

"If you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness..."

Isaiah 58.10



Hands of Hope DR Newsletter

CASEY ZYNDA, EDITOR

Oh, happy days, oh happy days, when Jesus walked.....*

It's October in the DR – still hot and humid. We've stopped outside a rural one-room school in Arroyo Indio. It's a small village of Haitians left behind when the sugar plantation closed. As I approach the doorway to the school, I hear sounds of laughter, voices and music. The room is dark because there is no electricity. However, you don't need light to see that it is decorated with two sheets hanging at opposite ends. One sheet reads "Hands of Hope DR" and children's hand prints fill the sheet. The sheet on the opposite wall is a fabric painted rendition of Noah's ark, with little hand-crafted animals appended to ropes on each side of the ark.



The children are sitting in little desks with moms on the edges of the room. Everyone is excited and the children's

round eyes dart around the room waiting to see what Ms. Deb would do next. Ms. Deb is busy, corralling a young boy into a Bible-inspired robe with a belt of cord so he could be Daniel. Four kids happily volunteer to be "lions". (Who wouldn't want to play with lion puppets?) The story told by Ms. Deb, and relayed it to the children by her translator, goes something like this. ~

Daniel believed in God. He was very good at the work he did for King Darius. People, who were jealous of Daniel, convinced the king to make a law that people could only pray to the king for 30 days. Daniel was caught praying to God, and was thrown into the lions' den for his punishment. Initially, the lions roared, but an angel appeared in the den, and quieted the lions, saving Daniel's life. King Darius was so happy that Daniel lived, he threw the jealous people into the lions' den.

There was a lot of roaring! Laughter and joy erupted from the children and their parents.

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

There are emotional dreams that are forgotten when you waken. There are remembered dreams stirring no emotions. And there are dreams that stir emotions because they are alive and active!

Such was the dream a team member had four years ago. Her dream was to open a library in the community of El Almirante – a community that has never had a library. This dream, now a reality, currently has 4 computers, a printer, 6 Amazon Fire tablets, tables, chairs, a water cooler, full-time electricity, internet, Bibles and hundreds of books (both from the States and donations from within the DR).

I was again brought to tears this past week when our librarian in El Almirante sent ...

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"Ms. Deb" is Deb Lambert and she and her husband Mark live in Defiance, Ohio, where they attend First Baptist Church. They are newlyweds, having married in July of this year.



Deb and Mark started their own ministry in 2014 when Deb went to the DR with our organization. Their vision is to share the love of Christ and bring laughter and hope to the children in small villages.

Deb's first and second visits to the DR were with her son, Jonathan, through another organization in March, 2009 and then again in July, 2009. They worked in a community called "Vietnam", and taught Vacation Bible School ("VBS"). God planted the seeds in her during those trips. When Jim Mossoney, head of their church's mission committee, told her that they needed someone to go to the DR to work with Hands of Hope, she readily agreed.

For those who have not been in charge of putting on VBS to hundreds of children, it is *a lot of work*. Then to do it in a country where you don't speak the same language, that is even more daunting. Mark and Deb matched stories with songs; approached vendors, such as Burger King (crowns), and Walmart (some craft supplies); and designed crafts that would capture the imagination of children. There were costumes, puppets, and red noses. Nine large bags of VBS supplies were filled.

All of that work culminated into Deb's presentation of the gospel to over 300 kids and parents in Arroyo Indio and Palamara between October 3rd and October 14th. Thirty parents and children accepted Christ in Arroyo Indio. Next year, Deb will be back in the DR. If his health permits him to do so, Mark will join her.



Thank you, Lord, for giving Mark and Deb the gifts of sharing the gospel and loving children. Parents and children in Arroyo Indio and Palamara were truly blessed.



Christmas is coming!

Food boxes will once again be distributed to supported children's families. The boxes will be delivered before Christmas by our HOH DR leaders. Each family will receive items for a traditional DR Christmas meal, including *chocolate, fruit and nuts*. If you would like to make a contribution, please send your check to: **HOHDR, c/o Diane Krueger, Treasurer, 4485 Meadowwood Circle, DeForest, WI 53532**. The cost of the boxes will be \$55/each, and sufficient boxes will be left with families who have more than 4 members in their household.

Christmas Letters and Cards. It seems too early, but it's really not if you want to send greetings to your sponsored child. Please get them to Casey no later than November 25th. (100 letters can take quite a while to get translated, and our translators volunteer when they have time available. Bless each one of them.)
NOTE: No gifts, please. (The cost of shipping is too expensive!)

Send your letters and cards to:

Casey Zynda, HOH DR Child Sponsorship Coordinator, 4946 North Sherman Avenue, Unit H, Madison, WI 53704.

Roadblock to Education

Before any child can attend school, they must have three things: a school uniform, school supplies and a *birth certificate*. HOH DR provides the first two. The latter item is a big reason why so many children do not go to school. A large majority of children in Capulin, Arroyo Indio, Palamara, Lecheria and El Almirante were born at home, using the local midwife. Hospitals are expensive and not readily available, particularly in rural communities. Hands of Hope DR is working with parents and government officials to see that home births are documented so that children can go to school. It's a very slow process. Please pray about this issue. Too many children are not attending school.

Capulin

There are 43 children in Capulin who are faithfully sponsored by people from Goshen Baptist Church, West Chester, PA.

In September, HOH Staff visited each sponsored child's home and made the following observations:

- 95% live in extreme poverty.
- 6 people sleep in one bed (parents and step-parents sleep with their daughters).
- 37 houses are in very bad condition. Two sponsored children live in the home below.



What is HOH doing?

- HOH Staff are working with town leaders to develop a plan to improve living conditions.
- They continue to accomplish the goals set by Capulin leaders. (See HOH's August Newsletter for the list.)
- Beds will be purchased for 36 sponsored children with delivery before Christmas.
- Ruth del Rosario, the Capulin child sponsorship facilitator, visited each sponsored child's home after school started. She and the parents discussed children's behavior, addressing bad behavior, and completing homework. She also stressed the importance of keeping their children clean and wearing footwear outside at all times. Ruth's interaction with parents helps to solidify HOH's desire to help families and the community.

In August, **school supplies** were delivered to the sponsored children who attend school. Each child received a school uniform and a backpack containing five notebooks, pencils, erasers, sharpeners, toothbrush and two tubes of toothpaste. An additional 100 children received 3 notebooks, a toothbrush and tube of toothpaste.

Three sponsored children are receiving ongoing **medical treatment** and are being monitored. One child has significant vision problems, the second has emotional problems and the third has hearing problems.

The child with vision problems will have eye surgery in December. Please keep her and her family in your prayers.

Upcoming Events:

- Annual Christmas Party on December 17th along with distribution of Christmas Food Boxes and cards from sponsors.
- Physicals will be given to each sponsored child (scheduled for late December or early January);

- HOH Staff are searching for a dentist and optometrist who are willing to travel to Capulin to perform dental and eye check-ups.

El Almirante

In August, **uniforms, school supplies and backpacks** were distributed to children who attend school. The library continues to conduct classes for children who are unable to attend school because they do not have birth certificates.

In September, **significant work** was done to the **home of a sponsored child** who lives with her grandmother. The sponsored child has HIV, which was contracted from her deceased mother. Their concrete floors were cracked and uneven due to roots from a massive tree that grew outside their door. The tree was taken down and the concrete floor repaired. The kitchen and bathroom were updated, and a new aluminum roof was installed.

Before ...



And After



The **child facilitator**, Marino Rosario, visited the homes of all the sponsored children to check on each child's physical wellbeing, and any stresses which could have a negative impact on the child. Marino counsels parents on these issues and often the parents are open to making changes. These visits further allow him to check out the bathroom situation in each home. He passes that information on to Richard and Almonte, HOH leaders.

New: College Fund. There are dozens of young people (post high school age) and adults who desire to go on to the university. While tuition is minimal, the cost of books and transportation can be major obstacles.

HOH is starting a college fund in Almirante. The College Fund will cover the cost of books. Transportation will be responsibility of the student. The College Fund Committee, comprised of six community members, will be responsible for developing the application form; receiving, reviewing and discussing the applications; and deciding which application(s) will be approved. The Committee will have a pre-determined budget, and will work within the confines of that budget. Four individuals have volunteered for the College Fund Committee, with the fifth individual being Marino Rosario, the HOH child facilitator in Almirante.

In March, the annual Pancake Breakfast held at High Point Church, Madison, will promote the College Fund, and hopefully sufficient funds will be raised to send 2-3 people to school.

HOH hopes that this fund can be started in other communities.

The Library continues to be the learning hub of the community. Seventeen people visit the library daily to work on their reading skills, explore the books in the library and work on the computers. Forty-three different people visited the library in October. Valerin, the librarian works with these individuals to promote their interest in learning and improving themselves.



Bible Study: Since his retirement, Alex Martinez has been volunteering with Hands of Hope for almost 2 years. Alex leads a weekly Bible Study for adults in Almirante.



Upcoming Events:

- Annual Christmas Party on December 22nd along with distribution of Christmas Food Boxes and cards from sponsors.
- Physicals will be given to each sponsored child beginning December 19th thru December 21st.

- Vision and dental checkups will occur in December.



Palamara & Lecheria

As noted in the lead story on page 1, Deb Lambert held VBS in these communities for 11 days in October. She came away wanting to do more.

HOH is seeking churches to adopt the communities of Palamara and Arroyo Indio. Do you know of a church that would be interested in spreading the Gospel and helping a poverty stricken community in a country not far from the U.S.? If you do, please contact Vicki Hellenbrand for more information: handsofhopedr@gmail.com.

Upcoming Events:

- Annual Christmas Party on December 22nd for sponsored children along with distribution of Christmas Food Boxes and cards from sponsors.
- Medical, vision and dental check-ups in December.

Interested in a 4 day trip to Capulin or El Almiranté?

Are you interested in visiting your sponsored child for a couple of days? HOH is planning 4-day trips to Capulin and El Almirante. If you are interested in learning more about this opportunity, contact Vicki Hellenbrand at handsofhopedr@gmail.com.

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT
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Pictures through Facebook Messenger showing two teen girls studying school materials and reorganizing all of the books on the shelves. These girls are sponsored children; both lost their mothers, and both have been unable to attend the public school. Because of this library, our college-educated librarian and a hired teacher, these teen girls are able to learn as the other children their age are learning; and they are receiving daily encouragement - reminders of God's love for them. These girls are so excited about learning that they show up every day!

In addition, our librarian reports more than 40 people used the library and its resources this past month, working to improve their reading skills and looking for work. The dream has become bigger than the dreamer.

"Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever! Amen. Eph.3:20-21

No dream is too large to affect the children and their parents in the many communities we care for. Please help to make more dreams a reality.

God bless – Vicki

Vicki Hellenbrand
President, Hands of Hope



Excerpts from Richard Chatman and José Almonté's monthly reports:

- "We are aware that the time spent with children is very important to them because many of them need attention, love and respect that they do not receive in their homes."
- "We believe that the work in the library will grow more every day and we will have a sustainable center for learning. This is what our God wants for children."
- "It was a wonderful experience to work with Debbie. We ask the Lord to give her strength, good health and a desire to continue her work in our country."

COMING TO THE STATES!

*Richard & Almonté - late November for 2 weeks – more details to be announced!
If you would like to have them come to your church, please let us know.*

The "Guys"

From left to right: Alex Martinez, Marino Rosario, Richard Chatman, and José Almonté



(Not pictured – Ruth)

Prayer requests for Richard, Almonté, Alex, Marino, Ruth and Valerin:

- That the Lord continue to give them strength to do the work He has entrusted to them.
- That they be protected daily, by putting on the full armor of God.
- For fruitful meetings with church and community leaders when identifying problems and needs in their respective communities.
- For meaningful discussions when meeting with parents, teachers and medical personnel about sponsored children.
- For discernment when visiting children's home, being aware of strained relationships and possible unhealthy situations.
- For developing good relationships with the children in the program, providing them with attention, love and emotional support.
- For opportunities to meet as many people as possible while Richard and Almonté are in the States.
- For donations to come to HOH-DR that will provide financial support to Richard and Almonté. (Almonté's wife recently lost her job.)

Thank you -

