

DESERT BLOOMS

February 2017

We are in the ordinary days of the winter at Santo Niño. The Christmas decorations came down on Feb. 2, the feast of “Candelaria” when the Church blesses all the candles for the coming year as it celebrates the presentation of the infant Jesus in the temple. We celebrate the light-in-the-darkness and we are aware of how the Christ-child illuminates our ordinary days in Anapra.

Our *escuelita* director, Cristina, spent the month of January making the spiritual exercises of St. Ignatius on retreat in Torreon, Mexico. In her absence we were blessed to have Nancy coordinate the little school with the assistance of Liliana, Yadira’s mom. Nancy slipped into our routine as easily as Cinderella’s foot in the glass slipper. Her patience and quiet attentiveness to each child, even in the most chaotic moments, were a beautiful witness to us. We hope she can continue to work with Cristina and Liliana to grow our school.

As in any school, part of the daily routine is recess and we are happy to have a rehabilitated backyard with a swing set and plenty of sand. The new cinderblock wall offers some protection from wind as well as security for the children.



makes our playground warm enough for winter use. The spring-time winds can create mini-dust devils that drive us indoors though!



We are always looking for ways to offer new sensory experiences and to find out what “clicks” with those who are least able to communicate with us. For Yerrick, music on a cellphone brought an instant smile to his face. Chuy never gets tired of the exercise ball. And the boys all enjoy time together in the ball pit.

Sometimes we really can’t figure out what’s behind a child’s reaction. Today was Beto’s tenth birthday and as

usual we sang to him at the conclusion of our lunchtime prayer. He covered his face with his hands and wept uncontrollably. He could not receive the birthday greetings and was not willing to come for candles on the cake, preferring to play by himself on the monkey bars. And yet he was waving us good-bye from the steps of the center when we left for home. Who knows what traumas have left their mark on his psyche?

Next week Lent begins. We will celebrate Mardi Gras at our usual Tuesday session. Jesús is ready with his mask and we have plenty of beads from our New Orleans Sisters. We appreciate the annual opportunity to be renewed, to turn towards God, and we are blessed to see God’s face in the children at Santo Niño.



Eventually there will be a mural designed by Cristina and the students. For now it’s just a bright beautiful white-wash that reflects our desert sun and

