

*Desert Blooms*  
*January 2006*

Dear Sisters,

Gloria met us at door of the clinic last Saturday with the news that she discovered three new children for the Santo Niño project. “Two of them are kind of hyper and have trouble learning. The other one has a small head and can’t talk.” This is how we receive referrals!

We already had our hands full because the little bus that transports our patients was not working – again – so we were doing the rounds ourselves in the various cars that we came in. Anyone who wasn’t working with a child was busy with “pick-ups and deliveries”. Fr. Bill picked up Fabian (the bubble boy) and Maria de Jesus from the colonia 30 minutes away from the clinic. The new children had to wait for another day.

The big surprise of the day was a new water heater for the Jacuzzi. It works with gas and provides “instant” hot water in good quantities for our purposes. And it doesn’t blow the fuses in the clinic! Dean, a volunteer with plumbing experience was able to install it for us with the help of Kirstin, our SC Associate in Volunteer Ministry. Dean’s next project is to anchor the lift we purchased over a year ago to help get the children into the tub. Needless to say, we are thanking God for sending him our way. At other times of the year the children don’t mind a tepid bath but in January they really appreciated the nice hot water.

We ask your prayers especially for Miriam and her family. She is the young woman with autism whose mother is being treated for cervical cancer. Miriam is kept apart from the rest of the family, locked in a room built by mission-trip volunteers. This is a vast improvement over the shed that was once her “home” but the situation is tragic in terms of food and hygiene. Her mother’s illness is becoming more serious and we are worried about who will care for Miriam. Her sisters have small children of their own and can barely manage. Their words for her are harsh and degrading and we recoil to hear them. At least in the clinic every other Saturday Miriam is received with love and care. She eats, bathes, gets a haircut, and sometimes when she sees her reflection in a mirror, she smiles. In the mysterious world of autism who knows what she thinks or feels, but whenever Miriam comes out to visit in our world we want her to know that she is welcome.