

THE GOOD NEWS OF LA GRAN FAMILIA

WORLD MISSION COMMITTEE
EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF FORT WORTH

DREAMS COME TRUE

By Becky McClure, San Angelo
Diocese of Northwest Texas

A BEAUTIFUL NEW HOME FOR THE GIRLS

Since the beginning of La Gran Familia orphanage, the girls have led a somewhat nomadic existence. Dreams for a permanent home dedicated to the female siblings in the family remained on the “wish list” as donated funds provided for the daily maintenance of a growing group of children.

The first girl who was a part of LGF was Angelica, sister of Jesus, Javi and Meny. She is now ten years old and has lived in various places. At first she lived with Goretty Lernas’ aunt and uncle in a nearby small town. When she entered school she moved to a Catholic girls’ orphanage and school for Tarahu-

mara Indian girls in nearby Carichic. After spending three years attending this school, Angelica returned to Cuauhtemoc to live with Goretty and the boys at La Gran Familia. By that time, Angelica was nine years old and two other young girls, Esmeralda and Gaby, had come to be a part of La Gran Familia. They are Tarahumara sisters who are now ages four and five. Carlitos, age 6, and Rigoberto, age 8, are their brothers.

Another older girl who lives at LGF is Minerva, age 18. Minerva is studying in her final year of high school and hopes to pursue studies at the local university after graduation.

This “band” of precious girls have patiently endured moving from room to room at La Gran



The children of La Gran Familia picking up candy after breaking a piñata.

Familia as Goretty has tried to figure out a way to accommodate the ever expanding crew. They have even lived in and commuted from a nearby rented house as the main house filled with rowdy boys!

The good news is that as soon as next week, this group should be living in a home of their own just next door to La Gran Fa-

“Let’s buy a house and give the girls a home”

By Anne Bergman, Chairman
WMC Mexico Subcommittee

Sometime after it became evident that a house for the girls was a necessity the Episcopal Church Women and the World Mission Committee of the Diocese of Fort Worth adopted the above motto. Prayers were offered and donations followed. A smaller house some distance from the original Gran Familia boys house was being considered but before a decision was made a better and larger house almost next door to the Gran Familia main house became available. Funds on hand from a number of parishes and dioceses were sufficient for a large down payment.

The Fort Worth WMC and ECW joined in sponsorship of an ingathering

for Mother’s Day on May 9 in the hope of paying the remaining debt. People of congregations throughout the Diocese were invited to honor a mother or other special woman with their gifts to the house fund. A list of the honored women will be published in a future issue of *Forward in Mission*.

The outpouring of gifts, already over \$12,000, was generous and will cover the remaining debt with some reserve for other needs.

The next goal is the purchase of adjoining lots connecting with the original Gran Familia building. Many will remember the purchase of that building in 2001 with funds collected through the ECW of the Diocese of Fort Worth.

The Diocese of Fort Worth continues to contribute funds for daily mainte-



Goretty in front of the new girls home looking towards the boys home.

nance of La Gran Familia through the generous support of congregations, parish organizations and the regular donations of faithful individuals.

Let us praise the Lord for His abundant blessings.

Dreams Come True *continued*

Esmeralda and Gaby
Birthday celebration

“Due to the improved housing for girls, La Gran Familia will be able to welcome three new sisters from Carichic”

milia. Thanks to generous donations from individuals, dioceses and churches, including St. John’s Episcopal Church Jackson, WY, the Dioceses of Ft. Worth and Northwest Texas, a three bedroom house was purchased to house the girls.

Recently youth and adults from across the United States traveled to Cuauhtemoc with supplies and paint to freshen up the newly purchased house.

Due to the improved housing for girls, La Gran Familia will be able to welcome three new sisters from Carichic; Araceli, age 10, Elena, age 15, and Leticia, age 16. These

children have lived at the convent school for most of their lives and the oldest girls have reached the end of the schooling offered in the area. Their father works as a cowboy in Delicia and their mother abandoned the family.

As a result of the expanding physical plant new staff is being welcomed to La Gran Familia. A new family will become a part of the working team. Miguel and Flori Dozal, along with their infant daughter, will be moving into the newly remodeled house to serve as house parents for the new home. Miguel is a physical education teacher who will also be helping

the boys with their homework in the evenings as well as managing the nightly “getting ready for bed” routine at the boys home and provide additional in-house supervision. Flori will serve as the resident caretaker and “head of household” for the girls home.

All of us can be grateful for those who support this work in Cuauhtemoc and for the help that has come from all corners of the United States to make this girls’ house a dream come true! La Gran Familia is a home where love, respect and acceptance is experienced and taught as a way of life.

Youth on Mission

By Barbara Hautanen,
Chairman WMC YOM

The youth have once again come together to plan and make their annual mission trip to Northern Mexico. This summer takes our mission team to Cuauhtemoc, Chihuahua, Mexico to the Church of Cristo Rey and to La Gran Familia Orphanage. They will represent the Episcopal Diocese of Fort Worth as they experience the giving of oneself to that which God calls us to do.

The World Mission Committee organizes this yearly mission event to bring the youth and sponsoring

adults from across the diocese together. Participants become short term missionaries..

Team member’s share what they wrote in their journals from last year.

“When I come here, God is right here beside me. I feel this amazing amount of His love every time I see one of the children smile!”

From another, “These children are not obsessed with material things. Rather, with many of them having young, inexperienced, or neglectful parents, or in some cases no parents at all, all they want is affection. Providing this is not

an act of charity. It is an honor to be able to spend time with such loving and innocent children. It has been perhaps the most meaningful experience of my life. The kind of love I have learned from these kids is not something anyone can teach or even describe. I will always remember their faces and affection, but most of all, the peace that they have given me. I have seen God’s love more in this place than any where else I have been.”

Pray for the team as they embark on this years mission trip to Mexico July 2—10, 2004.



A sad goodbye as
the mission trip ends.