

## DESERT BLOOMS

November 2012

The month of November brings thoughts of thanks. Visitors to Santo Niño often comment at the genuine sense of joy in the center. Amid the struggles of poverty and illness, in a country barely beginning to find its way out of violence, the mothers and children of Santo Niño find many reasons to be

grateful to God. We thought this might be something to share with you this month of giving thanks.

During our Halloween party on Oct. 28 one of the most popular activities was “bobbing for apples”. Even though many of the little “bobbors” had just come from the face-painting station, waiting patiently for their cheeks to be

adorned with spider webs and pumpkins, they were anxious for a turn at the tub. We went through many contestants before fourteen year old Bryan showed the younger children a winning technique. A little later he was back at the front of the line, asking if he could go again to get another for his younger sibling. This became a pattern. Successful apple-bobbers kept at it until all their brothers and sisters had apples too. How often we take for granted the simple joy of a crisp autumn apple!

Saturdays the dessert after lunch is usually ice cream. A gallon bucket of generic ice cream costs just \$6.99 and feeds the whole gang- often with enough for second servings. Martin, however, gets his nutrition through a feeding tube directly into his stomach. It has spared him from episodes of pneumonia that used to send him to the hospital several times each year. Carrying the bucket around to offer seconds, we noticed Martin on the floor mat, eyeing us with hope. His mom, Celia, gave us the green light

and in an instant we were down on the mat with Martin, lifting him to his best sitting position as he went wildly spastic at the prospect of ICE CREAM!!! Two of us were barely able



to hold him but we managed several spoonfuls into the moving target of his mouth without choking. His eyes radiated sheer delight and we weren't sure if it was the delicious treat or the fact that we noticed him down there on the mat.

Lucy was bursting with happy news. She and Nena were late arriving to the center because they had gone to see the pediatric neurologist. Lucy had to fight to even get the appointment ahead of schedule because she was desperate. Since last April the pharmacy had refused to fill the prescription for one of her daughter's anticonvulsant medications because they said it was too expensive for the government insurance program. She knew that other Santo Niño children were receiving the drug and so she persisted in trying to get authorization for Nena. The doctor assured her that there would be



no problem and that he would handle the matter personally. Hooray and thanks be to God! Later Lucy spoke to us in private about another cause for giving thanks. Her eldest son was arrested in September, implicated in a robbery. Her family had given minimal support as Lucy tried to provide him with legal assistance and the basic necessities he was required to have while incarcerated. This included weekly payoffs to avoid beatings and abuse. Lucy's second good news was that her son had finally been released from prison.

These and many more stories remind us to cultivate an attitude of gratitude in our lives. Gratitude has the power to transform, to heal and to liberate. It causes us to be more naturally generous with what we have. It creates a wholesome and holy environment that allows us to recover our best selves. Gratitude helps us to trust that we will have everything we need. As if to remind us of that fact, last week we learned that we will be the recipients of a canned food drive from the Student Government Association at the University of Texas at El Paso and we will receive blankets from a project at Our Lady of the Assumption School. For these and for so many donations we receive throughout the year, we give thanks to God and thanks to you.