



Noticias from Santa María

A Newsletter from the Santa María Foundation

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Faces of Santa Maria



Servando is a 6-year-old boy in Kindergarten who came to Santa Maria after living with his grandmother who could not continue to care for him. While his father worked at night, his mother would socialize with men on the streets. His father would have to look for her when he returned home from

work. Sometimes, his mother would take Servando with her to play hide-and-peek with the men that she associated with. This experience with irresponsible adults has led to many behavioral problems. When he arrived at Santa Maria, he was aggressive with the other children and would swear at them. He frequently asked for alcohol to drink. After school started, he became more abusive by hitting the other children and even took his clothes off and danced naked in the courtyard. Through the grace of God and his faithful caretakers, Servando is receiving the love that he needs to learn respect for others and himself.



Felix is an 87-year-old man who has lived at Santa Maria for eight years. He worked all of his life in the fields. He never married and all of his siblings have passed away. Through Santa Maria, he has a home and a "family" to call his own. Due to his experience with plants, he spends his days caring for the flower gardens that grace the Asilo (nursing home).

A Night in Old Querétaro

Our Gala, with Bishop Tom Flanagan as honorary chairman, is scheduled for November 19, at 6:00pm, at the Hilton Airport Hotel. Emceed by Sonny Melendrez, it includes a dance and live and silent auctions. We will also have one of our missionaries present to share the labor of love that she is experiencing at Santa Maria. Your participation in this Gala will help to promote this much needed ministry at the mission. It promises to be an enjoyable night of fun. Look for your invitation in the mail in a couple of weeks!

From the Associate Mission Director

Fr. Mike Sanchez

In July, we had graduation for our children. There was great pride in the graduates' faces along with hope for the future that they would not have had if it hadn't been for Santa Maria. One of our high school graduates, Martin, who with great discipline and hard work, achieved a 98.5 grade average! Three of our female graduates are going on to college to become teachers. Another graduate is applying to be a pilot in the Mexican Air Force. There's more to tell, but remember...all of these children had been brushed aside, were abandoned, or too poor to have such dreams. Thanks to you, your prayers and support, they will all make great contributions in their own ways. God bless them and you all.



Participants of this year's mission trip.

Making a Difference

Despite the fears of going into Mexico due to the violence along the border, fifteen volunteers from five different states traveled to Santa Maria on June 25th to make a difference in the lives of the children. They completed numerous projects, including: building benches for the TV room so that the children do not have to sit on the floor, sewing much needed sheets and pillow cases, creating a beautiful garden area of grass and flowers outside the church at Santa Maria to enhance the spirituality and morale of the children, and upgraded and performed maintenance on the old computers in the lab. "Muchas gracias" to this diverse group of talented volunteers who took a week from their jobs and families to serve the children at Santa Maria.

Muchas Gracias

- Mary Pint and Carmen Kane, participants in our mission trip, who donated the funds to purchase new computers for the computer lab at Santa Maria. Through your support, we were able to transport and install them at the mission, as well as set up a second lab with the old computers at the other school.
- Barney Zenizo, who donated an economical pickup to be used at Santa Maria.
- Xerox agent, San Antonio Xerographic Systems, for printing our newsletter.
- You, our generous donors. This summer, the Foundation provided tens of thousands of dollars for: food and lodging for the residents, numerous projects for the mission, another vehicle for Santa Maria, and preparing and supporting the missionaries to care for the children and elderly.

From the Foundation Director

Rick Jones

What a summer! Our mission trips completed many needed projects. We now have 7 missionaries serving at Santa Maria to help care for the children and elderly. Through your generosity, we are doing great things for the mission! Jason, our missionary who completed his yearlong commitment in July, returned home to Mississippi to experience Hurricane Katrina in August. Thanks to God, his family and home fared well through the storm. The children, elderly, and staff pray daily for the victims of this disaster. As you donate and pray for the needy of Katrina, please also remember our needy children and elderly at Santa Maria. God bless you for your kindness.

Our Missionaries

Serving the 2005-06 School Year

These treasured yearlong volunteers provide love to our children and elderly by serving as caregivers, house parents, and teachers

Eric Ahern



Eric is a returning missionary who started serving at Santa Maria in August 2004. He is 32-years-old and the eldest of three brothers, and comes to us from Glendale, AZ. In the past, he volunteered at the Annunciation House in El Paso, TX and feels that he truly saw God face-to-face in the people that he served. He enjoys painting retablos and other religious art. Over the past year at Santa Maria, he has taught the children about the saints, art, and English. He painted a life size portrait of St. Philomena, a setting of Jesus with children on the front of the Casa de Jovenes, and is in the middle of paintings to be put in the Church at Santa Maria. Eric is also teaching art and coordinating activities for the secondary students.

Carrie Grzelak



Carrie is 24-years-old and the eldest of three daughters, and comes to us from Steubenville, OH. She graduated this Spring from the Franciscan University of Steubenville with a Masters in Counseling. In the past, she has volunteered as a tutor, in a soup kitchen, and at a Crisis Pregnancy Center. She enjoys reading, hiking, camping, traveling, and being outdoors. At present, Carrie is serving as one of the house parents at the Casa de Niños taking care of the boys in 1st grade and caring for the elderly at the Asilo (nursing home).

Jonathan Maki



Jonathan is 28-years-old, one of five children, and comes from Notre Dame, IN. He served in the U.S. Army and recently graduated from Holy Cross College. In the past, he has volunteered feeding the homeless and helped rebuild houses for the poor. He has also tutored students in English and Math. He enjoys sports, playing the guitar, and writing music. At present, Jonathan is teaching English and sports to the secondary students.

Arturo & Dora Lomeli



Arturo & Dora are “over 30” and have been married 33 years. They have three children and three grandchildren. They have volunteered in several positions at their church, including teaching religious education, Eucharistic minister, and Parish Council. Arturo was also involved in prison ministry. Dora enjoys reading and Arturo enjoys playing the guitar and working with his hands. At present, they are house parents at Casa San José taking care of the boys in 2nd thru 6th grade.

Kristina Sample



Kristina is 23-years-old and an only child, and comes from Claremore, OK. She graduated this Spring from Newman University with a major in Theology and minors in Spanish and Music. Kristina has volunteered as a religious education teacher, feeding the poor, and helped build homes in Guaymas, Sonora, Mexico. She also helped coordinate recreational activities and musical events for the residents at a Veteran Center. She enjoys listening to music, singing, and swing, salsa, and merengue dancing. At present, she is teaching and working as a house parent for the middle school girls at the Casa de Jóvenes.

Alison Swoboda



Alison is 22-years-old, the middle of three children, and comes from Little Falls, MN. She graduated this Spring with a major in Music and a minor in Chemistry. Alison has volunteered in youth and music ministry. She also helped educate middle and high school students and at-risk groups about HIV and AIDS. She enjoys singing and playing several instruments, including guitar, flute, piano, and the harp. At present, she is a house parent at the Casa de Niñas taking care of the girls in 1st thru 6th grade and teaching English in the primary school. She hopes to enter medical school in the future.

Please pray for them as they cope with leaving their homes, family and friends to enter another culture and language to serve God's needy children and elderly