

Desert Blooms
January 2008

Dear Sisters and Friends,

The new year brought very cold weather to our area as elsewhere. There were days when the pipes in the clinic froze, despite the good insulation that Jose Luis had wrapped around the exposed areas. No running water...no warm Jacuzzi...disappointed children! Everyone has coughs and colds but the fragile children are most severely affected. Thankfully we have been able to provide medicines as well as teach the family members how to position them for comfort and some simple techniques to loosen the congestion.

We are discovering that many of the parents of our special children have chronic health conditions that need attention. Jose Leopoldo, a single father with two daughters, has uncontrolled diabetes and high blood pressure. So does Sandra, Conchita's mother. Half of the "grupo de apoyo" have high blood pressure! Our new year's agenda broadened to include education about diet and exercise for these conditions and we brought medications and a home glucose monitor from the El Paso clinic to monitor the progress of our moms and dad. We will be bringing back Gloria Morales, our health promoter from La Guadalupe to give more sessions on "counting carbohydrates for diabetics". Sister Carol is even planning some classes on "heart-healthy cooking" and perhaps a clinic garden to add more greens and veggies to the typical Mexican diet.

Last month we mentioned that Mari, Ricardo's mother, gave birth to another son she named Jesus. He is currently hospitalized with severe malnutrition. All of us have taken turns trying to feed him in recent weeks and despite our best efforts he has been unable to gain weight. We fear that he may have the same condition as his older brother who weighs no more than fifteen pounds at 20 months of age. Ricardo has recently benefited from an injection of "Bo-tox" administered by the neurologist who cares for many of our children. This is apparently the latest treatment for extremely spastic children and the effect is truly remarkable.

Dr. Miramontes, a neurologist from downtown Juarez, visited Santo Niño on a Saturday in December. He and his associate had never ventured into the colonia of Anapra so Cristina our social worker arranged to meet them downtown. They toured the clinic and were amazed to see so many of their patients. It was a golden opportunity to get some free advice and we used it to our advantage. (That's how Ricardo got the Bo-tox appointment!)

Even as the van loads up for the trip home we Sisters have been able to enjoy some tender loving care from Lucy, Sofia and Gloria. They put their new skills to use for our benefit. "Cinco minutos!" Lucy insists. So for five minutes we luxuriate in their tender loving care. Never mind the loaded van. Time to relax. Tend body-mind-& spirit. Give thanks.