

SNAP-SHOTS

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“AGING OUT”

In Tijuana it's estimated there are around 100 orphanages. Each one is home to between 20 and up to 100 kids, most of whom have at least one parent or relative but for various reasons; abuse, neglect, drugs etc., they have been removed from their families. Directors of these institutions are responsible for the feeding, care, education, development, and the launching into society of hundreds of kids. With government assistance unrealistically minimal, most orphanages rely heavily on donors and volunteers for their day-to-day needs. While some kids will stay to continue their education after they “age out” of an orphanage at 18, many leave, facing the adult challenges on the outside with little to no support or guidance. Without strong spiritual and emotional support, they are vulnerable to substance abuse, prostitution, homelessness etc.

Being mindful of this when visiting the 5 orphanages we are connected with, Hortencia and the team spend time talking with kids, directors, and caregivers about their struggles and successes, and look for ways we can help. Many of the kids we've known since childhood are now navigating their way through mid to late adolescence, a challenging time for all!

Several months ago we were asked if we could offer sewing classes again at Casa de Gracia, particularly for the kids who are more *practically* than academically minded. Thankfully because of funds made available, we were able to purchase several sturdy old Bernina sewing machines, (which are not cheap, but worth the \$ as they rarely break down), and our sewing teachers Paty and Kathia, set to work preparing and gathering materials, patterns, and equipment to make it happen. The response from the kids since then, has been encouraging!



Making blankets.



Mastering the basics.



Making a hoodie.



Making hats.



Kathia, (past sewing student)...

teaching.



Busy at work.

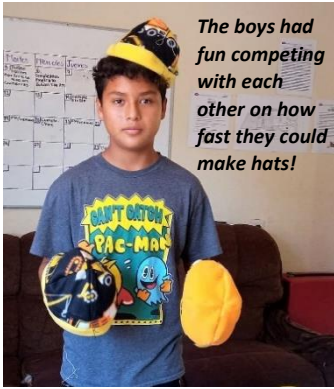
For one in particular, (a troubled girl who had recently arrived at Casa De Gracia), the classes helped calm disruptive behavior, build confidence, and direct her energy into learning a skill that she enjoys and has a talent for. All of the other kids have also done well making hats, blankets, and hoodies for themselves and now for other kids and the elderly in our barrios as well.

We thank all of you who partner with us for making it possible to equip these kids with a practical skill (before they “age out”), that has potential to help them gain employment, or possibly begin a small business of their own in the future.

Cont.

...make it your ambition to lead a quiet life... mind your own business and work with your hands, ...so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anybody.
1 Thessalonians 4:10-12

Some of the finished products!



The boys had fun competing with each other on how fast they could make hats!



Custom made hoodies



A YOUNG ARTIST

Roswaldo has lived most of his 16 years at Siempre Mi Familia, meaning "My Forever Family," (a christian orphanage). From a young age it was clear he possessed a talent for art. During the pandemic, the directors Alejandro and Arcelis, (who are also the house parents), cleared a space in a covered section of a patio for Roswaldo to practice while school was closed. As you can see he has made good use of it! Roswaldo is one of the more fortunate kids in an orphanage where using his talents and abilities is encouraged and supported. That's not always easy for Alejandro and Aracelis though, as they have 20 other kids in their care, including 2 of their own, some they've adopted, and some with special needs. With mostly teenagers now, it's an expensive and challenging time. They make **many** sacrifices to ensure the kids in their care have the best possible chance for the future before "aging out." Please keep them in your prayers!



Above: Roswaldo proudly displays his work in the patio, some of which he has already been selling!
Left: Explaining some of his paintings to Geovanny, (V&O helper).

WENDY

In mid-2019 we were involved with the placement of a young boy at Casa Hogar Niños del Camino. During the process we were introduced to Wendy who had lived there since she was small. Wendy was now one of the older kids helping out with the younger kids. She was also studying hard at school as she wanted to gain entry into a Govt. funded and more sought-after university in Tijuana once she graduated High School. This required not only excellent grades for the next two years but also finances to pay for her exams, school fees, uniforms, laptop, supplies, transport etc. She knew she would need help and had been praying. Impressed by her faith and commitment, Hortencia shared her story with a couple who have been generously supporting ministry work in TJ for many years and asked if they would be willing to help. On hearing the situation and that Wendy had the help of a trustworthy adult at the orphanage to manage the funds and coach her along, they gladly agreed to help and have been doing so ever since. This month, after passing all the requirements and a difficult entry exam, Wendy received her acceptance letter from the university! As she embarks on this exciting new chapter in her life, please pray for her. (She wants to become a Customs and Immigration Officer). She will stay on at the orphanage working/helping out, as well as being a mentor and role model to the younger kids. Once again, THANKS! for your help in this work where God uses us all and multiplies blessings to encourage many others working for His purposes also! Joyce, Philip, and Hortencia, on behalf of the V&O team.



Wendy with her High School Graduation Certificate and University Entrance exam results.



On Graduation Day, giving thanks to God and her sponsors.