbable connections are made when we just keep showing up with open minds and hearts. I love that our troops care about and are acting for the children in their path so far from home. Kids are kids wherever they are--they need predictable things, and we're honored to be helping. ■

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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.

2009 Financial Statement

Income and Expenses

Income	
Cash	\$205,973
In-Kind Gifts	\$905,459
Total Income	\$1,111,432
Expenses	
Direct Aid Cash	\$60,709
Direct Aid In-Kind	\$905,459
Payroll/Benefits	\$77,360
Payroll Taxes	\$4,762
Professional Fees	\$14,141
Fundraising	\$700
Insurance and Misc.	\$9,459
Printing & Publications	\$1,066
Postage & Photocopy	\$1,471
Office and Occupancy	\$18,036
Travel	\$7,922
Total Expenses	\$1,101,085
Change in Net Assets	\$10,347
Net Assets Beginning of Year	\$11,644
Net Assets End of Year	\$21,991

Balance Sheet

Assets	
Cash	\$21,991
Equipment	\$61,043
Vehicles	\$15,369
Less Accum. Depreciation	(\$76,412)
Net Property & Equipment	\$0
Total Assets	\$21,991
Liabilities	
Total Liabilities	\$0
Net Assets	\$21,991
Total Liabilities & Net Assets	\$21,991

2009 fundraising/administrative expenses =3.9%.

Figures are from our 2009 audit by Sterling Ellsworth, CPA, Santa Barbara, CA. Copies of our IRS audit and 990 forms are available on our website, at charitynavigator.com, or upon request.

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 gifts 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.

Board of Trustees
 Rev. Dave Brishin (Pres.), Marian Brishin (Secy), Eugene Spann (Treas.), Dona Shono, Frances Haynes, Bill Frey, Tony Salas, Paul Weiss (emeritus chair)

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