

## **Report No. 6 from Alto Cayma – 13 Aug 17**

### **Letters**

Mercedes finished translating the last of the letters I brought down with me, and we have delivered them. We are requiring each “ahijado” (sponsee) who received a letter to write one back. The staff and I will send a brief report on all the other ahijados to their respective “padrinos” (sponsors), in lieu of a letter from the ahijado.

### **Timeline of Settlement**

Tuesday marked the 8<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the Mujeres Con Esperanza settlement, our new area of work. By comparison, ENACE (the lower part of Alto Cayma, where we have been working for years) will celebrate its 27<sup>th</sup> anniversary later this month. As the lives of the families in the more developed settlement of ENACE improve, we find ourselves working more and more farther up the hill.

### **A Significant Anniversary**

On Thursday, a special mass was held in the chapel at the cemetery to commemorate the 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the passing of Father Frank Cortis, the



founder of the Aldea (the orphanage). Changes in government regulations have reduced the permanent population of the Aldea to just 11 boys now, and Father Alex is using most of the facility for a much broader mission (a Family Support Center), but every time we go there, we remember when it was the lively home of 50 boys and girls, many of whom we still have contact with.

### **Happy Birthday, Briza**

On Friday, we had a little impromptu party in the office to celebrate the birthday of Briza, our Director of Social Work. Here Giuliana is being



very decent about holding the cake without trying to give Briza a faceful of frosting.

### **A Family in Desperate Need**

On Friday afternoon, John and I went with Lurdes to visit a family which had been referred to us by Padre Pedro, the parish priest. The Huaycho family household consists of the husband, Santos, the wife, Eufemia, and their 6 youngest children. In addition, one of their older daughters, who recently separated from her husband because of his violent

behavior, is living with the family temporarily, along with her 2 children. These 11 people, 8 of whom happened to be home at the time of our visit, are



all living in a single rented room. At night, they sleep in 3 beds plus a pad



laid out on the floor, all of which are in bad condition, and there is never enough food to go around to feed so many mouths.

Why such extreme poverty? Because Santos, the main breadwinner, has been stricken with lung cancer and cannot work. He spends a lot of time



in Lima, undergoing treatment under a government healthcare program similar to Medicaid. Eufemia, in addition to taking care of the house and the kids, earns what she can by selling a homemade beverage called “chica de jora”, but her income from that only amounts to about \$100 a month.

The family is basically living on charity. Padre Pedro and Father Giovanni, from the Missionary Society of Saint Paul, are helping with the rent and Santos’ medications which his health insurance doesn’t cover, and our Association has recently chipped in with our discretionary funds to help temporarily with nutrition and medical care for the children.

This family desperately needs reliable, ongoing support, and I am proposing at least a double sponsorship under the Acercándonos program. Mariluz, age 10, and Bryan, age 6, would be the nominal “ahijados”, but the



sponsorship would, in effect, help the entire family. A double sponsorship would cost \$60 a month. We have a couple of other families in extreme need whose sponsors are paying \$100 a month, and the Huaycho family could certainly use this level of support as well, but it's important that I find a sponsor quickly, and if \$100 a month is too much, I'd rather have \$60 than nothing. Who would like to step forward and put their compassion into action on behalf of this family?

### **Visitors**

The end of this week, I received an echo from last week's visitors when Maris, the nurse-administrator from the Policlínico, sent me this photo of her



distributing some of the vitamins from Kathy and Jennifer's church to the people in the village of Condori in the altiplano above Arequipa. Maris entitled this photo, "Vitamins at 15,000 feet".

We spent a good deal of time this week getting ready for the visit of Chris Connelly, aka "The White Tornado". Between his own sponsorships and those of his family and friends, Chris is responsible for 44 sponsorships in the Acercándonos and Salir Adelante programs. He comes to visit us once a year, and when he does, he wants to visit with each and every one of those "ahijados". We have scheduled 3 full days plus a part of a 4<sup>th</sup> just for visits to individual homes, plus we're planning a party for next Saturday morning for

those “ahijados” we couldn’t reach in their homes. Each “ahijado” will receive a \$30 food basket, above and beyond their normal sponsorship benefits. Also, while he’s doing these visits, Chris will be assessing the people’s special needs and communicating with their sponsors in near-real time, resulting in the flow of additional benefits to many of the “ahijados”. I think you get the picture now of why he’s called “The White Tornado”.

### **Birthday in the Aldea (the Orphanage)**

On Saturday morning, we had a birthday party for 2 of the boys in the



Aldea, Neyber and Jesús. As I’ve explained, the group living in the Aldea is



much reduced now from what it was, but that also lets the boys experience



more of a family atmosphere, which is a positive.

## **The White Tornado Touches Down**

We had to rush from the Aldea birthday party to get to the airport in time to see The White Tornado touch down in Arequipa. As you can see in the



blurry photo, he hit the ground running and was already moving fast.

## **Monthly Meeting of the Acercádonos Elderly**

Chris arrived just in time to join us for the monthly meeting of the elderly sponsorees in the Acercádonos program. I presented him to the



group, as I have done every year for the past 13 years, and then we welcomed 5 new “ahijadas” into the program. They averaged 70 years of age, but the



oldest was Sra. Gertrudis, age 88, who had to lie down during the entire



meeting. It was valiant of her and her family members to come to the meeting. We wouldn't require that of a person of such advanced age, but they wanted to do it.

Briza then gave a tailored version of the cancer prevention and detection briefing which the nurse from the Cancer League had given the week before, and



people were encouraged to sign up for the screening campaign, which will be launched soon. Then we handed out letters to the few “ahijados” whose “padrinos”



had written them, and we ended the meeting by handing out photos which



had been taken at last month's Acercádonos birthday party.

### **National University Entrance Exam**

This morning (Sunday), some 5,000 students were sweating bullets over the entrance exam for the National University. The exam is only given twice a year, in March and August, and admission is determined by the test results, period. Nothing else is taken into consideration, so no wonder the students get very nervous about taking this exam. Lidia will be able to access the results over the internet within the next couple of days, and will give me a report. The competition for admission is so fierce now that if 20% of our kids from the Bridge to Opportunity program get in this time, we'll be doing good. Let's keep our fingers crossed.

“Love God, Serve Neighbor/Serving Alto Cayma”,

Jim