

## DESERT BLOOMS

January 2011

Life is back in full swing at Proyecto Santo Niño after a few weeks break during the holidays. Everyone is very excited to have returned and be spending time together again. As we start a new year, we have been reflecting on and celebrating the many little miracles that have happened in our clinic since it opened about eight years ago.

Cristofer is almost three years old and has been coming to the clinic since he was an infant with his mother, Sol. Last week on our way back to U.S. from the clinic, we drove Cristofer, his mom, and his baby sister Jimena to their little home a few blocks away. Cristofer was very content, clutching a big red balloon that had been part of our clinic Christmas decorations and was now his toy. As he stepped out of the car, the wind took the balloon, and it began to tumble rapidly down the dirt road. Cristofer let out a cry and took off running. He was just bouncing along on his little legs, arms outstretched, with one mission in mind: retrieve his beautiful runaway red balloon. We just watched from the car for awhile with smiles on our faces as he ran. We eventually drove after the balloon to capture it and bring it back to him. The huge smile on his face as the balloon was placed back into his arms reflected the joy we felt watching him. We had just witnessed something sacred.

You see, Cristofer was born with bilateral club feet. In the early days of his life, doctors thought that he would never be able to walk. At the clinic, we gave him therapy and did stretching exercises with him. Eventually, an orthopedic surgeon from the United States performed an operation on Cristofer to straighten out his legs and gave him leg braces. He grew stronger and more capable through therapy that he continued to receive at Proyecto Santo Niño. Around age two, Cristofer began to walk. Now, coming up on his third birthday, he runs around as if he had been born with normally functioning legs. Seeing him jog along after his balloon was a beautiful thing that represents

a little miracle and reminds us that his life will be much different than his mother ever expected when he was first born.

Jacqueline is another of our special children with a miracle story. Jacqueline's mom Laura had an emergency C-section to deliver her, but it happened too late. Jacqueline was born with cerebral palsy due to anoxia during this birthing process. She was so weak during the first years. She could barely hold her head up, and it was predicted that she might not be able to walk. Sister Peggy taught Laura many therapies and stretches that she could do with Jacqueline. Both Laura and her husband, Cesar, were very dedicated to helping their daughter. Through the exercises that they did with her faithfully, Jacqueline's muscles were strengthened. Now, much like Cristofer, you will find her trotting along throughout the clinic, just as happy as can be. Sister Peggy said that once Jacqui figured out she could move around like that, there was no stopping her.

On Thursday, Laura had Jacqueline on her lap, trying to feed her some delicious beans for lunch. In between every spoonful, Jacqui would slide or hop out of her mom's lap and just take off, on a beeline, for the opposite side of the room. Laura simply smiled, without even a tinge of impatience or frustration. Her smile was loving and grateful. As she got up to chase Jacqui again, she told us how wonderful it is to see her daughter running around like that.

We are blessed to be a part of these stories, and they would not be possible without all of the prayers and support that you offer us. Thank you so much. We hope that your 2011 is off to a great start, and that God blesses you abundantly throughout the year.



## Photos

- Top right: Jacqueline, caught in a rare moment of sitting still!
- Center: Cristofer getting ready to hit the piñata at the Christmas party in December. Look at those healthy legs and feet!