

## DESERT BLOOMS

April 2017



We went on a fieldtrip to *The Bomberos!* The main fire station in downtown Juarez welcomed Santo Niño on April 11 and it was quite an adventure. Our Love Bus and every other vehicle we could commandeer loaded up with children, parents, volunteers, Sisters, wheel chairs and sack lunches. Several days in advance we had begun preparing the children of the *escuelita* for the experience which exceeded our wildest expectations.

The firemen couldn't have been more attentive to their very special guests. The tour of the fire station included an enactment of a response to a call from 911: taking the information, sliding down the pole, putting on their gear and dashing off in the fire engine with siren sounding. The children practiced "Stop! Drop! And Roll" and learned about fire safety. Best of all, they got to try on the fireman suit and sit behind the wheel of the fire truck. It was a wonderful day!

The following Tuesday was Easter week. Whitney prepared dozens of plastic eggs with



candy for an egg hunt. Whether they found a dozen or only a few, the excitement was the same. They went home sweeter than ever!

Día de los Niños (Kids Day) is approaching at the end of April. The mothers and special brothers and sisters are preparing a *kermess* (fair) for the children with booths, tickets, prizes and of course a special lunch. But last Saturday was dedicated to the siblings of our special children. They received messages of gratitude from their mothers, "angel massages", and other acknowledgments of the challenges they experience as *hermanos especiales*. One of our special big-sisters celebrated her Sweet 15 birthday last week. Thanks to a project called Sembradoras, Alejandra had a beautiful gently used quinceañera dress and lovely dance and reception with twenty other young ladies.

Last month Santo Niño Project received some wonderful publicity in the El Paso Times and around the country through its parent company, USA Today. First, Whitney was featured in a story about women discerning a call to religious life during National Catholic Sisters Week. The piece included the center in Anapra as one of her ministry sites and a photo of her helping in the *escuelita*. A few weeks later a reporter called to do a full story on Santo Niño. She came with a photographer and the article featured a short video of Sister Carol in addition to the print media. In case you missed it, the web links are below. Easter blessings!

