

DESERT BLOOMS

October 2017

We just passed the second anniversary of Brother Jim's death on September 27 and have felt his presence as we have had the opportunity to share the story of our project with visitors and newcomers. It is the stuff that legends are made of. Brother Jim had been working in Anapra since he felt a call from God to serve the poor in a healing ministry. At age 65 he left the security of his Benedictine monastery in North Carolina and eventually began a mission called "Beloved Disciples" in the colonia. For nearly thirty years Brother Jim responded to the needs of his neighbors while living a monastic life among them. One of his deepest desires was to provide services for the handicapped children he came to know on his rounds in the colonia, but every time he thought he was ready to begin, something happened to disrupt his plans. Then one day he heard about Proyecto Santo Niño.

Brother Jim showed up on our doorstep one Saturday asking questions about our little center. At the end of the visit and tour he asked, "What do y'all need?" After hearing our usual reply about diapers and over-the-counter medicines he said, "What else? Think bigger." Then he asked how the children and their families got to the center. We pointed to our station wagon. A few weeks later we received a message to stop by Brother Jim's mission after Sunday mass. He gave us a check and said to go to see a Toyota dealer in El Paso who was already on the look-out for a van in our price range. A few months later Fr. Bill received a donation from Brother Jim's

mysterious resources that allowed him to double the size of our center (which was connected at the time to his house).

Years later Brother Jim shared the story of how his plans to develop a ministry for the handicapped were frustrated over and over again. "Lord, why do you put this on my heart if you won't let me do it?" he asked in prayer. "Then I heard about you Sisters and I came to see for myself. That's when I realized that you are doing it so much better than I ever could and God knew it!" We believe that Brother Jim is still very active in our ministry. He

intercedes for us in times of illness and his healing gift continues to pervade our center. He challenges us to never doubt what God is doing in and through us and to never fear because God is with us.

God is indeed faithful to the care of the special ones who come to Santo Niño. Due to illness and family crises Yadira and "big" Chuy haven't been able to be with us for almost six months. The children and their moms slipped easily back into the routine. Reyna was especially happy to welcome Yadira and the two have become our Santo Niño make-up artists. They disappear into the playground fortress and emerge as

"painted ladies". We've had some new arrivals as well. Efren, age 9, is receiving therapy to rehab his broken arm. Angelica, age 8, has cerebral palsy and is learning movement control while making fast friends with Monce. When the news spreads about our special religious education program (starting on Saturdays after the regular center activities) we hope to welcome other special kids and their parents to the center. We can sense Brother Jim's hand in all of this, still watching over the ministry that was so dear to his heart and finding more ways for us to reach out to those most in need.

