

DESERT BLOOMS

January 2018



Diapers. Not a glamorous theme for this month's newsletter but a daily necessity at Santo Niño. In the evening on New Year's Day we began to

receive phone calls from people wanting to make donations to the children at Santo Niño. We were surprised until we discovered that a local television station had shown a 3-part series on Proyecto Santo Niño that previously aired before Thanksgiving. Suddenly we had a wave of publicity! "How can we help?" the callers wanted to know. We were offered everything from clothing to medical equipment to nutrition supplements.

It's always challenging to explain that our greatest need is for diapers, mostly in adult sizes and not the pull-up variety. It is not an item that is fun to shop for and most people don't have extras that they can share. But they are something that we always need and that continually drain the resources of the mothers at Santo Niño. Just one day at the center last week reminded us of that reality.

Nena, age 16, was enjoying time in the therapy ball pit while her mom worked with other children. Quite surprisingly, Nena got herself to a standing position to indicate that she wanted to get out. Because she is quite unsteady on her feet we helped her maneuver her over the edge of the pit. Walking with her we noticed that her stocking feet left wet footprints on the concrete floor. Uh-oh! She was soaked! Sister Janet led Nena to the Jacuzzi room while three of the moms went to work clearing the ball pit to uncover the expected large puddle. For the next two hours each plastic ball and the floor of the pit was washed with bleach solution.

Luci, Nena's mom, helped her out of her soggy clothes. It was a very cold day so Nena



Nena and Chuy

had two pairs of sweat pants over three large adult diapers covered by a blue underpad. After a good hot bath and shampoo Cristina helped Luci dress Nena, carefully assembling the

diapers and adjusting them once she was in a standing position. And Sister Carol was ready to give Nena her lesson so off she went to the therapy table. After her lesson, helping her off the table we noticed a wet mark. "Luci!" Without so much as a sigh, Luci came to assess the situation. Back to the changing station they went while one mom dug into her diaper supply and another into the pile of used clothing she had brought to share that day. The diaper change was accomplished and Nena was squeezed into a dry pair of pants about two sizes too small. We all laughed at the finished product but as they say, "You laugh so you don't cry!"

How do the mothers do it? Alone it would be so much worse. The community they build together at Santo Niño sustains them. They understand what it is to have used the last diaper. They have all resorted to using a bed underpad for a diaper. They have shared black electrical tape or duct tape to use as fasteners. Diapers are not a glamorous topic but the need for them - and for a compassionate community - never goes away.

