

DESERT BLOOMS

April 2013

We feel like family at Proyecto Santo Niño, but in the past month it has felt even more so with the visits of Steve and Anita Gildea (Sister Janet's brother and sister-in-law), Patty and Dan Kemme



(Tracy's mom and dad), and most recently Ellen Douglas and Bud Gildea (Sister Janet's sister and dad). For some it was a first visit. The experience of

crossing the border, driving through the colonia of Anapra, meeting the mothers and children, hearing their stories and sharing a meal was an opportunity to see how love can make a desert bloom.

Those who remembered the early days of the project marveled at the paved roads, the full-service supermarket and gas station in the colonia. Within the center they saw improvements in the physical space and the donations of equipment and educational materials. But the greatest change has been the total integration of the mothers into the functioning of Santo Niño. They are everywhere in evidence as the heart of the project, as their children are its soul. Besides the individual therapy and care for their own child (bathing, massage, sensory-motor development) they prepare the lunch, clean up afterwards, work in groups with the siblings and generally keep an eye out for who's crying or needs a diaper change.

Even without Spanish, the visitors discovered they could communicate well enough to color, play Skip-Bo, wipe a nose or comfort a crying child. Grandpa Gildea came with a pocketful of

chocolates and a few stuffed animals that made him a magnet for even the most hesitant children.

In other news, Freddie's cast came off 2 weeks ago and he saw Dr. Heydemann for follow-up last week. He hasn't been cleared for weight-bearing yet but we hope with some adjustments to the brace and regular therapy he'll soon be on his feet. Brisa has completed her chemotherapy and is in remission. Her hair is starting to grow back and she is enjoying her participation in the various educational activities at the center.

Celia, the mother of Martin who went home to God in January, has been coming to the clinic regularly. She is wonderful with the younger mothers, enjoying the opportunity to participate in the therapy for their children and sharing what she learned in caring for Martin for nine years. Her own grief still fresh, she finds peace and consolation in compassionate care for others. She is a beautiful witness of a mother's love for us to celebrate this Mothers' Day.

