

Hello to all of you wonderful friends, family, and dedicated supporters of Rivers of Mercy,

We hope that you had a wonderful Christmas and that this new year is full of God's blessings in your lives. Here at Rivers of Mercy, we are continually awed by how God works, how He answers our prayers, and how He is faithful to guide us and show us His will. We are eager to share with you what's been happening over the past several months.



In September, our dear "Abuela" (Mary), who has been a full-time volunteer here for three years, left the orphanage for a much-needed and well-deserved 45-day vacation.

Unfortunately, shortly before she was due to return, she was in a terrible car accident in Albuquerque, NM, and suffered many injuries. After spending a week in the hospital, she spent several months in a rehabilitation center, but was able to leave around Christmas. Mary had a great and hopeful attitude during this entire ordeal. Her motivation for recovering was to be able to return to the children at the orphanage as soon as possible, which she was finally able to do early this month!

God gives Mary amazing strength and stamina, and she is already working hard making delicious meals, doing laundry, grocery-shopping in El Paso, and being the wonderful "Abuela" that we all love. Mary's car, which she used to take into El Paso for doctor appointments and running errands, has finally "hit the dirt." We are looking for a used vehicle (that runs well and gets good gas mileage) for her – please let us know if you can help. We also have a new full-time volunteer named Patty, a retired kindergarten teacher from Albuquerque, NM. Patty plans to be here for at least a year and a half. We already love having her here because she is a wonderful person and is always looking to see how she can help. She speaks Spanish fluently, which is a big asset. In addition to doing school activities with a couple of our kindergarten kids, Patty takes care of the toddlers (Joel & Danny) in the mornings, sometimes accompanies Mary to El Paso, and helps with laundry, cooking, and clean-up.



Samuel and Paola with their new parents

Over the past several months, some of our children who had been with us for quite a long time (1-2 years) were adopted by Mexican families. Usually we are not able to meet the adoptive family or have any further contact with the child, but we've had some exceptions to that recently—"happy endings" where we blessed to meet the children's new families! In December siblings Samuel & Paola were adopted by a couple here in Juarez. This was sudden, unexpected, and was initially heartbreaking for us. Samuel and Paola had been with us for about a year and a half and each had a genuine personal relationship with God. We had seen true fruits of the Holy Spirit in them. It was so strange to not have

them here anymore and it was a very difficult adjustment. Several days after they left, we received a phone call and were delighted to discover that it was Samuel! To make a long story short, we were able to go and visit Samuel and Paola at their new home and get to know their new parents. They are very happy to finally have a permanent family who loves them and cherishes them. Their parents told us that every day Samuel & Paola read their illustrated children's Bibles that we gave them, and they have taught their new father (who plays guitar and piano) several Christian songs that they used to sing with us here at the orphanage. We are confident that Samuel and Paola will be a powerful testimony to their family.

"The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective." James 5:16

This year for Christmas, Martha, our right-hand worker and partner, and her fiancé, Roberto, offered to spend Christmas here at the orphanage with the children so that we could spend the holiday with my family. We took advantage of their offer and spent several days in Rio Rancho, with my immediate family. While we were gone, Roberto actually proposed to Martha at the orphanage in front of all the children! They are planning to wed this August here in Juarez. One of our other workers, Bere, got married in December, and another, Lili, is also engaged and has plans to wed in July! Please join us in hoping and praying that these wonderful workers and friends of ours will be able to continue on here at Rivers of Mercy, and if not, that God would use them wherever they go, and provide other capable workers to take their place. Thank you so much to those of you who provided Christmas gifts for our children – it is a special and anticipated time for them. We had a delightful time during our morning Bible stories reenacting the journey to Bethlehem and the birth of Jesus, God’s promised Savior. Check out our blog for some great photos at <http://juarezkids.blogspot.com/2011/01/christmas-at-orphanage.html>.

We have some exciting news to share with you in regards to our plans for a private Christian school. In the midst of much prayer and seeking of God’s will, the Lord brought several people into our path who have the same vision and calling to start a private Christian school in the colonia of Anapra (where we live). Our plan as of now is to work together with these dedicated men and women of God to start a kindergarten this upcoming fall! The plan is that this school will be for kindergartners from Rivers of Mercy as well as from the local community. Our vision is that a couple of years down the road, after the kindergarten is up and running well, we will start an elementary school on the land behind the orphanage. We are excited about what God has in store! Please join us in prayer that God would give us wisdom, would clearly show us His will and guide our actions and decisions, and would help us to trust Him as we take steps in obedience.



Itzel, aka “Miss Anapra”



Joel with his school backpack

Our personal family is doing great. Joel turned 3 on New Year’s Eve and is already anxious to go to school with all the other kids! Itzel is 7 months old and is almost crawling. Mary says she looks bigger every day. Emmis & I and others are planning a mission trip to the village of Estribo (about 12 hours south of Juarez) in March, where Martha and I will be teaching a Sunday school teacher training class in the mornings and a vacation Bible school in the evenings. Thank you to all of you

who faithfully pray for us. We are convinced that it is because of this that the Lord has protected us in spite of the violence in this city. God is using your prayer and financial support to build His kingdom through the salvation of many children. We are so grateful for you.

With love in Christ,

Emmis, Kristin, Joel, & Itzel Robles & the children at Rivers of Mercy

“The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.” James 5:16

<http://riverofmercy.org>
<http://juarezkids.blogspot.com>