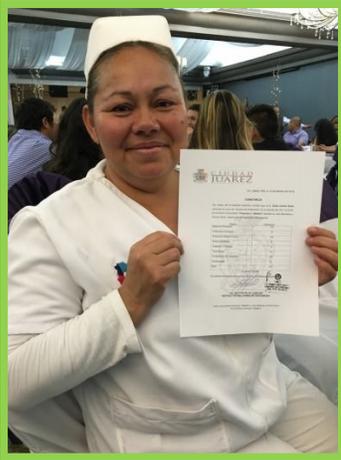


DESERT BLOOMS

March 2018



We had lots of reasons to celebrate in February at Santo Niño. On February 10 Celia Rivas, one of our therapy moms, graduated from the community health center nursing assistant program. “I made a promise to myself that I would do this, for myself and for my family and my neighbors,” she said as she showed us her

certificate. We attended the graduation along with Celia’s three daughters and grandson. The graduates were “capped” during a candle-lighting ceremony while they recited the Florence Nightingale pledge. It was beautiful to see the pride of the graduates and their families at this remarkable accomplishment.

Sister Peggy told Celia, “You were already a nurse before taking the first class. You learned nursing with your son, Martin”. Martin died about five years ago. He was the only child at Santo Niño to receive a feeding tube. Many of our children would benefit from the procedure that offers improved nutrition and decreases the risk of aspiration pneumonia but it is a rare parent who will allow it. Celia did and Martin’s quality of life was much improved because of it and the care she gave. Now, in addition to her service on our team of mothers at Santo Niño, Celia can seek employment at a community health center, hospital or factory. Driving her home after the graduation, down the dirt roads and into the alleyway that leads to her tiny house, we could only imagine the resource for health promotion and advice that Celia will be in her community.

We would have had our biggest celebration on Valentine’s Day (Dia de Amistad in Mexico!)

but since it fell on Ash Wednesday this year we celebrated on Tuesday, Feb. 13. We made valentines and had chocolates- but we also had a Mardi Gras parade! Reyna was happy to oblige anyone who wanted a “make-over” for the parade. She has become our fingernail technician and general make-up artist, never hesitating to use nail polish as eye shadow for a super dramatic effect! You can just imagine the reaction of the recipient’s mother.

We have welcomed back two children who we knew as babies. José Dario has cerebral palsy and Mirka was born with a spinal cord defect. Both had moved out of the area but returned to us for therapy last month. Mirka has been attending a local primary school and was delighted to discover the program offered at our escuelita. Interestingly, the other children were puzzled and a bit frightened by Mirka, who although she is wheelchair-bound is verbal and able to propel herself. It took some time for them to warm up to her- until Cristina realized that most of our children in wheelchairs are non-verbal and can’t fully participate in the classroom.

Springtime is upon us. The desert is beginning to bloom even as the March winds whip up the sandstorms. One other sign of spring appeared as Alexa’s mom undressed her for the Jacuzzi: chickenpox!!! Oops! We will be watching for the “showers of lesions” to appear on other little bodies in the next few weeks.

Special thanks this month to Alisha, former volunteer and our Diaper Fairy Godmother!



Mirka at Mardi Gras