

August 2017 Report from Tyson Malo and Niños con Valor

Dear Church of the Good Samaritan,

We hope 2017 has been going well for you and your families! We really appreciate your ongoing support of Niños con Valor and wanted to touch base and share a year-to-date update on how things have been going here in Cochabamba, Bolivia.

Pedacito de Cielo Boys' Home

In December of last year, our boys moved into the house that our girls had been living in for the previous 10 years, and have been happy to have more space both inside and outside. This meant a new school for many of our boys, and for the most part they have adjusted well to the routine. Our two newest children, brothers Luis* and Pedro*, arrived late last year and have been a fun addition to the family. We have also added two new caregivers to our team – Minerva and Alejandra – who have really brought energy and joy to the home. Several of our boys are involved in Scouts, and have enjoyed both the weekly activities and the camping trips they have been able to go on. In May, Carlos, our psychologist, took the caregivers and the boys out to the lake to celebrate Bolivian Family Day. It was too cold to go swimming, but the boys had fun skipping stones and devouring a lunch prepared on an open grill at the lakeside. Overall, it has been a really good year so far at PDC; all the boys are working through the different challenges they face due to their pasts, and there is a growing sense of “family” in the home.

Corazón del Pastor Girls' Home

Our girls also experienced a big change in December, when they moved for the first time since we opened the home back in July 2006. The new house is about the same size as the previous one, but with more outdoor space and extra rooms outside to use for different needs. In February, sisters Mari* and Sandra* joined our family. They came from a large home where there are over 160 children living, so the shift to a smaller family home was a big change. They have adjusted well and are now, along with our other two youngest girls Cristina* and Marta*, bringing a new rush of youthful, playful energy to the house. We also have a few girls who participate in Scouts, and in July three of our oldest teens – Johana, Jhoselin and Evelyn – participated in a recital for the dance company they are a part of. We've also seen a couple staff changes in CDP, with some staff shifting into roles in our newest program – Caminos Abiertos al Cambio. Seven months in, we are encouraged by how our teens are becoming more mature, and how our girls help one another out as a healthy family should.

Sendero de Esperanza

In January, we set up what we are calling our “pre-Sendero” apartment. This is a space, located on the 3rd floor of Pedacito de Cielo, where teens who have turned 15-years-old can request to live when they feel they are ready to start living more independently. They sign a contract similar to that signed by the young adults who receive our SDE scholarships and live in our SDE transition home, and breaking of this contract (through a system of warnings and formal observations) results in a return to Corazón del Pastor until they are ready to try again. The apartment includes 2 bedrooms, a living space, and a kitchen. The teens prepare their own breakfasts and eat with the boys for lunch and dinner. There is no staff living on

the floor with them, but PDC staff is present to provide support when needed and to respond in case of emergencies. There is also daily contact with the SDE coordinator, and the CDP social worker and psychologist continue to work with them as they do with all CDP residents. Basically, it exists to provide an additional step between living in CDP and moving into the transition home, offering more opportunities for independent decision-making and to learn from mistakes made. So far, this new aspect of SDE has produced encouraging results!

In our transition home for young adults, there are currently three young women living together – Adriana, Abigail and Elena - all of them finishing up their final year of high school this year. Ariana and Abigail moved into the transition apartment in December, and after a rocky start are both now into a good rhythm. Both have stable jobs and are starting to save up for the future. Elena joined the program in July 2017. She grew up in CDP, and had been living with family since the courts approved a family reunification back in 2015. She is now back with aspirations to study gastronomy and become a chef, and is incredibly motivated to make the most of the SDE scholarship.

Caminos Abiertos al Cambio

This is the newest program initiated by NCV, launched at the beginning of July. Children in the residential system in Bolivia, similar to those in the foster system in the US, often manifest their frustrations through negative behavior. In some cases, the traumatic impact of their childhood experiences can produce more serious behavior disorders. In the past, we have always been able to respond adequately in-house with the support of our program psychologist and social worker, and strategies implemented by our caregivers. However, over the past year a few of our teens have manifest behaviors that go beyond mischief or calls for attention, putting them on the road toward delinquency. We love these kids, and want to help them learn to control their impulses and make better decisions, yet we also need to honor the rights of the other children in our homes who are happy and who want to live in peace and harmony, but find their lives disrupted by the actions and attitudes of these teens.

The problem is, there are no programs in Bolivia that provide off-site therapy to children with behavioral difficulties. So... we made one! We have a separate living area now on the property of Corazón del Pastor, with a large shared bedroom, a kitchen/living room, and patio space. Teens whose actions could be defined as juvenile delinquency, and who do not respond to repeated efforts to modify this behavior, are now sent to live in this space and participate in a more individualized and intense therapy program. They are accompanied 24/7 by two Youth Guides, young psychologists who provide them with the affection they need, while ensuring strict adherence to the routine and activities of the program. These activities include physical exercise, community service, and therapy (individual and group). Evaluation is performed on a daily basis, includes the participation of the teen's teachers, and quantified in a visual behavior register that the teens can understand. There are 3 phases to the program, through which the teens progress until they are able to be reintegrated back into CDP.

The courts, upon learning of our pilot program, praised our efforts to not give up on these teens and have requested that once we have more concrete data on its success, that we provide a detailed project description and offer training to other organizations so that this

type of care can be made available to other teens growing up in residential programs throughout Bolivia.

Some other Highlights

Late last year, we created a new staff position in order to better coordinate the work of our caregivers. Through this role, we have seen some incredible improvements in the coordination of activities in PDC, CDP and SDE. One of the things we do in our homes, is set a monthly theme, then plan activities and outings to reinforce what each month's theme is. So far this year, these have been our themes:

January – The Future is Mine
February – “Mirror, Mirror”
March – Education and Professionalism
April – Values
May – Family
June – Bolivia and Biodiversity
July – Getting to Know our World
August – Art of Every Form

Overall, it has been a fun, exciting year here in Cochabamba, Bolivia! It is our hope that through this short update, you can feel a bit more a part of the NCV family, and that you are encouraged by the positive difference you are making in the lives of all the 41 children who are a part of our family.

Paz y Bendiciones,

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