

Desert Blooms
August 2007

Dear Sisters and Friends,

We have another angel watching over us. Alan Javier went home to God on July 25. He was our most fragile child, suffering from a syndrome that had also taken the lives of two older brothers. His seizures were almost continuous and his face seemed always contorted with pain but he never made a sound. On several trips to the hospital he was turned away. Not even comfort measures were offered. Then in the last few days of his life there was talk of surgery to place a feeding tube. It is difficult to understand why such measures weren't offered a year ago. We are thankful he is finally free of every infirmity. Now his mother and her two daughters, ages 15 years and 11 months, will make a new beginning.

Two new children arrived last Saturday. One came with Zoila who has a car at last. (We hope this one works!) The child had meningitis at five months of age and now has seizures which have never been treated. Zoila was going to share some of her son's anticonvulsant medication but fortunately decided to wait and ask us. We arranged to have him evaluated by a neurologist who will ultimately decide what medication he needs.

At lunchtime when we gather to eat a simple meal Sofia suggested that the mothers take turns offering the blessing. One recent Saturday Pablo, a forty year old mentally challenged man who is our biggest "Santo Niño", volunteered to lead the prayer. He prayed for all the children who live in the streets and for those addicted to drugs. He prayed for all the children who come to the clinic and for their families. He prayed for the clinic, that it would move ahead with much success. Then he led the "Our Father..." There wasn't a dry eye in the house!

It's been several months since we mentioned Miriam, our young friend with autism. We were anxious about how we could provide a more stable and therapeutic situation for her. Last Saturday some of us were just sitting around, waiting for the last family to arrive, and Miriam was sitting there with us. Her hands were full of little pieces of plastic trash: spoons, straws, candy wrappers. Who knows what they mean in her world but they are her security like Linus' blanket. She occasionally shared one of her treasures with Jill or Bianca, our new volunteers. She sat next to one of them for awhile, then moved to the other, back and forth, occasionally leaning her head on their shoulder or looking deep into their eyes whispering, "Miriam!" It's amazing to see her connect with new people, not just us familiar folk. She has very few outbursts now and they are short-lived. A little "time out" with Siba, Gloria or Sofia is enough to calm the storm. Gloria often reminds us, "Miriam feels how much we love her and accept her. That's what has made the difference." We know that some of this improvement is due to medications, but to paraphrase St. Paul, "the greatest of these is love!"