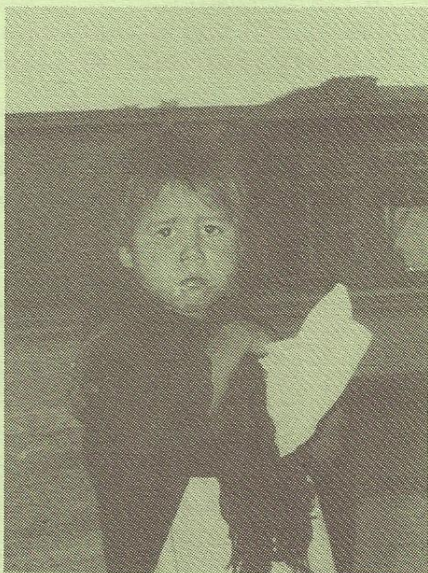


Layman **action** for children, inc.

WINTER 1989

THE 23rd YEAR OF LAY PEOPLE  
REACHING OUT TO HELP GOD'S NEEDY  
CHILDREN IN MEXICO



A YOUNG GIRL RECEIVING A MEAL  
AT THE BREAKFAST STATION IN TORREON

*Financial help will be gratefully  
received at:*

*Layman Action for Children, Inc.  
P.O. Box 83023  
Los Angeles, CA 90083*

*For any questions, write to:  
Tor Jansen, Executive Director  
38 Elsie Drive  
Southampton, PA 18966*



Dear Supporters:

The 23rd year of your help to the children of Mexico has started. You have made a better world for so many who did not have a home. Most of these children had no idea that God, through you, could love them. So many had no chance for an education and a better future.

Your help has given the homeless a place to call their own. At the "Mama Paulita" and "La Familia" homes, they found new brothers and sisters, Christian house-parents and a concerned group of Mexican people who make sure that the physical, the mental, and spiritual needs are provided for.

During the past year, I have met often with our adult Mexican workers. They want you to know how much they appreciate that you enable them to be in the Service of Jesus Christ. "You are helping the Mexican people help themselves."

We have started a Breakfast Station Program on the streets of Torreon. There children can come before school to receive a cup of oatmeal, rice or soya soup with flavoring and some bread or crackers. We have had as many as 80 children per day come starting at 7 in the morning. I visited the project and can appreciate the work of Rebecca, the coordinator, and Rubin, a young volunteer. They have the warm "atola" ready every school morning and never fail to teach a Bible verse with the soup

We are also working on a home where our older youth can live and can get vocational or university training or start a job. Right now, in our homes, we have to let the older children go out on their own when they are 16-17.



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P.O. Box 83023 Los Angeles, Ca. 90083

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As a non-profit, interdenominational organization, it is our goal to respond to the needs of the under privileged children of the world. It is our belief that these needs must be met at all levels in a child's life - we must relate to the total being: the physical, the mental, the spiritual. When put into ACTION, this means providing food, shelter, and clothing to meet the children's physical needs; providing educational opportunities to enrich and enhance the mental capacities of the children; and providing the opportunity for worship thus encouraging spiritual growth.

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TAX DEDUCTIBLE CONTRIBUTIONS CAN BE  
MAILED TO THE ADDRESS ABOVE.

We have felt bad about that for a long time, but there are always young ones waiting to come in. Now, with your increased donations last year, we can do something! A group of 15 Mexican Christians have decided to serve in a Organizaing Group. With them I have already looked at proposed properties in Monterrey.

Thank you for your continued contributions for the children and youth. All your donations except visit, travel, and newsletter expenses go directly for our Mexican friends.

The Christmas Season was a happy one for our children and youth. I received many thanks for the extra \$5 we could give each this year. May God add his Blessings to you as you read this newsletter and look at the pictures.

Tor . . .



Another photo of Torreon Breakfast Program  
Workers and Children

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CHRISTMAS 1988 AT CASA HOGAR MAMA PAULITA as written by Ruth Hernandez, visitor.

The weather was warm and sunny as we drove south toward the Casa Hogar for Christmas. We arrived just at dusk on the 23rd of December to find Mrs. Hernandez ready for church. "I've just made 20 choir robes plus costumes for three wise men, the shepherds, Joseph and Mary!" she said with a sigh. We hastily combed our hair and went with her and the children to the little church next to the home.

The program was like children's Christmas programs the world over: an adult managing, children in costumes going up to recite, songs, a play with angels, shepherds, Mary and Joseph and a baby: a real live baby, lent for the occasion! Being a Mexican baby, accustomed to being passed around, the child, in white pajamas placidly accepted being sat in Mary's lap and happily banged its little hands on the arm of the chair while the actors spoke their wondrous lines and the Wise Men knelt to lay down their gifts.



I was impressed during the program by the fact that the children participated with such good will and determination. Dr. and Mrs. Rodriguez, a local Presbyterian couple, have taken the responsibility for the little church as their project for the year. Mrs. Rodriguez managed the program and had done all the work of preparing the children, rehearsing them, etc.

After the program we hurried back to the home to eat the traditional tamale supper provided for all by the church women. Still with the dust of travel in our hair and clothes, we washed hands to help. Volunteers had set and decorated the tables; I lost track of the others while I stood before a huge vat of hot tamales, neatly wrapped in corn husks and arranged like fish scales in overlapping rows to be steamed. Three of us stood for half an hour unwrapping tamales and serving plates.

We ate with the children and church members and then got up to cut slices of cake. The children ate quietly, lingering over their meal. Then laughing and talking, boys and girls, big and little were waiting for the gifts they could see by the Christmas tree.

I missed the gift distribution because I ended back in the kitchen, washing dishes. The older children usually do this, but this was their special night, so Mrs. Ocejo's daughter, Mirna Ocejo, and I cheerfully washed up for 90 people.

Thanks to your contributions, Mrs. Hernandez was able to take the oldest children to a large department store before Christmas and let each one buy something for himself - a rare and marvelous experience for youngsters who grow up in a children's home. Some used their money wisely, some not, but it was theirs to spend according to their own heart's desire. We were happy to see Teresa looking cute in a little cotton skirt and blouse she had bought for herself that day.

Another youngster, Auguston, said he wanted to spend his money to buy a string of Christmas lights for the arch over the gate of Mama Paulita. Mrs. Hernandez accepted his suggestion and bought the lights herself, allowing him to spend his Christmas money on something for himself. The lights looked so pretty over the gate for the whole community to enjoy during the Christmas season.

Then there was Carmelo, much taller than most of the others, holding himself proudly as a young man who had come back from his studies in Monterrey. Nearly as tall now is Pepe, whom I remembered as a sullen, sad child who almost never spoke. Now he is tall, straight, and animated, laughing with the other youngsters at the table. Later I saw him gesturing and posturing in high good spirits, imitating something from the TV to make the other children laugh, the change is incredible.

My husband goes to take a look at the industrial washing machine, whose good health is of interest to all; think of washing for fifty people by hand! A wrench is needed; where is Jobito? Jobito has become the home handyman. With his mechanical turn of mind and his willingness to help out, he is a pillar of this little community.

Because everyone had begun to expect Jobito to solve all problems, Mrs. Hernandez decided to relieve him of some other duties, and named Augustin "Jefe de Comedor" (Head of the Dining Room.) Augustin, also one of the older boys, is responsible for organizing set up and clean up of tables, sweeping and mopping, and arranging for the devotionals before meals. For this he is required to be neatly dressed, something he used to neglect. Now he comes to meals in long pants and a shirt instead of a T-shirt.

On Christmas Day Noemi's mother comes to visit her. This blind woman had taken Noemi away several times to help her beg on the street. Ordinarily the child would not be allowed to return, but her mother's need was too terrible to deny. Twice Noemi fled from the manacles of that street life and came back to the home on her own, only to be taken away again. The third time, the local authorities brought her, and now she is officially required to live in the home. Noemi is so happy to see her mother again.

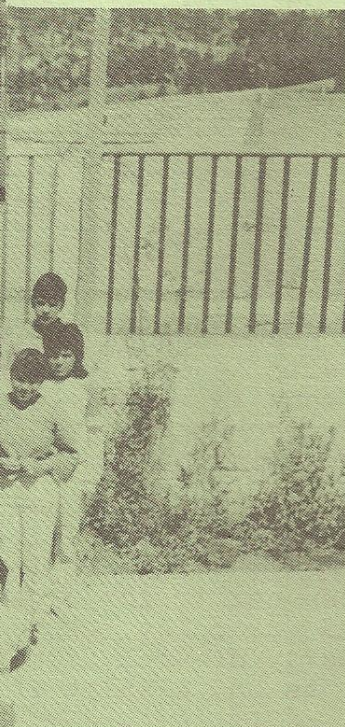


As I come and go over the years, the children grow up and eventually leave the home, while others come. This year the older girls I knew are gone. Most of the children are in elementary or junior high school (half are under 10), through some are older than would be normal for their grade in school because they came so late to the home.

I Noticed that both boys and girls help in the kitchen now, and most of them go about their business with calm responsibility. Everyone seems happy and relaxed; relations among the children themselves and with the staff seem incredibly healthy. I would have to be here longer to see and understand all the myriad feelings of anger, attraction, complains, and adjustments that go on in any group.

For the moment, it's Christmas and all's well at the Casa Hogar.

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Your children in Mexico (Mama Paulita above, La Familia right)  
WISH YOU A HAPPY NEW YEAR!

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The student and the Gospel Outreach Programs are still going strong. We will report more to you in the spring issue. Our staff in Norway, Sweden, and USA wish you a BLESSED NEW YEAR!