



the Casa Corazón news bulletin

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Jesus said: "Let the little children come to me:" and He took the children in His arms and put His hands on them, and blessed them.
- Mark 10: 14, 16

Casa Corazón is a 501(c)3 ministry of Mountville Mennonite Church and division of Special Missions Foundation. (www.specialmissions.org)

Our mission is to assist children in Honduras to gain access to medical care and healthy living styles. This includes sponsoring children to come to The United States for life-saving/changing surgery that is not available to them in their country, organizing medical and surgical teams to Honduras, and assisting with projects that decrease the health risk factors in the mountainous villages and public hospitals of Honduras, Central America.

We're on the WEB!

www.ccorazon.org

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HEARTS ALIVE

Casa Corazón has partnered with The Children's International Health-care Fund at The Milton S. Hershey Medical Center, Hershey PA since 1997 to provide donated open-heart surgery for our Casa Kids. To date, the fund has graciously donated this service (about \$25,000 per child) to more than 25 Casa Kids! Children needing open-heart surgery are referred to Casa by Honduran pediatric cardiologists, missionaries working in Honduras, and other concerned medical personnel or family members. The three main cardiac defects corrected are: *Tetralogy of Fallot*, a defect that includes valve narrowing, enlarged heart, and a hole in the heart; *Ventricular Septal Defects*, a hole between the beating chambers of the heart; and *Atrial Septal Defects*, a hole between the upper chambers of the heart. Pediatric Open-Heart surgery is not available in Honduras for these types of heart defects.

In modeling the charitable efforts of the United States physicians and surgeons, their Honduran colleagues have asked Casa Corazón to partner with them in providing donated cardiac treatment for Honduran children with minor heart problems. These are cardiac issues that can be resolved with a cardiac catheterization procedure. The Honduran physicians are willing to donate their time, talents, and expertise.

We anticipate sponsoring 5 children for open heart surgery in 2009.

So that more lives may be saved, Casa Corazón is currently accepting donations to help offset the medical cost of these children.

Casa Corazón is raising funds to help cover the cost of the hospitalization as not all of the costs of the medical treatment can be donated. Casa Corazón has set a goal of helping one child a month once this project is funded. We welcome your participation in the **Hearts Alive Project!**

Casa Corazón's first child for 2009 in the Hearts Alive Program just arrived in The United States on January 17. Axel is scheduled for surgery February 3, 2009. After a few days in the hospital, he will recuperate with his host family, Dale and Sharon Hess, New Oxford, PA. When he is medically cleared, Axel will return to Honduras to his family and friends. Casa Corazón expresses a sincere thank-you for all those involved in saving Axel's life.

Donate on-line through our secure website at:
www.ccorazon.org/donate

Hearts Alive Project recipient; Axel



Casa Calendar 2009

- January 2009** ——— {Neurosurgery Brigade to Hospital Catarino Rivas, San Pedro Sula Honduras}
- March 2009** ——— {Latrine Building Project to Pinalito, Intubuca, Honduras. A small group sponsored by Casa Corazón will spend a week working with the villagers to construct latrines for each family living in Pinalito. The project is funded by Israel Landa MD, a Casa Physician Volunteer and will be organized by Casa Rosada, Santa Barbara, Honduras.}
- May 2009** ——— {Casa Corazón Medical Team to Santa Barbara, Honduras}
- June 2009** ——— {Casa Fundraiser in conjunction with World Surgical Foundation, Harrisburg, PA}
- September 2009** ——— {Pediatric Surgery Team to Hospital Catarino Rivas, San Pedro Sula Honduras. Sponsored by World Surgical Foundation, Harrisburg, PA}

Casa Kid Highlight

Carolina was born with multiple holes in the septum of her atria (the wall that divides the left and right heart chambers). Her cardiac defect was discovered when she had difficulty recovering from bronchitis. She tired very quickly with activity and did not grow very well. Her parents, both school teachers in Santa Barbara, Honduras were referred to Casa Corazón by a Honduran who works with Casa in the villages.



Carolina leaving family and friends in Honduras.



Carolina in the hospital.



Carolina with host family.

Baby Pablo comes from a more rural village of Santa Barbara. His cardiac defect more pronounced because he not only had a hole in his heart but he is also missing some of the structures important for effective heart function. His parents, village farmers, did not have the benefit of a formal education. Both children came to The United States for open heart surgery with the medical brigade when it returned from the week long mission to Honduras. Carolina and Pablo were cared for by host families during their 2 1/2 month stay. While both surgeries were successful, Pablo will require medication and additional surgery in several years. Carolina's heart is as good as new.



Pablo with family in Honduras



Pablo with family in Honduras



Pablo with family in Honduras

The Ripple Effect

Being united by circumstances, Carolina's family reached out to Pablo's family. They provided them with transportation and information. They helped them buy medicine and complete paperwork necessary for Pablo's travel. Since Pablo's mother was recovering from surgery in the hospital, Carolina's mother welcomed baby Pablo home when he returned to Honduras. Now that the children are back in Honduras, Carolina's parents remain vigilant for Pablo and his family. They take him to doctor appointments, they often visit Pablo to make sure he remains healthy and has enough medicine. They are the "eyes" and "ears" for Casa Corazón. Carolina's mother faithfully reports on the progress of both children. Even though they are very poor, families of Casa Kids often express their desire to repay the gift of life given to their children by Casa Corazón. My answer is always the same. *Helping children is our mission. It's what we love to do. The only payment we need is for you to love and provide for your child. If you ever see another in need, help them. And in so doing, you pass on the gift of Casa.* Casa Corazón appreciates and is blessed by Carolina's family's desire to give joyfully as they have received.

A special Thank You to:

Robin and Randy Davis, Mifflinburg, PA
Host family for Carolina

Dra. Marta Jimenez and family, York, PA
Alternate host family for Carolina

Dale and Sharon Hess, New Oxford, PA
Host family for Pablo

Hershey Medical Center
Warren Smith, Cardiac Social Worker
Penny Porter, CRNP, Children's Heart Group
Dr. John Myers, Pediatric Cardiac Surgeon
Dr. Stephen Cyran, Pediatric Cardiologist
Maura Castillo, American Airlines Miles for Kids
Providing donated airline tickets