

Caring **action** for Children, Inc.
P.O. Box 64324 Los Angeles, CA 90064



WINTER 1994

For questions, please write to:
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Your Children and Youth
in Mexico
send their thanks for your
support in the New Year

A letter from your director :

Congratulations to you! You have made it possible to start out 28th year of helping children and youth in Mexico. During this time, you have made it possible for our Mexican friends to build, purchase, rent, and operate four homes with a total capacity of up to 120. Now we are in the process of building two more homes. All these years you have given so many a secure home and a chance for an education. Together we have followed the will of the Lord to share the many blessings we have in our countries.

I would like to write about my latest visit to Mexico. This time was different because I had the opportunity to travel almost 2000 miles by car. I will try to give you an idea of what this country is like and how your donations are invested in the lives of those we serve.

My journey started last November with a flight from Philadelphia, PA. to Cancun Mexico. Nineteen American volunteers had decided to serve one week and pay \$850.00 each to help our Mexican friends build a children's home in Bonfil, near Cancun. We would stay in a downtown Cancun hotel and meet every morning at the host church.

The work-site in the village of Bonfil was very hot in the tropical sun. Therefore we started our work day at 5:30 a.m. in the church kitchen with breakfast, devotion and preparation of take-with lunches. We had planned to limit our volunteer group to 19 because we were worried about keeping all occupied. The Lord and Luis, our Mexican coordinator, had other ideas for us. We ended up with an additional 23 Mexican students and a group of Americans from the resort hotels. We also worried about the 10 mile transportation between the church and work-site for all those people.

The Lord soon took away our worries as each volunteer found a task. Pastor Ascencio and Luis, from our host church, had two vans for only 15 but the Lord sent us "Mike" from Florida with a room camper van and the willingness to make many roundtrips. Miracles still happen!

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As a non-profit, interdenominational organization, it is our goal to respond to the needs of the underprivileged 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.

TAX DEDUCTIBLE CONTRIBUTIONS CAN BE MAILED TO THE ADDRESS ABOVE.

We planned for 19 but somehow 56 volunteers from two different cultures worked together as one team.

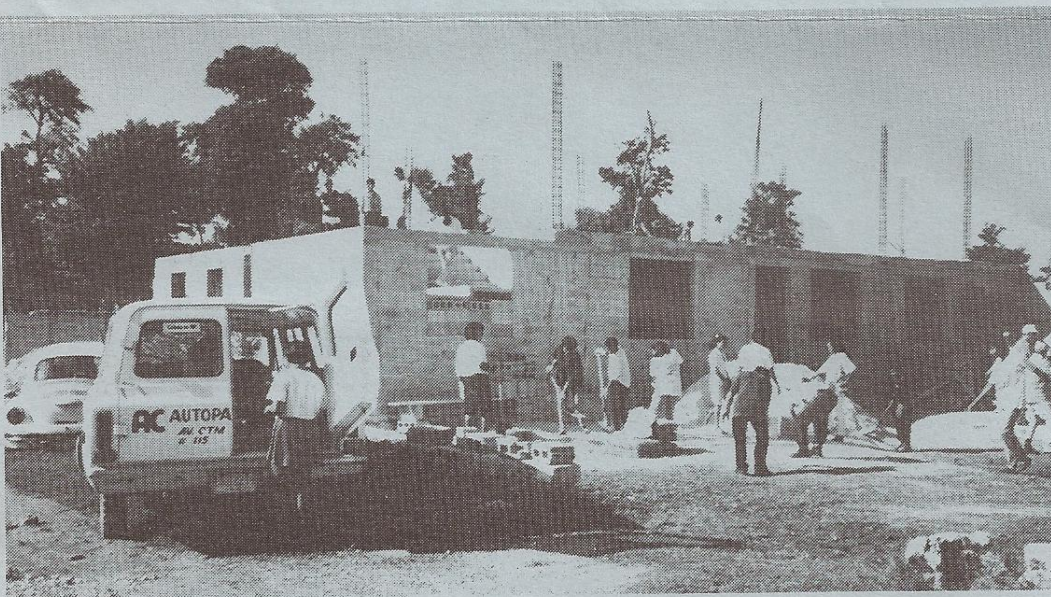
Work went fast with so many hands. Buckets of gravel, sand, water, and cement were hand carried to a rented cement mixer where the concrete mix was transferred to wheelbarrows. Fortunately we had strong men and women who could handle the heavy toil. The entire 3" thick floor was finished for the 36' X 60' building in three days. Other team members painted, cleaned and leveled the property and built 60' of cement block walls.

Caring Action for Children started the support on this project four years ago. Today, the village of Bonfil has a chapel where a new Mayan Indian congregation meet, a medical office where volunteer Mexican doctors come to give free treatment, and the first floor of the "Esperanza (Hope) Home" where the first children may arrive soon. Thank you for your faithful support.

You may have read about the the New Year's Day rebellion of 2000, representing the forgotten and poor Mayan Indians. The cause for this rebellion is an indication that we need to show our love in some way. At "Esperanza" we are helping the Mexican Christians start social and spiritual ministries for the children of the forgotten people. Such ministries by caring Mexicans will be the only way to prevent the need for future rebellions.

The volunteers had the opportunity to experience people in a "different work". Next to the work project are two shack huts with two families and 14 children. The team visited, shared

gifts and were touched by seeing how they lived their primitive lives. They also visited areas where thousands of job seekers live. "I came back a changed person!" was expressed by many volunteers.



*Americans and
Mexicans work
together to build
the "Esperanza
Home" for child-
ren in Bonfil.*

*The ground floor
is finished!*

Mike, our saviour with the extra van, was driving along back to the USA. I asked him if would like to come with me to see our other mission projects. He accepted and we started down the coast of the Yucatan Peninsula. From the car, we had a good view of the Mayan villages. The houses near the road had electricity and sometimes you could see a TV through the cracks of the bamboo and stick huts. The most prominent building in the villages usually were the school and Catholic catedral. We were told many Mayans live and subsist in the jungle beyond as they had done for thousands of years.

The road, in some places, was very bad but still passable at 5 MPH. Holes in the pavement, animals and people on the roads plus warning of robbers kept us from driving at night. We found the people very friendly when we stopped for gas or a bottled drink. Only once, when we asked a man for the way to the town of Zapata were we pointed in the opposite direction. Zapata was our first overnight. We found a hotel in the center of town. From the balcony and walking around town in the evening, we could see the great difference in wealth in the part of Mexico. The well-to-do sons of the ranchers and landowners would noisily drive around town in the latest model four-wheel-drive pickup trucks. In contrast, darker skinned Mayan women and children were quietly walking, almost unseen, with a pail of tortillas, beans, or handmade items for sale. Students, still in their uniforms, from the in-between class were enjoying themselves in the park. Mike and I were obvious foreigners and some of the students tried out their English on us. This was not a modern town but we felt safe. Chiapas State, where the rebellion took place, is only a few miles from Zapata.

The next day we drove another 12 hours before we reached the home La Familia. While Yucatan had been flat and sparsely populated, the land now became hilly to mountainous and with more villages and cities. The biggest cities were Villahermosa and Vera Cruz. Here you find many factories, commerical activities and traffic jams.

Some roads are superhighways for a few miles, narrowing down to single lanes. You see rich people in expensive cars and poor people walking along the same roads, often with a donkey carrying firewood or something from their sparse farming plots. Hundreds of busses carry people to and from the markets in the towns. Since this is close to Guatemala, soldiers stopped us several times to check what we carried. I guess for guns or drugs.

It is impossible to estimate the time it takes to go from one place to the next. Detours, unmarked roads, few gas stations hidden in side streets, our limited Spanish, stretched our time estimate. We arrived in the city of Serdan at La Familia four hours after dark time. The last three hours had been over a high mountain range with many hairpin curves with no guardrails. I was afraid to look out the side window and prayed that Mike knew where he was going.

We arrived at La Familia as a surprise to everyone. Our message that we were coming had been lost somewhere. All the children got out of bed and greeted us with hugs and handshakes. Four were new arrivals and they were a bit more bashful. The director, Lourdes, quickly made us some tortillas and bean soup. It had been a long day for us. Mike got the bed in the guest room and I was happy to sleep in the boys dorm.

The next morning we were up with the children. Fortunately, it was the weekend so they did not get up at the usual 6 a.m. All of them were doing their morning chores before we had breakfast together at 8. We had some candies and toy gifts for the children and we soon were accepted as their uncles, Tio Tor and Tio Mike. The older children were facinated with Mike's camper and asked if they could wash it. You should have heard the excitment as we took everybody through town as a reward for a clean car. The experience of riding in such a car is something they will always remember. This home does not own a car, so the children do not often see the worldoutside the town. We visited a three mile diameter crater nearby where we were told that a meteor had crashed many years ago.



Lining up for food, "La Familia"



Mike visiting "Mama Paulita"

I had a discussion with the house mother, Lourdes, about the status and plans for the home. She showed me several areas which needed repair. The most urgent was the boys bathroom where a door, several sinks and tiles need to be replaced. All the monthly money the home receives from Caring Action for Children is used for food, schooling and utilities and very little is left over for repair she said. While we were talking, the older children took Mike on a walking trip around Serdan. As a 68 year old grandfather, he enjoyed that. He bought them treats and was also a hit with the children he played his marmonica for them. He just kept speaking English to them, they spoke only Spanish to him but they communicated in love.

We are currently providing support for 15 children at La Familia. We are expecting additional children soon as the new Methodist Patronato brings new children from the crowded cities.

Two more days of driving over mountains and along the Atlantic coast were required before reaching the "Mama Paulita" home.

The rest of the story will wait till the Spring letter. We still ahve almost 500 miles left til we arrive at the USA border. Mike and I were asked to bring the "Thank You's" from all the Mexicans who receive your help. Your donations are multiplied in the Kingdom of God!

Our congratulations to Eliseo Rios and his new bride, Olga, on their marriage January 23rd. Eliseo is the Treasurer for the home "La Familia". We wish them well!

A note from our Treasurer,

1993 was similar to the previous year in both income and disbursements of funds. With our strictly volunteer work team, we are proud to show that 93¢ of every dollar you sent to Caring Action for Children was delivered to to our projects in Mexico. The other 7¢ paid for the traveling to our programs and other overhead expenses. During our trips, we saw that the funds you provided were spent to their fullest and that the children were well taken care of. Thank you once again for your help.

A copy of our financial statement is available if you request.