



We are happy to say that many things have happened at Casa de Elizabeth (“CDE”) since the July Newsletter arrived at your house. Does this mean we don’t have to worry any longer? No, not really. Because once something is complete at CDE there are still many other work projects that need help and DIF keeps returning with more demands. CDE has not had any major repairs since inception.

The kitchen remodel is done!! See more photographs of the newly remodeled kitchen on the orphanage website: [www.casadeelizabeth.org](http://www.casadeelizabeth.org) under Activities and Gallery. This project was taken on by Faith Church of the Valley, Phoenix. We thank them wholeheartedly for their vision and mission. To any others that may have helped – thank you – you have



helped the staff and children have a far better place to eat and enjoy their meals.

Now, on to other urgent projects. Remodel of the boy’s and girl’s dorms. Work has begun on

the boy’s dorms, but only 2 or 3 local men are working on this project with the assistance of Calvary Chapel, Tucson volunteers. Can you imagine how slowly progress pushes forward when only 2 or 3 are working on possibly 20+ rooms just in the boy’s dorm alone? Slowly, very slowly. Then on to the girl’s dorms. The living quarters for the children have been haphazardly repaired over the years and most recently, not to the satisfaction of DIF who had not inspected CDE in over 20 years.

DIF keeps pushing; Manuel keeps looking for help for labor and financial assistance. DIF keeps pushing. Their time demands are hard to meet due to a lack of funds.

Here are just a few of 27 listed items that DIF wants accomplished and some of the deadlines are NOW:

- Emergency lighting inside and outside dormitories and in each room; kitchen, classrooms, dining room, television room, office, school; equipped with 90 minutes of lighting;
- Entire facility should have diesel or gasoline powered auxiliary generator for electricity;

- Ventilator fans and extractors must be installed throughout facility, i.e., dormitories, classrooms, office [5 coolers needed]
- 3 LP gas storage tanks protection around each tank;
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With approximately 90% of donations to Proyecto Compasion going to CDE, and with falling donations because of the U.S. economy, you can imagine that CDE is having a very difficult time meeting its needs.

← **NEW** – 2-2500 gallon back up water storage tanks.

DIF does not care if there isn’t enough money; they even threatened to shut down CDE. What will happen to the children? What will happen to all that has been done so far to assure these children that they have a safe place to live? What will be done to their self esteem if they witness this lack of humanitarian effort by their own government?

**Definition of DIF:**

DIF = Desarrollo Integral de la Familia. DIF is Mexico’s social service agency, organized at the Federal, State, and municipal level. DIF is responsible for welfare and safety of the most vulnerable members of Mexican society, regardless of age.

**By Amy L. Benoit** – In July, I had to make a special trip down to Casa de Elizabeth for just one day. This was in the wake of having just finished spending 3 days there on a mission with other single missionaries. The reason for my unscheduled visit was because I left my father’s telescope in the guest quarters that our group had been using the previous week and I had to retrieve it.

After initially berating myself about my oversight, I came into a sense of peace. This peace only grew as I made my way back down to the orphanage. This trip was very different than any others that I had experienced. I was not accompanied by usual entourage and that definitely elicited a different response and dynamic from everyone at the orphanage. This time, instead of working, I mostly sat and read a book. It had been months since I read anything for leisure. Occasionally I would be interrupted by some child or another who came over to say hello but most of them ended up sitting down and reading their own books. At another point in the day I walked around and said hello to everyone that I’ve come to know over the past year and it was different. I couldn’t help but meditate on what was changed and just now, a whole week later, I’ve discovered the answer.

You see on every other trip, I was seen as a guest and this



time I was seen as family. Every other time I had someone show me around, hold my hand and introduce me to everyone whereas this time I knew where everything

was, who most of the people were and they expected to see my face. At one point I was hanging outside in their temporary kitchen with the cooks and some staff and we all were snacking on each other's food. There was light conversation not about the group that I was with and what we were doing but about their lives and their plans for the weekend. They were teasing me about leaving my dad's telescope and my rudimentary Spanish and I was swimming in this sea of acceptance. What was this peace? And why had I not noticed it before? This peace is more than just the people, the place or the circumstance. While it developed over the past five trips that I had been there it really wasn't about frequency over time. This peace was coming from something else entirely; it came from acceptance.

After the last trip, the group of missionaries and myself had a debriefing about our experience. As I spoke with the group I talked about our singleness and how many often look at our singleness as a plague, as if there is something dreadfully wrong with us. The reality is each and every one of us single young adults on this mission were not single out of some flaw but single out of the truth and knowledge of what commitment really is. True commitment is deep into the heart of God and deep into the heart of each person. The fact that we are serving each other in this Singles Serving Orphans (SSO) group and then serving the orphanage in whatever way that God provides for us is proof of our commitment. We have come to believe and trust in the fullness of God's love for us.

**So what does this have to do with the kids or the orphanage or my peace? Well, not too long ago the two children that I had sponsored at Casa de Elizabeth were reunited with their biological mother. The last time I had seen both of them was Christmas 2008 and I had given my boy a stuffed lion that had**



**come with a camouflage blanket. The next time that I had gone back down with SSO all the kids told me that my sponsor children were gone. The time after that, 4<sup>th</sup> of July, the kids again**

reminded me they were gone and asked repeatedly if I would be sponsoring new kids. This day, this time, I was by myself and a group of young boys ran up to me and gave me the

camouflage blanket. My heart soared with the realization that my sponsored boy must have shared with all the other kids my gift to him and where he got it. My heart realized the depth of love that these boys all had for my sponsored child, love for each other and love for me. Here I am 7 months later with several trips in between and when it was just us, these beautiful boys gave me his blanket. They told me that they loved him and that he has the lion and I should have his blanket.

My peace comes from knowing that God has all of us in His heart. The more that I opened up my life and will to God's plan the more He has revealed the depth and grandness of His heart as well as opening up my own heart. My heart is in God's heart and everyone else's heart is there. I hold this blanket in my hand and with it I hold the hearts of my sponsored kids, the other kids at Casa de Elizabeth, the hearts of kids to come and they in turn hold my heart in theirs. God is calling us to a complete commitment to His heart, to His love and the more we do that the more we come to see, feel, believe that all our hearts beat together and that is peace.



**Sponsorship Program at Casa de Elizabeth Orphanage**

As the economic times hit everyone, sometimes the hardest hit are the less fortunate. We all

recognize the need to put that "extra" in a safe place. Safe place has a broad definition. Would you consider putting it towards the sponsorship of a less fortunate child at Casa de Elizabeth?

We have a wonderful program where you can correspond and visit with a child. As this author travels to the orphanage approximately every other month, the children are encouraged to write you a letter, which in turn is sent to you. This is a rewarding project for the children. You can write in English, they have others to help interpret. They will most likely write to you in Spanish, but that then gives you the opportunity to find someone to help interpret and possibly they will want to sponsor, thereby spreading the word of help for these children.

Many of the children are learning to speak English and some are even trying to write a little English. Most of the children are now going to school on site and are ready and excited to learn English. Sending a bilingual book raises much excitement and is shared by all.

Your sponsorship donation is applied in many ways – food, shoes, medicine, school tuition, orphanage improvements,

day to day expenses, and many other items. Your donation is also tax deductible through Proyecto Compasion [www.proyectocompasion.com](http://www.proyectocompasion.com).

The children thoroughly enjoy getting to know someone in the United States. They may write the same thing in a letter each time, they may continually ask you to visit, and they will pray for you, but bottom line, they get a lot of pride out of sending you that letter.

Please visit the orphanage website at [www.casadeelizabeth.org](http://www.casadeelizabeth.org) and view How Can I Help, Sponsor a Child or email Colene McKee at [EEKMC@hotmail.com](mailto:EEKMC@hotmail.com) if you have an interest in sponsoring a child.



**Prayers:**

1. Pray for the children that DIF is taking to another facility for psychological purposes. For misbehaving, acting out, hitting, etc. Pray for their safe return
2. Pray that DIF has and will give final approval of the requirements made of CDE.
3. Pray for fairness of visitors when giving items to specific children. All gifts should be given to the directors so there are no hurt feelings.

“Father, providing food for your children, by wisdom’s guiding, teach us to share one with another, so that rejoicing with us, all others may know you care. Then will your blessing reach every people, freely confessing your gracious hand. Where you are reigning, no one will hunger, your love sustaining, showers the land.” From the hymn “Praise and Thanksgiving”, by Albert F. Bayly



**A DREAM COME TRUE – A library for the children – Donated by Alpha Beta Chi/Phi Theta Kappa sorority, Tucson, Arizona through a collection of over 1300 donated ALL Spanish books. Shelving was also donated and constructed by the sorority.**

**5 Cents vs. \$5.00**

Jesus sat down opposite the offering and watched the multitude putting money in. Many rich people put in large sums. A poor widow came and put in two copper coins, which make about a penny. Calling his disciples he said **“I’m sure that poor widow has given more than anyone because everyone else has given what they have left while she has given everything she had to live on.”** Mark 12: 41-44

Once upon a time there was a \$5.00 bill who told his adventures to a 5¢ coin. He said “I have been to horse races, to the Olympics, to baseball and football games, to movies, to golf tournaments, and to the best restaurants; you know, I really get around.

The nickel listened with envy and told the \$5.00 bill “I haven’t been to any of those places you mentioned but I haven’t missed a Sunday church service. One Sunday a small boy watched his mom put me (5¢) in the offering tray. When they got home the mother criticized the service complaining how long and boring the sermon was. The boy asked his mom “What can you expect for 5¢?”

In Mark 12 Jesus observed the conduct of people but he didn’t judge. Today he observes us too. So we ask ourselves to look into our hearts and ask ourselves if we give God our leftovers or is our giving a sacrifice.

God doesn’t care about the amount we give. But He does care about our priorities, the manner in which we give. God loves us. He doesn’t want our belongings. He wants us to believe in Him, He wants us to give thanks, to be open to His love for then we will freely bring forth our offering. Our giving will not be an obligation but rather will be gratefully shared with our brothers and rather than diminish, they will multiply. Our giving will not be the leftovers, but rather the first product of our labor.

The widow in the Gospel story is teaching us: poor but generous, alone but with God, gratefully she gives all, even the little she has to live on.



**PLEASE FEEL FREE TO SHARE THIS NEWSLETTER WITH ANYONE.**