

## DESERT BLOOMS

August 2016

The fifteenth birthday or *quinceañera* is celebrated in Mexico as a “coming of age” landmark. August 6, 2001 was the birthday of Juan Dieguito, our first child with special needs. In his brief life he showed us the lack of services available for special children, especially those living in poverty in Juarez, Mexico. So of course we had to celebrate our XV in a big way.

We sifted through piles of photos and Sister Peggy created a display board. Romina

speaker, no hand-washing, no flush...no matter! The show must go on- and it did! We watched the slideshow on a laptop with battery pack and sang songs for musical chairs. Someone hauled buckets of water from home for us to use in the kitchen and bathroom.

Just before lunch the lights and fans came on. We watched the slideshow together and then took turns sharing our best memories of Santo Niño. We remembered our angels, the children who are with



reviewed our digital albums for a slideshow to project on the kitchen wall. Celia brought her giant speaker with music for dancing and musical chairs. Sister Janet baked three birthday cakes, one for each five years of Santo Niño.

The mothers planned the menu and it was a spicy spectacular. Reyna’s dad, Eric, made his signature tacos and her mom, Tania provided an atomic pico de gallo. Lupe, Monce’s mom, brought a huge vat of pork in red chile sauce. Thankfully there was plenty of rice, beans, chips and lemonade to cool down the palate.

What we didn’t plan was for the electricity and water to be off! No fans, no projector, no

us now in the communion of saints. Our newest families, hearing the stories, now share more deeply in the life of the center.

After lunch the kids enjoyed a piñata on the patio. It was Elsa from “Frozen” and some of the children were ambivalent about smashing her. Reyna took her turn and then promptly gave Elsa a kiss!

Our 15<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration finished with the ritual dances of the *matachines* in honor of the Santo Niño and Our Lady of Guadalupe. In the blazing mid-afternoon sun and heat the sacred dancers helped us re-dedicate ourselves to the service of the children and families who are Proyecto Santo Niño. Here’s to another 15!