



Worldwide Heart to Heart Ministries



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Orphanage: Children's Village, Tegucigalpa, Honduras
Oscar & Amy Serrano, Honduras National Directors

NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 2007

Children's Village: Rescued from Misery

by Amy Serrano

What is the first thing that comes to your mind when you hear the word *misery*? For some of us it may be terrible stomach flu. For some of us it may be living with a troubled marriage or working at a job that you hate. However, the child in this month's article would define being miserable in a very different way. She would say it means having not one good or positive thing in life. Every aspect of her life was completely horrible, with no hope of that ever changing. She would define it that way because that was her life for eight long years. We will call her Joanne and this is her story.

Joanne is now nine years old and lives with us at the Village. One look at Joanne, and you already know two things about her. One is that she radiates perfect innocence, and two is that she has Downs Syndrome. Joanne has lived with us since July. We became aware of her situation through Freddy Castro, a childhood friend of Oscar's, and a WWH2H board member and employee.

Joanne was born in Masca, Honduras just 10 minutes from Tegucigalpa. She lived with her mother, father and seven other siblings. Her situation was so horrible, I have to break it down into three parts.

1. "You Really Don't Exist"

Joanne's "home" was nothing more than an 8'x8' shack made of

garbage and sticks. There were no furnishings. The eight children all slept on the dirt floor. None of the kids were in school and none have documented births. The mother and father do not have documented births, either—they were born in their home and there is no legal registry of their existence. Without legal registry, you cannot apply for an ID card. Without an ID card, you cannot legally work, open a bank account, vote, or own anything that would require a title. Children without registration cards cannot go to school. Oftentimes, people without birth certificates cannot be treated at the public hospitals. In the government's eyes you really don't exist. The mother makes 80-100Lps washing clothes, about \$3.50 to \$5.00



A little girl is treated at one of the WWH2H remote medical clinics in April for sores on her ear.

per week. The father is a raving alcoholic, doesn't work and drinks at least half of what the mother earns.

2. Sores on the Inside and Outside

The health situation in the home is deplorable. There is no clean water source for this family. There is a leach-infested stagnant pond about a mile and a half away. That is where the mother washes clothes and bathes the children. The only clean water source nearby is a small creek about a half mile from their home, that folks upstream use for washing clothes and sewage. At least it is moving, as opposed to the stagnant pond. This stream is only accessible by cutting through other people's property. Joanne's mother told me she has been chased off with a machete.

All of the children have lice, scabies, parasites, fungus, malnutrition, respiratory infections, stomach infections, and on and on. None have been vaccinated. The mother cannot afford medicines. The last time I went to visit this family, I could only stay for about five minutes, as the smell and the flies and mosquitoes were unbearable! All of the children (10 and under) spent the entire day completely naked, as they had no clothes or shoes. We clothed them and took the mother and the children to the health department. The mother was put on birth control and the children were all given antibiotics and skin creams.

continued on page 2



Rescued from Misery

(continued from page 1)

3. Abused in Many Ways

The social situation in the home is deplorable. The couple had their first child when she was 24 and he was 14. The ages of the children are 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, and 10. The missing years represent miscarriages. Basically, a child has been born to them every 9-12 months for the last 10 years.

The father is an abusive alcoholic. We took Joanne out of the home because we learned that the father was sexually molesting her. When we took the family to the health department, the mother freely admitted that that was what was happening. She said she believes that he is also molesting their two-year-old daughter. She said the boys of the family are also victims of their father's verbal and physical abuse. The mother is praying that he will be put in prison, as she is a victim of his abuse as well.



Many poor families live in homes with stick walls and dirt floors (photo taken during the April medical mission).

Treated with Love and Kindness

I think that I have completely covered how terrible this situation is and was for Joanne. It gives a whole new view of pure misery. Joanne is now living with us. We have treated her parasites, lice, scabies and all the other multiple illnesses that she came to us with. She is now in school, and we are trying to find an educational program for a child with Downs Syndrome. All things considered, she is doing fairly well.

Her mother comes to visit often. Many of you reading this may not

understand why the mother stayed with the father and allowed this abuse. In Honduras, woman and children do not have the same rights and protections as we do in the States. At this moment, we are working to get the rest of the children out of the home.

As you read this story, you can see just how much these children need our help. It is also clear to see the tremendous project that

lies ahead of us. Taking a child out of a disgusting situation as Joanne's takes only minutes, but taking the effects of the ugly situation out of the kid takes years. Only God can heal them, and He is doing that. They need all of our help and prayers. Joanne knows what misery is, but now she can also know what it means to be loved, to be treated with respect and kindness, and to be able to enjoy life. I wish you could see her. She now belongs to the constantly smiling club.

-AS

Upcoming Events:

- November 18, 2007—WWH2H Board Meeting, Carson, 2:00 pm
- November 24-December 1, 2007—Summit Valley Community Church from Addy, WA volunteer construction team
- January 19-26, 2008—Castle Rock Christian Church from Castle Rock, WA VBS team
- February 16-24, 2008—Touch of Hope school supplies and puppet show team

Worldwide Heart to Heart Ministries is a nonprofit interdenominational Christian organization dedicated to serving poor children and senior citizens. Board members, officers and coordinators serve as volunteers without salary or remuneration. Charitable gifts are used to support Children's Village orphanage and ministry in Tegucigalpa, Honduras. Administrative expenses are covered by donations made specifically for that purpose. Our mission is to bring the love of Jesus to hurting people of this world. We emphasize caring for orphans, volunteering for mission projects, organizing medical teams to treat the poor, and providing food, clothing and education.

WWH2H is managed internationally by our USA Board of Directors. In addition, we are incorporated in Honduras as Asociación Mundial Corazón a Corazón (ASOCORA). Visit our website at <http://wwh2h.org> for a list of WWH2H and ASOCORA board members and volunteer teams.

HOW YOU CAN HELP:

- PRAY for our children and our leaders
- Become a Monthly Sponsor and encourage your friends and family to become Monthly Sponsors
- Provide funds to help with expenses for construction, furnishings and equipment
- Sign up for our monthly newsletter
- Volunteer for a mission team
- Organize and hold a fund raiser for WWH2H

Thank you for your continued financial and prayer support for this important work. You are the "heart" in Heart to Heart. Without you there would be no ministry. God bless you, and thank you!!!



Village Report: The Happiest Place on Earth

by Amy Serrano

We are praising God for another wonderful month of blessings. Each day, God provides for our needs and moves us forward to do more for His kingdom.

Earning Responsibility

All of the teenage boys living at our Village in Tegucigalpa have part-time jobs. After they have finished with their normal chores and schoolwork, certain jobs that we would have to pay someone else to do are offered to them for wages. We do this to teach the boys how to work and be responsible, and how to manage money.

The older girls began to complain that they also want to work and make some money. When they moved to the rented house in Puerto Cortes, I offered them part-time jobs helping me with some housekeeping in our home. Two girls come each week and work daily for two hours ironing, dusting and so on. I pay each of them \$5.25 per week.

We brought Kellin to see her mom in Tegucigalpa. Kellin's mother is a prostitute and wanders from house to house. Currently, she is living with some members of a local church and has been attending the church. Kellin's mother said she did not have any food. So, Kellin took the \$10.50 she had saved from two weeks' work and gave it to her mother to buy food.

One of the other girls, Daniela, saves all her money to send it to her destitute grandmother who lives near the Guatemalan border.

These stories are sad and precious at the same time. First of all, it is sad when two 11-year-olds have to support their loved ones with their \$5.25 a

week. But it is precious that these girls, who could spend their money on makeup, jewelry, and candy, think of others before themselves. I know that I have been called to raise them, but I am humbled when I realize how much I am learning from them.



Kellin gives money she earns to her mother to buy food

WWH2H Church

We recently decided to change the hours at our church. Ever since January, when volunteers from Castle Rock Christian Church in Washington came to Honduras to lead four days of Vacation Bible School, we have transported children for Sunday School each week. With the new bus, we have also brought children from our Children's Village in Tegucigalpa to church each week. The children outnumber the adults 3:1. For the sake of having enough space, we are now having a Children's Service in the morning and our regular service in the evening.

The first Sunday of the new schedule, children began to pour into the church and sit down around me. I was in the center of a sea of little people—almost 200 children! I began to really look at each little face. There were all the children from our Village, and all the children from Puerto Cortes that we bus to church. Poverty is at the center of their lives that results in many other problems.

Poverty leads to lack of education, which leads to insufficient income, which leads to alternate means of income such as crime and prostitution. This all leads to hopelessness and

despair which lead to alcoholism and abuse. Many children live in homes where drugs and alcohol are sold and consumed. Many have lost their innocence for parental profit or at the hands of an abuser. Many of them live in horrible conditions.

However, today is Sunday, and at our church Sunday School is a place where a kid can still be a kid. The children are all smiles. For a while, they can leave behind whatever is at home. They are coming into a place of unconditional love and acceptance from Jesus Himself.

As the music begins, I think the sound of praises can be heard a mile away. The sound of little voices fills the air with the loudest singing I have ever heard. They clap their little hands, some even closing their eyes and raising their hands to Jesus.

One thought begins to run through my mind. During a trip to Disneyland, we kept hearing, "This is the happiest place on earth." I thought about that slogan as I watched these children drop their burdens and enter into God's presence. It is a refuge from the evil in their world, and from the expression on each child's face, church truly is the happiest place on earth.

We would like to do so much more for these children. We would like to be able to feed them, have after-school and daycare programs. We are praying that God will provide the land and the funding to build a facility that would be used for church and the social programs we hope to

have for them someday.

God bless you and thank you so much for all that you do in your prayers and giving. These little lives are the fruits. I pray that God will bless each of you mightily for all that you give and sacrifice for these children.



Daniela sends money she earns to her grandmother



From the President by Mary Frenter

Here are some updates that didn't make it into the last newsletter:

David's Foot

David had his cast removed on August 28th. He is in a brace until at least October 23rd. I am working with the Barnes Elementary School in Kelso, Washington, to apply for a student visa for him.

Public Relations/Fund Raiser Chair

We are looking for a volunteer Public Relations/Fund Raiser Chair. Please contact me if you are interested in joining the dialogue.

Mississippi Container

Kathy Cadden from Columbus, Mississippi is shipping a container for our Village with desks, medical clinic equipment, shoes and lots of other things we need. Thank you, Kathy for all your hard work in doing this!

Boeing Employees Community Fund

Nominated by Brian Ross, Boeing has accepted us into their Employees Community Fund so that employees may make automatic payments into

our account from their paychecks. Thank you, Brian!

Please Pray for Our Funding Needs

Village—fencing, gates, window bars, closets, beds, commercial dishwasher, commercial tortilla maker

Tech School—Shop equipment and curriculum, tools, digital library, computer equipment and curriculum, network, printers

School—Structure, furnishings and equipment

Houses for more kids—Triangles 2 and 3 at the main Village structure

Church/Community Center/Office Complex in Puerto Cortes

You can see there is still so much to be done so that we can offer these children not only a home, but the chance to break the cycle of poverty. We can do this with your help and God's guidance. Thank you all and God bless!
-MF



School children watch skits performed by kids from the Village and the Damascus Christian School Drama Team in June.

2 Corinthians 1:3-5 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God. For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows.

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