

Casa de Angeles

"House of Angels. Home of Hope."

Spring Newsletter, 2009

Memo from Mickey

Once again, I write this message after members of the board of the Casa de Angeles Foundation have had the opportunity to be in Guatemala this spring, and to visit the orphanage. We were all struck by the ongoing growth and progress of the children, as well as by the increasing number of children in the orphanage's care..

There are now 54 children. 27 of these are pre-school age; 21 are primary school age, and 6 are middle school age. (Our oldest child is 14 and in the 8th grade.) There are 10 adult members of the orphanage community including one novice, three *ayudantes* (helpers), one maintenance man/gardener/driver/watchman, plus three teachers and the two Sisters.

All of the children continue to flourish in the love provided them. I can even report continuing growth spurts as we start hitting "the hormone years" with our oldest group of children. (However, a growth spurt in Guatemala is a relative measure.) The level of soccer play is improving, and I suspect that the adults had better challenge the children quickly if we are to have any hope of winning. Many of the children have also been in a karate class, so we have our own group of "mighty mites" developing, too.

The dormitory closing the quadrangle is now in full use. The Sisters solved their concerns about having the "tween-aged" boys and girls right across *(Continued over.)*

School Days!



When we started the Casa de Angeles Foundation in 2000, the oldest child was 4 years-of-age and the pre-school run by the Sisters was our only educational effort. At that time, education expense was not even a line item in our budget. Now, education has become a very large part of what we are accomplishing together.

Over time, as the children have aged and more have arrived at the orphanage, education has *(Continued.)*

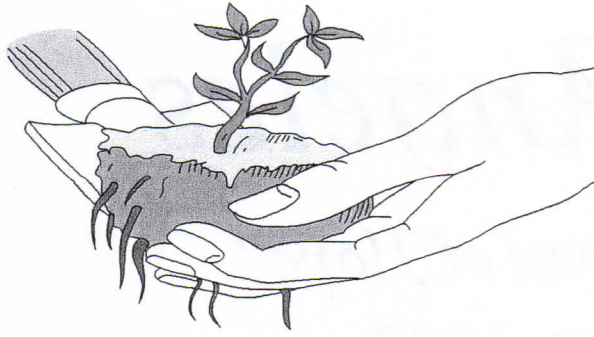
Mark Your Calendars!

September 12, 2009

Annual Bay Area Fiesta!

November 7, 2009

Corvallis Gala Dinner Party!



Our Garden Grows!

Last fall while four of us were visiting, we planted a vegetable garden. Both the seeds and the children were well-watered. We were rewarded with a bumper crop. So, the children ate their own-grown veggies all winter. Also, the first fig tree of a fruit tree orchard has been planted, and a further, varied planting is planned for this year.

Casa de Angeles Foundation
501 San Pedro Cove
San Rafael, CA 94901
415.482.8375

Memo from Mickey, cont'd.

the hall from one another by changing the two girls' dorms in the "old" dorm wing into infant dorms -- one graduates from there at age 5 -- and the two boys' dorms in the old dorm wing to "middle" and "older" girls' dorms and then utilizing the two dorms in the new wing as "middle" and "older" boys dorms. At the same time, we are continuing the discussion with the Sisters, our architect, and our contractor about the vision of a "build-out" orphanage ten years from now, when we will have 100-110 children, ranging from newborns to University students planning their careers, and weddings, and otherwise getting ready to leave the *Nido* (nest).

Mickey Golbus, MD, President
Casa de Angeles Foundation

A Close Call!

One of the children, Juandi, gave us all quite a scare. Because of a large ventricular septal defect of his heart, and a secondary pulmonary hypertension, Juandi was rapidly failing. The required surgery was beyond the capability of the single open heart team in Guatemala. So, the Sisters made arrangements with the same hospital in Madrid where Chiqui was operated on for a similar condition. The Madrid hospital agreed to help Juandi for the same fee -- gratis. When Elvisa and little Juandi arrived at the hospital, and he had a repeat cardiac catheterization, the doctors reported that the situation was hopeless, and that they would not be operating. We were all devastated. However, two days later, the doctors changed their minds and elected to operate. The surgery went well and Juandi had a rapid recovery. He returned home to the orphanage two weeks later, with only his chest scar to tell the tale.

School Days, cont'd.

education has grown as a budgetary concern to the point that today it is a \$10,000 per year expense. We currently have 21 children in primary school (grades 1-5), and 6 children in middle school (4 in 6th, 1 in 7th, and 1 in 8th grade). All the middle school children had been going to school in Antigua until this year, when our 7th grader, who has outstanding potential, was placed in a boarding school in Guatemala City. There, he can be appropriately challenged intellectually. (He comes back to the *Nido* for home visits.)

We realized that the cost of teaching our primary students in our own school may provide a cost saving. So, the orphanage is now accredited by the Ministry of Education as a *colegio* (primary school), and we have hired three accredited teachers. Plus, we have invited 11 students from the poorest families in the local village to become students in our school. Our teacher to student ratio is much more favorable than at other schools. To support this effort, we have just built a school, consisting of 5 classrooms. Our education budget will continue to grow as the children grow.

