

## DESERT BLOOMS

April 2015



Last month another of our special ones went home to God. She had been at the center with her mother, Laura, just a week before her passing and we never imagined it would be our last time together. At age 19, Yessi was a tiny person with a big personality.

Like all the children, she loved her time in the Jacuzzi but always in a bathing suit! Though we never heard her speak a word, she communicated with her sparkling eyes, bright smile and pointed index finger. She loved our celebrations, especially Christmas, clutching her party favors or bag of candies with delight. She loved pink and the Disney princesses and lip gloss. Sitting in a high chair she was oblivious to all the kitchen commotion as she attended to her ice cream which is the special Saturday dessert. How we will miss you, Yessi!

On the Saturday before Holy Week the mothers had a mini-retreat on the theme of the Via Crucis (Way of the Cross). We began with Tai Chi led by Sofia. Then we reflected on the origin of the practice of praying the fourteen stations that remember the passion and death of Jesus. In Anapra it is common to re-enact the passion story during Holy Week with vivid detail, the sandy cliffs and dirt roads providing a perfect backdrop for the devotion. In our reflection we tried to make the connections between the suffering of Jesus and the suffering in our own lives and in our world today.

Each of us drew a paper that had one of the stations in coloring-book form. With colored pencils and crayons we took time to reflect on the station and make it personal. The sharing was powerful. Cristina said, "I got the one I absolutely didn't want: Jesus dies on the cross. I remembered when I sat with my baby in the hospital and I thought he would die." Her child's name is Jesús. Another had "Jesus is stripped of his garments" and shared, "I thought of how humiliated I have felt sometimes by the things people say about my child." At the end however, we remembered that death did not- and does not- have the final word. The final word is "Love" and the promise of eternal life, eternal reunion, where every tear will be wiped away.



Now spring is in full swing and the little playground is full of activity. Neftali is enjoying weekend 5K runs with his dad. Most of the special brothers and sisters are on an extended "spring break" from school and join their special sibs at the center. We have assigned an extra supervisor to the ball pit and sensori-motor education area to try to manage the chaos, with greater and lesser degrees of success.

We've had two baby showers to celebrate the new life that we will welcome next month. And so the Paschal Mystery continues among us: from life...to death...to new life!

