



Orphans and Orphanages

A Time for Giving

“Approximately 80% of the population of Guatemala lives on about \$2 per person a day.”

BY DIANE SPRINGER

According to a popular dictionary, an orphanage is “an institution for the housing and care of orphans”. Since the 1950’s, the United States has closed most orphanages and instead, supports foster homes, group homes and other placements for children who have no parents or children who are not safe at home. Whenever possible, the goal is to reunite children with their parents if the parents can provide a safe, loving, nurturing environment. Unfortunately, children in third world countries don’t have the same options as children have here in the U.S.

The Central American country of Guatemala is still recovering from their last civil war, which ended in 1996. Over 500,000 people became homeless during that era. More than half of those numbers were children. The majority of the population of Guatemala still struggles and their standard of living is far different than ours. Approximately 80% of the population of Guatemala lives on about \$2 per person a day. That’s something that most of us can’t even imagine. There are many children who live on the street, who come from abusive homes and who end up in orphanages in Guatemala.

One of these orphanages is Hogar Miguel Magone, an orphanage on the outskirts of Guatemala City, located in a hilly province. This home houses approximately 50 boys, who receive medical and dental care and lots of love. The names and faces change sometimes but the needs are still the same. A few lucky boys are in private school and the majority of boys walk about 3 1/2 miles a day to get to and from school. The boys range in age from 6 to 17. They are divided by age into three dorm rooms and teachers are with them 24/7. The orphanage has a cook and a working laundry but all the other work at the orphanage is done by the boys. They all have chores and rules to live by. Unfortunately, the government doesn't provide any financial support to the 215 orphanages in Guatemala. They rely on citizens of the world to fund their educations, provide them with needed clothing, donated food and monetary donations to pay operating costs.

Diane Springer, a Broker with Coldwell Banker Bartels Realtors in Pinole, has traveled to Guatemala 4 times in the past 18 months. Her 5th trip is coming up in just a couple of weeks. Diane lives and works at Hogar Miguel Magone orphanage for 2-5 weeks at a time. Diane saw the need for so much more to be done for these boys that she formed a non-profit foundation in April 2007, solely for the support of this orphanage. Orphan's Hope Project, Inc. is a 501(c)(3). Through this foundation, donors are able to help the boys and receive a tax write off.

Orphan's Hope Project has painted and renovated rooms, purchased and installed a new walk-in freezer, purchased beds, funded private school for 7 boys, purchased a new computer system, upgraded the phone system, provided backpacks to all the boys, brought educational supplies, purchased new shoes for the boys on two different trips and has brought many, many new shirts, socks and other clothing items to the boys. Orphan's Hope Project has received over \$20,000 in donations this year. Orphan's Hope Project also places volunteers in the



orphanage to work & help the boys. In fact, the orphanage now has a full time carpenter, who traveled from Vermont, and fell in love with the boys and the work. All this is because of the efforts of Orphan's Hope Project. Local organizations such as Bay Area Rotary Clubs, The Exchange Club of Pinole-Hercules, The Pinole Youth Commission, YMCAs, The Oakland Raiders, CASA of Contra Costa County and Sonoma County, the California Waterfowl Association and many more, have donated funds and new items for the boys. In addition, many private individuals have donated new items and money to support the orphanage and the boys.

In August 2007, Orphan's Hope Project arranged a visit to a fire station. All the boys, and a few girls from the local village, were treated to a visit to the San Cristobal fire station in Guatemala City. These children had never been to a fire station. Before leaving the orphanage, all the children were given custom made t-shirts, compliments of Lynda Bartels, manager of Coldwell Banker Bartels Realtors in Pinole. (The firefighters got shirts also). The shirts had a Guatemalan flag on them and the Guatemala county slogan, El País de la Eterna Primavera, "Land of Eternal Spring". The boys were so excited. All the boys, teachers and staff piled into vans and drove to the fire station. The 3 hour visit was educational and fun. The boys had classroom time, toured the fire station, put on firefighting gear, met the chief and the highlight of the

afternoon, was a 10 minute ride in the city streets on a long, red fire engine... sirens wailing, lights on and horns blasting. Now that was exciting! In fact, the boys will all be getting red fire hats around Christmas, compliments of the Pinole Fire Department. And, one of the older boys at the home now wants to become a firefighter.

The needs of the boys are great. They play on concrete most of the time and wear out their shoes very quickly. They always need shirts, jeans, socks, underwear, etc. Orphan's Hope Project ships items to the orphanage but limits these items to only new things. These boys are perceived as throwaway kids and they deserve new clothes, socks, etc. They need shoes about every 3 months and in January, the need is even greater as they start back to school after a 3 month vacation. The boys need uniform shoes for school as well as tennis shoes for running and playing. The boys often sort through the used, donated shoes in hopes of finding shoes that fit. Orphan's Hope Project is committed to buying new shoes for all the boys in January and they could use your help.

Now that the holidays are here, it is our hope that you find it in your hearts to help the boys at the orphanage. The Christmas/New Year trip is an important one as the holidays are lonely and upsetting for the boys.

We need so many things for the boys and right now, we need socks and shoes. Please consider donating some new, child sized socks and/or \$ for shoes. Socks are easy for us to ship. Socks can be mailed or dropped off at Coldwell Banker Bartels Realtors at 3088 Pinole Valley Road Pinole, CA. 94564. Attn: Diane. And we need \$ to buy all the boys their two pairs of shoes. The average cost for the two pairs of shoes is \$45 a boy. We always look for back to school sales and will purchase the shoes in Guatemala. We need to size them for each boy's feet and shoes are too expensive to ship to Guatemala. A tax deductible donation is easiest and

your check can be mailed or dropped off at Coldwell Banker Bartels as well. All checks should be made out to Orphan's Hope Project. Donations can be made through Pay Pal by going to the web site www.OrphansHopeProject.com. 100% of your donation will be used for the boys and their needs.

We hope you will consider buying shoes for a boy and/or donating new socks. We truly have so much to be thankful for and these boys have so little. Won't you please consider helping those who need your help?

Thank you for your spirit of giving. Thank you for caring. And thanks from all the boys at Hogar Miguel Magone orphanage. Please have a wonderful holiday season knowing that you helped brighten the lives of these boys.

For more information on the orphanage and Orphan's Hope Project, please visit the web site at www.OrphansHopeProject.com. There is a wealth of information on the web site, as well as pictures and a short video. Orphan's Hope Project T-shirts and hand made Guatemalan bracelets are available through the web site. You may call the founder, Diane Springer, at (510) 741-8554. Donations are tax deductible and receipts will be given.

