

***Desert Blooms***  
***December 2005***

Dear Sisters,

Our last trip to Anapra before Christmas was December 17. We were loaded down with food boxes for each of the families of our special children, thanks to your generous gift. Fourteen large pork roasts, cans of hominy, and bags of red chile pods...the makings of Christmas tamales or posole or both! Siba and friends had also collected toys and clothing for the children and doubtless there will be more for the next clinic scheduled January 7.

The roads in the colonia are barely passable because of construction of a sewer system. As in the U.S., it seems the idea is to tear up as much road as possible all at once, then go on holidays before returning to finish the job! It makes our transportation of the children and families a bit tricky at times but Sister Ann and Fr. Bill know most of the detours and even some shortcuts.

We worked most of the day without electricity in the clinic. Apparently temperatures below freezing burst the water pipe outside that feeds the water heater for the therapy tub which then blew the circuits. We managed quite well with a kerosene heater and battery-operated equipment.

Vanessa's mother is now five months pregnant. Sick with a cold she was also very worried because her obstetrician had not heard the fetal heartbeat at her appointment earlier in the week. While Sister Peggy tended to Vanessa, Sister Janet suggested we check out the baby on the way. All was well. The heartbeat was easy to locate and with each sound the mother was more relieved. Some Tylenol and cold medicine safe for pregnancy and a bag of baby goodies (blankets, bibs, undershirts and sleepers) did wonders for the worried mom.

Sister Carol worked with little Maria de Jesus while Yessenia translated for Sister Marita with her mother, Pilar. Communication is so much more than words and it was apparent that the discourse was rich. The mothers are able to take a break, relax a bit, even laugh as they see their children in loving, capable hands and enjoy the camaraderie of others who know the challenges of caring for a child with special needs. Besides learning some therapies they can use with their children between the clinic sessions they also occasionally receive a massage, a snack, or in this case the promise of a manicure at the next visit. Little things mean a lot!