

DESERT BLOOMS

June 2014



During these hot days of summer (triple digits most of the past ten days!) we are especially concerned about keeping the children of Santo Niño cool and well-hydrated. The center itself actually is quite cool in comparison with most of the homes of our families. It was constructed

of straw bales over rebar, then covered with chicken-wire and several layers of stucco. The roof also has a layer of straw insulation with an air space above to provide ventilation. So with the ceiling fans, a few floor fans and a nice dip in the Jacuzzi, most of the kids stay nice and cool even on the hottest days.

Annie's last Saturday nutrition lesson for the mothers focused on healthier options for hydration. She gave a big "thumbs-down" to the sodas and sugared drinks disguised as juices that are the cheapest beverages available. Even the popular aguas frescas (fresh juices made from cantaloupe, watermelon, limes or lemons) are often heavily sweetened. Annie offered samples of two alternatives with ingredients that are readily available: water with cucumber and fresh mint and watermelon lemonade. They were a big hit- good to the last drop! Since the class, several mothers have reported on other fresh beverages they have offered to their families with good success. And the sodas have almost disappeared from our lunchroom!

Neftali had surgery on tendons in his hips, knees and ankles during the first week of June. Due to the spasticity caused by cerebral palsy, he was developing contractures that made positioning and hygiene difficult. He came through the surgery well, thanks to the skill of the surgeon at the Children's Hospital of



Juarez and the many prayers of his mother and her prayer circle. Now he is in a cast from waist to toes for about six to eight weeks.

And in this heat! We have recommended ice cream and popsicles to help pass the time.

Maria Angélica returned to Santo Niño after several years' absence. Her birth was complicated and she had been slow to meet her developmental milestones, still unable to walk independently now at age five. She is a quiet child and was wary of all the attention initially as we put her through her paces but she warmed up to us quickly. She has a very unsteady, uncoordinated gait. When Cristina presented her with a tiny walker with front wheels, Angelica took to it immediately. Now she flies all around the clinic, delighting in the freedom to go wherever she wants. A few weeks ago we obtained a consultation with a local neurologist. With our donations we were able to pay for the recommended diagnostic tests. She has a condition known as "ataxia" related to a congenital brain malformation called "Dandy-Walker Syndrome". Treatment for Angelica is primarily the kind of therapy she can receive with us. The walker has made a great difference in her confidence and independence already.



We are very close to getting the new mini-bus. It has already been christened "The Love Bus" by the mechanics who are working on the final details before we import it to Mexico. It will have a special handicapped vehicle designation and graphics that indicate it is a private bus for our special children. In addition to the Santo Niño, it also sports Scooby-Doo, Dora the Explorer and Snoopy! The Christ Child keeps good company! We hope it serves us for many, many happy miles. May God bless all who are making The Love Bus a reality!