

Casa de Angeles

"House of Angels. Home of Hope."

Spring Newsletter, 2011

Memo from Mickey

I write this message after most of the board members of the Casa de Angeles Foundation have had the opportunity to be in Guatemala this spring, and to spend time at the orphanage. All of us were struck by the ongoing growth and progress of the children, as well as with the increasing number of children.

There are now 83 children at the orphanage. This is an increase of 12 children since last Spring's newsletter. That's quite a jump! Our staff consists of 17 adult members of the orphanage community including one novice, six ayudantes (helpers), two rotating armed guards, covering the orphanage 24/7, 5 teachers, a gardener and, of course, the two Sisters. (The armed guards are the result of a deteriorating security situation in Guatemala.)

One of the reasons for the marked increase in the number of children in the last two years is that the Guatemalan government, which does not fund orphanages, has forced the closing of some orphanages. The Sisters, characteristically, have welcomed some of these suddenly homeless children into their fold. With the influx of new children and the aging of our oldest children, building two dorms, separated by sex, for young adults became more important. This has been the major project of the last year. The first floors have a library/study room with computers, a rec room, laundry and bathrooms. The second floor consists of four rooms for three growing young adults each, plus a room for an **(Over, please.)**

Photo Page

Photos taken by the kids, supervised by Toni Golbus.

Enjoy!

"Teach Your Children Well..."

Education at the orphanage begins for the four-to-six year-old group who are in the only "head-start" program in Guatemala. To improve the pre-school program, both of the Sisters have taken pre-school education seminars and courses at the University of Guatemala City.

Primary school education (1st through 5th grades) was taking place at the local school, but about three years ago it became clear that our financial outlay for this was as great, and would become even greater than if we had our own primary school. Other advantages of having our own primary school were that the Sisters could choose the certified teachers, guaranteeing their excellence. Plus, it would allow the mainstreaming of some of our physically and/or mentally disadvantaged children into appropriate class levels, which the public system would not allow. We sought recognition by the Ministry of Education, which we achieved. We then built our own five-room primary school on site. For the 2011 school year, the primary school has 36 of our own children and 15 children from some of the poorest families in the village, in five classes. Five certified teachers handle morning classes and three stay in the afternoon and oversee homework and other group activities.

This school year, there are 7 children in middle school. These children are taken to school in Antigua, as the Sisters felt that the middle school there had higher **(Over, please.)**

Memo from Mickey:

adult supervisor. Immediately outside is a common area for hanging laundry, a grassy area and a basketball court. We are delighted with the twin buildings, which are almost finished but for some last touches. (See Photo Page.)

We are also starting to rebuild the managerie of animals that, sadly, were lost in the mud floods of last year. The first additions are a new puppy and a pair of goats, who will produce more goats and supply milk. Last Fall, while four of us were visiting, we again planted a vegetable garden, with both seeds and children being well watered. Each of the last two years, we have been rewarded with bumper crops that allowed the children to eat their own fresh veggies all winter long.

All of this progress and care is only possible because of your support, spiritually and financially. On behalf of the children, the Board of Directors wants to thank you again for your generous support. You continue to change the future for an increasing number of adorable and well-deserving children.

Mickey Golbus, MD, President
Casa de Angeles Foundation

"Teach Your Children Well...":

educational standards than the one in our village. There are currently 4 of our high school students attending a boarding school in Guatemala City. They come home to the orphanage approximately every other weekend. As with the middle school children, the decision to send them to boarding school was made because it was felt that school would provide the best education.

When we first met the Sisters in 1999, the oldest child was 3-years-old, and the education budget consisted of buying a box of crayons. Today, education expenses are the single largest item of the orphanage budget!. That budget includes \$10,000 for uniforms, books, and supplies for the primary school, \$20,000 for primary school teachers, and \$3,000 per student in middle and high school for uniforms, books supplies, and boarding costs. We have granted some scholarships. Our education budget for 2011 is \$51,000. Our Board feels this is some of the best money we spend, and looks forward to supporting university tuitions!

Well, Well! We Need a Well!

A continuing problem at the orphanage is WATER. A few years ago, we installed a 20,000 liter cistern system that was filled with town-supplied water, and then went through our water purifications system, so that all of the water from any spigot was potable. This system has served us well these last several years. However, during this last year the town has allowed the starting of a significant amount of new development. This has taxed the town water supply. The authorities have "handled" this problem by shutting off the water supply to parts of town on different days. This is playing havoc with our cistern system. So, the Sisters are hard pressed to have sufficient water for each day.

It is clear to the Board that just as we had to become electricity independent by installing our own generator, we must now also become water independent. To do that requires a deep well dug through the rocky ground on which we sit. The farm next door to us installed a deep well, finding an aquifer at 350-400 feet, so we feel confident that this will be the depth of the well that we will also need. Unfortunately, there are a limited number of companies in Guatemala that can drill such a well. So, the competition is low and the prices are high. Estimates indicate that it will cost us around \$40,000 for this much needed well, an expense which was not in our budget

Can you come to the children's rescue and help us fund the drilling of this well? It is of the utmost importance to the children and the orphanage. Thank you for your kind consideration of supporting this new effort!

Casa de Angeles Foundation

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