



## Centro De Esperanza Infantil A.C. Oaxaca Street Children Grassroots Inc. April 2020

*35 years making a difference in the lives of children*



In July, 1985, after reading a fascinating magazine article about Oaxaca and the Triqui indigenous culture in the Mixteca about six hours from the city, Harold and Jodi Bauman decided to visit Oaxaca. The first evening, eating in an outdoor café downtown, a nine-year old boy named Ruben, came to their table asking for food. The mother had to flee their village and had come to Oaxaca in search of a better life for the family after the father had been killed in their village. He wanted to go to school but he had no birth certificate, had no vaccinations, no money and no home. With the help of a kind lawyer, a birth certificate was written and he was enrolled into school. This is how the Oaxaca Street Children Grassroots organization began, thirty five years ago, with one child and the dream of Harold and Jodi that an education would help this needy child.

Over the past thirty five years, over 800 needy children have been educated, learned to read and write, be respectful productive citizens, be mainstreamed into society, escape poverty and have a brighter future. 130 young adults have graduated from universities and vocational schools on a professional level as doctors, dentists, nurses, pharmacists, lawyers, teachers, accountants, architects, engineers and various areas of business.

And today, we have 675 students from various ethnic backgrounds, ages 4-26 currently enrolled in kindergarten through university levels in several schools in Oaxaca, all with the dream of a better life with an education. In 1999, with ownership of our building, we registered with the government as Centro de Esperanza Infantil, A.C. in Mexico as a partner with Oaxaca Street Children Grassroots in the USA, today as one organization.

The goal of CEI is to help children from low socio-economic backgrounds who often live in a one-room tin house with dirt floors, some without electricity, running water or modern conveniences, living in crowded conditions, living from meal to meal, with parents trying to survive on a daily wage of \$6.00 - \$7.00 USD. There is no money for school as often the children need to work to help the family survive.

With the help of a sponsor who contributes \$250 USD per year, the child is given a pair of shoes, a pair of tennis shoes, a school uniform, a P.E. uniform, a backpack, school supplies, inscription fees, guidance and counseling. In addition, from other donations the child may come to our center for a daily meal, use the computers, the library, take extra classes, tutoring of homework and constant encouragement and assistance.

CEI has the belief that, "Every child wants to learn and can learn if given the opportunity." Thanks to all the generous sponsors, volunteers and donors from around the world who have the same belief in helping make a difference in the lives of needy children who want to learn. Yes, 35 years of making a difference in the lives of needy children. And remember, "Giving a child a peso on the street only helps today, but investing in his/her education is forever."



**Dulce María Martínez Ramírez**

### *Returning to her village to help others*

"My family of seven came to Oaxaca from the village of Tierra Blanca and needed help. When I was five years old, I was accepted into kindergarten at CEI and have spent my entire educational preparation with CEI. I always enjoyed working with young children and seeing them develop. So I decided to be a bilingual teacher, helping educate children from the villages like where I came from. I was accepted into the Escuela Normal Bilingue Intercultural de Oaxaca where teachers are prepared in all sixteen indigenous languages of Oaxaca. In my four years of preparation, I was able to practice in several villages. I am currently finishing my professional practice (student teaching) for one year in Tierra Blanca working with twenty six children between the ages of four and five and writing my thesis. Thanks to CEI because in July, age 23, GPA of 80%, I will graduate with a degree in Bilingual Preschool Education, both in Spanish and Triqui, my native language. In the future, the government will send me to a village to teach where needed. I will be the fourth graduate from this university to return to various villages to help educate others of our indigenous backgrounds."





## Three Kings Party

On January 4, around 270 kindergarten through high school students celebrated the traditional Three Kings Party. The children were entertained with a show of competitive games, a raffle of many gifts, tacos, fruit cups, popcorn and chips, drinks and ice cream. After eating they took part in a carnival with four rides, games of chance to win prizes and a bouncy house. Before leaving the party, the primary students were given a gift bag, clothing and a candy bag. The high school-through university students were given their gifts throughout the month of December at the CEI office. The smiles, laughter and noise indicated that everyone had a great time! Thanks to all volunteers who helped with the party!



## Culture Corner.... Noche de Rábanos

Native to China, radishes were introduced to Mexico by the Spanish friars in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Eventually they became used as a side dish, a snack or carved into decorations for special dishes. In the colonial period, Oaxaca was known for wood carving and the farmers began carving radishes into figures as a way to attract customers' attention in the Christmas market on December 23. Centuries later, December 23, 1897, the mayor of Oaxaca decided to create a formal radish carving competition, which has been held each year since. It is called the "Night of the Radishes" and over 100 contestants take part competing for prizes in various categories. Today in addition to radishes, artisans compete in two other

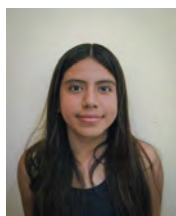
categories, using dried flowers (flor inmortal) and cornhusks (totomoxtle). The radishes are cultivated near the city airport. These giant vegetables are heavily fertilized, treated with chemicals and not for human consumption. On December 18, around 10 tons of radishes are harvested. Some grow to 50-60 centimeters in length. The artisans have a few days to produce their complex figures based on aspects of Oaxacan culture. In the early hours of December 23, the artisans set up for the one-day festival attended by thousands of local and foreign visitors.



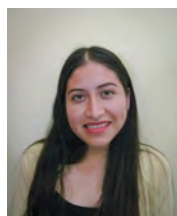




Angeles 100%



Dana Paola 100%



Elda Elisa 100%



Elian 100%



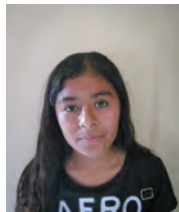
Karen Mayte 100%



Perla 100%



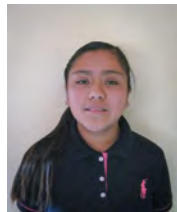
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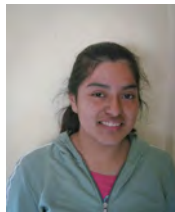
Erika 100%



Itzel 99 %



Karla 99 %



Natalia 99 %



Rosa Elia 99 %



Tania 99 %



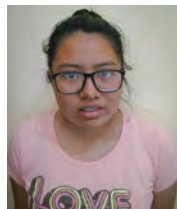
Ana Isabel 98 %



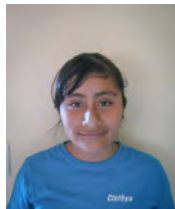
Angel 98 %



Jazmin 98 %



Citlali 98 %



Cynthia 98 %



Dina 98 %



Keyla 98 %



Luis 98 %



Luz Elena 98 %



Soledad 98 %

## Honor Roll

Special recognition and gifts were presented to the twenty three students on their excellent academic achievements this past school year with GPA's of 98% to 100%. One hundred twenty four of our students received GPA's of 90% and above! Again this indicates that all children want to learn and can learn if given a chance..... CEI is currently giving 675 children this opportunity for an education.

## PROUD GRADUATES 2020



### Josefina Elizabeth Cruz Ortiz

"I always wanted to be a teacher because the best way to change something is with an education. I want to teach older kids in Oaxaca and make a difference in the lives of others. In July, 22, GPA of 87%, I will graduate from the Universidad de Benito Juarez with degree in Teaching. I completed my scholastic practices with the federal government doing surveys on education needs. My professional and social services requirements for six months were completed in the university. In addition to my studies I have worked in a shoe store, a restaurant and as a babysitter to help my abandoned mother raise we three children. Thank you, CEI, you have been great help to me since I was nine years old."



### Florencia Leonor Hernández Cruz

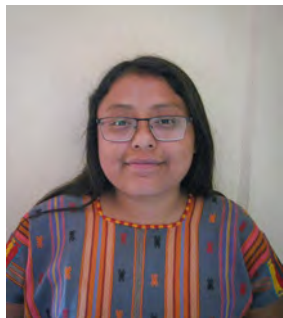
"My family of eight moved to Oaxaca from our village when I was two years old. At an early age, I cleaned houses, worked in stores and market stalls, did babysitting and worked with a teacher in fourth grade who was a great influence to me to be a teacher. When I was thirteen I came to CEI for help. My social service (6 months) was completed in primary schools. My professional practices (3 months) also were completed in primary schools. In July, age 23, GPA of 80% I will graduate with a degree in Elementary Education from the Instituto Pedagógico Computarizado in Oaxaca. I love to motivate children and work with them and show creativity. Thanks to CEI for helping me..... I am now a teacher and I can also care for my child!"



### Abimael Torres Roque

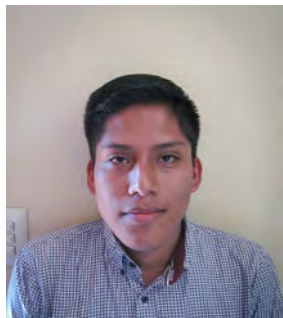
"I was born in Santiago Amoltepec, a village of 4,500 inhabitants, nine hours from Oaxaca. In second grade my parents went to the north to work leaving me in charge of my two sisters. We were sent to a youth hostel where we had to work for our care until first year of high school. My father abandoned the family and I had to work to help support them. I spent one year with Canafe after preparatory school doing my social service and became interested in helping others in need. When I was sixteen, I was curious and made my first trip to Oaxaca to explore. I always wanted to be a dentist; we never had one in the village. In July, age 23, GPA of 85%, I will graduate as a Dentist from the Universidad de Benito Juarez –School of Dentistry. My next year I will complete my social service requirement, hopefully in a village because of the need for care and write my thesis or go directly to a practical thesis. Thanks to CEI, it has been a rough road, but dreams do come true!"

## PROUD GRADUATES 2020



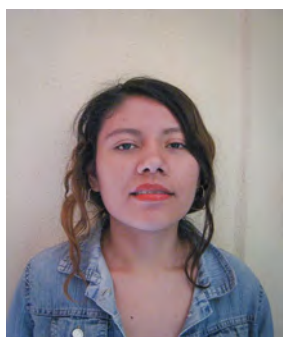
### **María Magdalena De Los Reyes Flores**

“Coming from a family of eleven children, we needed help. CEI has been my second home since I was three years old when I entered kindergarten. At the age of eight, I was working in the market selling typical clothing. I always enjoyed working with people and sharing my cultural background and decided to study tourism. Now age 22, GPA of 86%, I will graduate from the Universidad de Benito Juárez with a degree in Tourism. I finished my six-month professional practices with the Secretary of Tourism in Oaxaca and my last semester I will complete my six-month social service requirement with the same department and work on my thesis. In the future I hope to work with the government or in a hotel.”



### **Abiud Maxwell Pacheco Hernández**

Abiud was born with meningocele, a paralysis of the back and legs, requiring crutches for walking. His father abandoned the family and at the age of eight he was accepted into CEI. His health never slowed him down as he was goal tender on his school soccer team. He said, “I had longer arms with my crutches and could defend the goal!” He always enjoyed working with statistics and numbers. In August, finishing his studies in three years, age 20, GPA of 90%, he will graduate with a degree in Criminology and Forensic Studies from the CLEU University. He has completed his six-month social services with the State Agency of Investigations in Oaxaca. In the future he hopes to go to Puebla or Mexico City where there are more possibilities for work. He said, “Thanks for believing in me and for all the help..... never give up!”



### **Karla Pelaez Pérez**

“When I was twelve, my father abandoned the family and with a handicapped sister, we needed help so I could continue in school. I worked selling avocados, as a waitress, worked in a shop, did tours to help the family. I loved school and I always wanted to be a teacher. It is a very noble profession, teaching others and watching them develop. My dream will come true in September, 22 years old, GPA of 92%, when I graduate with a degree in Foreign Language Teaching-English & French from the Universidad de Benito Juárez. My third-year practices were completed in the university teaching other students and my social services (one year student teaching requirement) has been with the students in the accounting department of the university. I hope to teach in Oaxaca and eventually go abroad. Thank you, CEI!”



### **Eduardo Aranda López**

“When I was fifteen I decided on a career in tourism. It is such a broad area covering all aspects of culture. My six-month social service requirement will be with the local government agencies in Oaxaca. My professional practices of 480 hours have been with the Children’s Library working with children in Oaxaca. I will graduate in July, GPA of 85%, age 22 with a degree in Tourism from the Universidad de Benito Juárez. My plans are to go elsewhere to explore and work. I have been with CEI since third grade and I thank everyone helping me to this level in my life.”



### **Nayeli Soledad Agustín Mendoza**

“Having a brother who was handicapped and needing help with learning has taught me that everyone can learn if helped and given the attention needed. He was my influence to become a teacher. CEI has helped me since sixth grade. To help the family I worked in a pharmacy. My practices have been in various schools: first and second year (280 hours), in third year, my professional services (350 hours) and my social services (480 hours) now in the sports department of the university. These practices are in development and improvement in education in all areas. I will graduate in June, age 23, GPA of 89% with a degree in Development in Educational Policies (Teaching) from the Universidad de Benito Juárez. I hope to teach high school or university students somewhere outside of Oaxaca. Thank you, CEI for everything.”



### **Rey Noel Trinidad Rodríguez**

“I was nineteen and wanted to go to the university but needed help. I worked as a gardener, painted houses, helped a carpenter and did kitchen work. I always loved working with food and wanted to be a chef. I know I will always have a job as people always will be eating! I have studied all basic foods and prefer baking. My professional practices began the first year with four months in a hotel in Huatulco. My next practice, now third-year, I will be in a restaurant in Puebla for four months. In June, age 22, GPA of 82%, I will graduate with a degree in Culinary Arts from the Universidad Tecnológico de los Valles Centrales de Oaxaca. My fourth year I will be preparing for my title. CEI has helped me economically, socially and with extra courses.”



## PROUD GRADUATES 2020



### **Rubén Palomeque Gómez**

"In high school I had a teacher that influenced me in art, in drawing and creating new designs. I was in the university but was financially stressed and my father, being a single parent, was unable to help with everything. Thanks to CEI for helping me in my last years to achieve my dream of being an architect. My professional practices have been with private construction companies in Oaxaca. My social service requirement will be with the government in Oaxaca. In June, age 25, GPA of 82%, I will graduate with a degree in Architecture from the Universidad de Benito Juárez. I hope to open my own construction company in home construction."



### **Ana Laura Martínez Bautista**

"CEI has been my second home since kindergarten when I entered the program. From a family of six, I have always worked in market stalls, a restaurant, a boutique and as a receptionist, but preferred selling clothes. I enjoyed my the studies with tourism, such a broad area of food, culture, history and customs of my country. I have had practices in hotels and my six-month social service requirement is with Sector (tourism offices) in Oaxaca. In June, 22, GPA of 82%, I will graduate with a degree in Tourism from the Universidad de Benito Juárez. My plans are to work in Puerto Vallarta in the future. Because of all the great help and advice of CEI, I will graduate!"



### **Erick Fernando Altamirano Díaz**

"CEI has helped me economically, given me much personal attention and guidance. I came to CEI in third grade as my mother was abandoned and left with six in the home to care for. I worked cleaning offices and as a waiter. In July, age 22, GPA of 86%, I will graduate from The Instituto Tecnológico in Oaxaca with a degree in Business Administration. I have completed my social service requirement (480 hours) on campus in the general offices and after graduation I will do my professional residency for one semester in Oaxaca to be announced and to work on my thesis. My future plans are to stay in Oaxaca to help my family."



### **Reyna Guadalupe Cortés Ramírez**

At the age of five and ready to enter kindergarten, Reyna came to CEI. In high school, she decided she wanted to be a nurse. She was interested in helping people which is a very humanistic career. This past year, age 22, GPA of 79%, she graduated from the Universidad de Benito Juárez with a degree in Nursing. During her four years she has had several practices in health centers, hospitals and clinics. She is currently finishing her one-year social service requirement in different areas in the state of Oaxaca, investigating projects, teaching other beginning nursing students and tending patients. "Thanks to CEI, in August I will defend my thesis and receive my title. I hope to stay in Oaxaca and work in a Health Center," said Reyna.



### **Angelica López Santiago**

"In primary school, I sold tortillas and candy and cleaned houses to help the family. When I was fourteen, my father passed away and took off one year of school to work. With seven brothers and sisters, we needed help. Thanks to CEI for accepting me. Along with my studies, I continued working by selling water, worked in restaurants and for an accountant who influenced me. I have completed my social service (380 hours) with an engineering firm and my professional service requirement in the city offices of Teixtlahuaca (380 hours) in addition to finishing my thesis. In July, age 24, GPA of 95%, I will graduate with a degree in Public Accounting from the Universidad de Benito Juárez. Someday, I hope to have my own accounting office in Oaxaca. I am so thankful, CEI, you have changed my life!"



### **María Guadalupe Ruiz Vázquez**

"My father abandoned us and we three children had to work to support our mother who was arthritic, losing her vision and could not work. When I was 21 and needed help, CEI was there. I liked working with kids and helping the ones with problems and difficulties. In third grade my teacher told my mother I could not learn. She moved me to a different school and that third grade teacher was my influence, helped me and worked with me. I then wanted to be a teacher! My philosophy is "The dream of a child is to learn." My practices have been in a Guardería for three months working with pre-school ages. My professional services will be teaching in a Guardería and kindergarten for three months. In July, age 24, GPA of 92%, I will graduate from the Universidad del Golfo de México with a degree in Elementary Education. Since I am bilingual (Spanish-Zapotec), I hope to work in a village teaching kindergarten and primary grades."



## Oaxaca Street Photography Workshop

Jay Waltmunson, Spanish teacher and photographer from Seattle, sponsored a Street Photography Camp in Oaxaca for eleven students. This was a serious photography learning project, a total Spanish immersion and created new friends through the lens of a camera. The camp was a week of intense photography of different areas of cultural attractions of Oaxaca and a photo exhibition for the public at the local Manuel Bravo Photography Museum.



## Posada Party

In December, forty students from the Carlos Gracida School in Oaxaca sponsored a Posada party for forty CEI elementary children. The Posada is celebrated the nine nights preceding Christmas when Mary and Joseph searched for a place to give birth. The morning was filled with activities, singing, skits, breaking two piñatas, food and each child was given a gift by the host students. Thanks Carlos Gracida for this happy event.

## Culture Corner.... The Poinsettia

Poinsettia plants are native to southern Mexico and Central America. The ancient Aztecs used the red leaves to make a purple dye for clothes and cosmetics and the milky white sap was used as a medicine to treat fevers. The poinsettia was made known because of Joel Poinsett, the first Ambassador from the USA to Mexico in 1825. He took some plants back to South Carolina and immediately he began growing plants and sending them to friends and botanical gardens. The first plants were sold in Pennsylvania as cut flowers and later were sold as whole potted plants. The plant received the name "poinsettia" because of Mr. Poinsett. There is an old Mexican legend about how the poinsettias and Christmas came together. There was a poor girl named Pepita who had no present to give the baby Jesus at the Christmas Eve service. She picked a small handful of weeds from the roadside and made a small bouquet. She entered the chapel and placed them at the bottom of the nativity scene. Suddenly, the weeds burst into bright red flowers and everyone there thought they had seen a miracle. From this night on, the bright red flowers were known as the "Noche Buena" or "Flower of the Holy Night." The shape of the poinsettia flower and leaves are sometimes thought as a symbol of the Star of Bethlehem which led the Wise Men to Jesus. The red colored leaves symbolize the blood of Christ. The white leaves represent his



### Oaxaca Address:

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**Office Hours:**  
Mon-Fri 9-5pm - Sat. 9-3pm

### Donations: send a check to:

Oaxaca Street Children Grassroots Inc.  
P.O. Box 2219 Benton, AR 72018  
**website:** [www.oaxacastreetchildren.org](http://www.oaxacastreetchildren.org)  
**email is the preferred means of communication:**  
[dslymaker@oaxacastreetchildren.org](mailto:dslymaker@oaxacastreetchildren.org)  
**Phone:** 501-574-9040  
**fb:** Centro de Esperanza Infantil A.C. - Oaxaca Street  
Children Grassroots.



### Canadian Friends of Oaxaca

Canadians can get a tax receipt for donations made in Canada or at CEI in Mexico. Send an Interac e-Transfer or cheque. Use PayPal or CanadaHelps. Find information at [www.canfro.ca](http://www.canfro.ca) or contact [pennyhopkins@xplornet.com](mailto:pennyhopkins@xplornet.com)