

DESERT BLOOMS

August 2015

Although we speak of our special *children* at Santo Niño, the reality of how quickly they have grown up on us comes crashing in from time to time. Tania was cleaning the office on Tuesday and handed us a large dusty three-ring binder. "Is this something we need?" she asked. Looking through the contents we found handouts from workshops as long ago as 2005. There were also remnants of our efforts to keep records of each child and the therapeutic interventions we had tried. But most interesting and heartwarming were the photos! How our little ones have grown!

easy road. There is almost no family support for his efforts. But with the steady guidance and encouragement of Cristina Estrada and the Columban Missionary after school program, Bryan will start high school later this month.



Nena
Age 4
<—
Age 14
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Luis
Pablo
Age 17
<—
Age 6
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Nena will turn 14 in October. That means next year she will celebrate her *quinceañera*, God willing! What a grand fiesta that will be!

Bryan graduated from middle school last month. We came to know him when he was refused admission to kindergarten because he still wore diapers. It made no difference that the incontinence was a consequence of a spinal defect. When we were able to provide pull-up diapers that Bryan could change for himself he was able to go to school. It has not been an



Luis Pablo, age 17, can only come to the center on Saturdays when his dad is off work. He especially enjoys his time in the Jacuzzi which relieves the spasms of cerebral palsy. The general busy-ness of Santo Niño is great entertainment and a pleasant change of scenery for one who spends most of his days at home and in bed. Over the span of more than ten years that Luis Pablo has been with us, he has had four new little brothers and sisters, bringing the total number of children in the family to eight. He is the eldest!

Last Saturday Sofia suggested a craft activity for the moms and kids. She brought leftover plastic jars and bags full of bright colored threads from the prayer-flag cottage industry that supports several of our families. (<http://www.ragstobritches.org/>) We supplied glue, scissors, glitter, construction paper, feathers and anything else that might be used to decorate what became little coin banks. It was a creative way to recycle and a lot of fun for everyone.

To top off the day, Erik, Reyna's dad, prepared *tacos al pastor*, his special recipe of pork, onion and pineapple with optional guacamole and a salsa at high end of the HOT scale. It was a good thing that we brought ice cream cones for dessert! These are the simple joys that keep us going, even on the hottest of our desert summer days.