

## Our Visit to Casa Hogar Maximo Cornejo, Puerto Vallarta

While Lisa and I were planning our vacation cruise for December 2014, we felt the Lord had provided an opportunity to serve Him and others. James 1:27 tells us to look after widows and orphans so we looked for an orphanage to support during our trip. After much research done with the help of Patric (Missions Committee) and Tee Shin Chang, we contacted Casa Hogar Maximo Conejo in Puerto Vallarta.

We also had help from Rene Cervantes from our church and our close friend, Pastor Mario Calderon of Message of Peace Church in South San Francisco to do further research and initiate contact with the orphanage in Spanish. With much prayer and these recommendations, we felt God was calling us to minister to this government-recognized orphanage which cares for children whose parents are either involved in drugs, violence or imprisoned. The orphanage was founded by Maximo Cornejo, who built major hotels in PV in the 1950s. He built Casa Hogar in 1992 so his wife, Alicia, could care for the needy children (Maximo has since passed away). The staff consists of Alicia ("Mama Alicia"), Ale (Alicia's daughter and our main contact), two cooks, Martin ("Papa") who is the facility manager and several workers and volunteers.



Martin, with  
Alicia Cornejo



Alicia and  
Linda (teacher)



Ale Cornejo

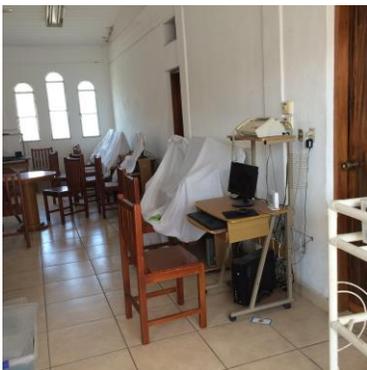
They currently care for 36 children, ranging from 1 to 12 years old. Most are in temporary care (equivalent to our foster care system), but can stay until they reach 18 years old. Lisa met one girl who was about 20 yrs old, who was raised there and comes back to help. Sadly, only one set of parents visits their child monthly; the rest do not visit their families.

Prior to our arrival, I was able to order some baby supplies through WalMart's Mexican website and have them shipped to Casa Hogar. We met Alicia, Ale, Martin and Estella at WalMart, where we filled up four shopping carts with household items: an iron and ironing board, soaps and cleaning supplies, kitchen supplies, brooms, buckets, a ladder, kitchen utensils, and a wide assortment of plastic storage containers, ranging from shoe boxes to drawer units and large tubs, and intermediate size containers. All this filled up Martin's pickup truck.

We then went to Costco, where we purchased a large cooler chest, garbage cans & bags, more brooms, mops, foil, plastic wrap, paper supplies, cookware, cooking supplies, 24 folding chairs, two tables, lunch for the staff and snacks for the children. The three shopping carts and two flat bed carts of merchandise filled up Ale's minivan and Martin's truck again.



Casa Hogar's compound is very simple and sparsely furnished, yet we could see how neat and clean they keep their facility. They are in the midst of repairing the front road and retiling two large rooms. Their computer lab consists of five computers. Their stove has a commercial quality vent hood, but the exhaust is ducted to another area in the same room. They hope to vent it outside; Lord willing, I will be able to order the parts online through Home Depot's Mexican website.



By the time we arrived at Casa Hogar, the older students were in school, so we met only the pre-K children. They were both exuberant and very well-behaved. On their own, they ran around and played like we expect children to do, but when it was time to eat, they all sat at the table while the workers their snack in front of them. No one touched the food until after I spoke to them and sang "Jesus Loves Me" in Spanish ([click here](#) to view some videos). We also gave Alicia Gospel tracts and Spanish Christian CDs for all the children and staff. They were grateful for our prayer of support for the children, the staff and their work. Lisa was also able to pray with Linda, a teacher, who is recovering from cancer. Another highlight was being able to play and interact with the children who were friendly and curious about us. Even though we didn't speak their language, we were able to connect through our gifts, hugs and play.



We praise God for the many church members who generously donated toward this orphanage (we received over \$3,600). By providing for their daily needs, your gifts helped these children and workers know that they are precious in God's sight. During this trip, we spent about \$2,300, so there are funds to continue a supportive relationship with them. I will be able to order more supplies and material through major retailers' Mexican websites.



If the Lord leads, we could return to Casa Hogar with a short term mission team and can serve them through English classes and tutorials. Please join us in praying for His will and purposes to be a blessing to others in need.

For more information about Casa Hogar, please visit their English website at <http://puertovallartachildrenshelter.org/>.

