

# For His Children

a Christian home for children in Quito, Ecuador

January/February/March, 2003

## Greetings to our supporters and friends!

**The bottom line is** that we give thanks and so appreciate all of our faithful supporters who continue to give, month after month, year after year. Thank you for your prayers and encouragement. **The next to the bottom line is** that due to the world political and economic situation, the amount of donations received by FHC is **down 40%** since January 1, 2003. We have been borrowing from the Therapy Pool account to make ends meet for the last two months. We don't want to continue to use funds that have been raised for a designated project. We know we have a responsibility to manage all our funds appropriately. So **now** is the time that we need you! If you are not a regular contributor or have overlooked supporting FHC in the last few months, please consider this request. **We have prioritized our most essential needs** and taken cost-cutting measures. We have slashed our operating budget here in Quito by 30%. It's a great challenge to cut costs and eliminate spending without affecting the quality of care and attention that we give the babies and children. It is a very real threat to FHC that we will not be able to provide the minimal care the children need, and that we will have to say "no" to the next abandoned child who is brought to FHC. Please consider **sending a contribution now**, and commit to be a regular financial supporter of FHC. If giving at this time is not possible, **please pray**. *Thank you!*



*Tatiana learns how to roast hotdogs from FHC caregiver, Norma, at Quito's Metropolitan Park.*

**Stress-reduction at FHC:** What do we do here at FHC when the stresses of the ministry press in? We turn off the computers, leave the office, and go play with the children. Looking into a pair of tender, questioning eyes is all that's needed... and the pressures disappear, the never-ending tasks fade, and our minds are quieted as we get back in touch with what FHC is all about...connecting with human beings who have suffered trauma, and ministering to them with God's unconditional love. Of course, *how* we show God's love relates to all the office work, the administrative, supervision, maintenance, etc... BUT just 30 minutes cuddling a soft, sweet-smelling newborn on your shoulder, or helping a toddler gain confidence to take his first solo steps, or getting away on a day trip with our five eight-year old girls with special needs to go swimming, or go to the park and roast hot dogs for lunch... (we actually did both of these activities during the past few weeks!) Those "stress-reducers" help us understand why we take the phone calls, make the appointments, write the reports, schedule the meetings, repair the washers and water pumps, etc., etc. Time spent with the children renews our

energy and enthusiasm. It makes us express heartfelt gratitude to God for placing us in this challenging position of great responsibility!

**Ground breaking for FHC's therapy pool** took place on February 17, 2003. Along with members of a Massachusetts' mission team (more about them below) the first trenches were dug and the building area was prepared. The project has been over two years in the planning and fundraising. A local construction company, "Constructec", owned by American Judd Johnson and his Ecuadorian partner, Carlos Pullas, are generously overseeing the project and the construction. Our plan is that some of the construction will be done by mission teams from churches in the States who will be traveling to Ecuador during 2003.

The pool will be a welcome addition to the activities for all the children at FHC, but especially for our 15 children with special needs. The warm water will be a relaxing environment in which to work with the children in our therapy program, as well as



*Our five oldest girls try out their pool, with volunteer Amanda Draxler, while Sandy stands guard.*

helping the children build self-esteem by learning new skills. The pool will be 16 ft. by 10 ft., and is being built on the FHC property across the street, at the "Faith House". It will be in a covered/enclosed area, with two bathrooms (one will be wheelchair accessible), a changing room, and a mechanical room. Thank you to all of our friends who have helped to make this project a reality.



**School has finally started** for 8 yr. old Tatiana (at left with caregiver Norma). We searched for months for a school that could offer Tatiana the learning environment she needs. Tatiana cannot speak, has moderate mental retardation, and epilepsy. We finally found what we were looking for just 15 minutes from FHC. It is a clean, well-organized school for children with special needs. Tatiana is in a class of six students. In addition to classroom activities, the students participate in horseback riding therapy and swimming lessons twice a month. Her schedule is 8 am to 1 pm., and a nutritious lunch is provided. The school gave Tatiana a "scholarship", so FHC pays only \$28 per month, which includes transportation! Tatiana's teacher reports that she does need to learn more appropriate work habits (!) and fortunately, our psychologist, Patricia, is on staff to guide us in this area. We are so thankful for this opportunity for Tatiana.

**Two FHC children met their forever families** in February, Elena (19-months, at right) and Carlos Sebastian, (16-months, below left with his parents).

**Elena** arrived at FHC in February of 2002. Elena's mother left her with a family in Quito in the fall of 2001. Her mother was single, with no job or support. The family took care of Elena until severe financial problems caused them to contact FHC to receive Elena. In December 2002, the Department of Adoptions of the Ministry of Social Welfare assigned Elena to an Ecuadorian couple living in Quito, Patricio and Diana. Elena is their first child, and they call every two weeks to tell us how very happy they all are!



**Carlos Sebastian's** adoptive family lives in St. Niklaus, Switzerland. They flew to Quito on February 1st, to meet their new son. Hans and Iris are the owners of an auto mechanic shop. The Oberwallis adoption agency processed the paperwork for the family, and sent their representative, Mrs. Maria Magdalena Sarbuch along with Hans and Iris to Ecuador. When the paperwork was completed and the adoption decree signed, Hans, Iris and Carlos Sebastian prepared for their trip home to Switzerland. A few days before their departure, we planned a farewell party at FHC. Attending the party was a local family that lives in north Quito. In October 2001, they opened their front door one morning and found newborn Carlos Sebastian on their steps. It was an emotional encounter for the two families, and we know that it will be an important relationship for Carlos Sebastian when he is older and wants to learn more about his story. Waiting to meet Carlos Sebastian in Switzerland are his two big brothers, Ramon and Stefen.

Please keep these two new families in your prayers. We pray for God's blessing and joy in their future.

**Very tiny Sandra Janeth** was welcomed at FHC on December 12, 2002. Born at 30 weeks, weighing just two pounds, Sandra spent two months in the government's Maternity Hospital before coming to FHC. We were advised that doctors had examined her eyes and performed laser surgery to stop damage to her retinas. The day she was released to FHC, we took 4.75 lb. Sandra to our trusted retinologist, Gustavo Alvira, who has taken care of all our children with retina problems (at no charge to FHC). He scheduled surgery for her left eye within the week. One month later, in February 2003, a checkup under general anesthesia showed that the surgery was not successful, the retina in her left eye had not reattached. This means Sandra is blind in both eyes.



News like this is devastating. Yes, we've cared for many children who are blind or have vision problems, but we never get used to the news that a child will not be able to see. Yet Sandra has brought us great joy. She is a lovely baby, enjoys being cuddled, and her development to date is almost normal. SANDRA IS LOOKING FOR A FAMILY. Please contact us if you would like more information.



**It is a policy at FHC** to first review medical records of a child with special needs before accepting him/her at FHC. In the process of having our physicians evaluate six month old Gabriel in early December, he spent a night at FHC. Our caregivers fell in love with him. The next morning, Gabriel returned to the hospital for a few more tests. Then we began asking God to guide us in making the decision whether to accept Gabriel at FHC. That same morning, Melinda was washing dishes and began praying, "Lord, how will we know if it is your will that Gabriel come to FHC?" (We take many factors into consideration before accepting a child with special needs...the number of children currently cared for in the home, FHC's financial situation, the status of our staff and caregivers, etc.) That same afternoon, two of our caregivers knocked on Melinda's office door and asked for a few minutes to talk with her. They said all the employees had agreed that they would like Gabriel to be welcomed at FHC, and they came to ask if we would say "yes". This was a first! Never have our employees "lobbied" to accept a particular child. They explained that they knew Gabriel would require special care. (He had hydrocephaly, an accumulation of cerebral-spinal fluid around the brain. A valve had been placed in his head to drain the excess fluid. He was also severely malnourished.) The employees had been planning how to raise money to cover his medical needs. Our physical therapist heard them talking a few days earlier and suggested they organize a raffle. She donated a large, new stuffed animal for the cause. They sold tickets and within a week they raised \$200. They bought nutritional supplements

and medicine for Gabriel. (Far away in Northridge, California, some very special FHC friends matched our employees' donation, to increase even more Gabriel's medical emergency fund!)

We were impressed with the love and dedication these women have for the children. A person working just for a paycheck would not show such compassion and sensitivity. We were moved, and told them that we felt strongly that our conversation was confirmation from God that we were to welcome this baby!

That is the story of how Gabriel came to live for a few short months at FHC. During that time, our caregivers were very attentive to him. They know how to care for a child with hydrocephaly and how to feed a baby with a nasal-gastric tube, which is what Gabriel needed in the beginning to increase his calorie intake. He responded to the love shown to him and it was beautiful to see his appearance change.

One night in early February, our employees called us to say that Gabriel was vomiting. Suspecting that the valve was malfunctioning (vomiting is a common symptom of an infected valve), or perhaps an intestinal obstruction, we called our pediatrician. By 1 am, Marcia, a caregiver and Melinda were driving Gabriel to a local hospital. Over the next few days, the doctors said the valve was functioning properly. Then they studied his gastro-intestinal system and discovered an obstruction. All went well during the surgery, however within 48 hours, Gabriel started a fever. In another 24 hours, our pediatrician called to tell us that Gabriel was unable to breathe without oxygen, and within a day, he was breathing only with the help of a ventilator. (During this time, one of our caregivers was with Gabriel 24 hours a day.) Four days after surgery, on a Monday morning, our pediatrician called to say that Gabriel had died.

We didn't know how to end this story of Gabriel when we were writing this newsletter. Maybe no more words are needed.



**Many of you may remember "baby" Alexander** (at right in the photo), now 17-months old. Alexander recently transitioned slowly into a move to the Snyder House (as we call the home where the toddlers live). Alex takes in all the smells and sounds even more acutely than other children as he is blind in both eyes (detached retinas since birth). We are now caring for Alex's half-brother, Javier David (at left in the photo), who was born October 4, 2002, and came to FHC a few weeks later. David is a smiling, sociable baby who looks like his older brother. We make sure the brothers visit each other every couple of days (David is at the Vaughn's "Baby Home", and Alexander is at the Snyder "Toddler" Home), although at this age, neither seems interested in the other. The brothers will be adopted together, as Ecuadorian law states that sibling groups must not be separated except in unusual circumstances.

A loving family in Florida is on their way to completing paperwork to become parents to the brothers. Join us in prayer that all the procedures will be successfully completed so that well before the end of the year the boys will be united with their new family!

**Lina (at right) flew to Quito** from the coastal city of Manta after the director of a Christian ministry to street children called to see if FHC could receive an 18-month old girl whose mother had left her in the ER of the local hospital. Lina has severe cerebral palsy, and arrived malnourished and recovering from pneumonia. In December, 2002, the director brought Lina with him on a flight from Manta to Quito, and Lina now calls FHC "home". She is slowly gaining weight, thanks to a nasal-gastric feeding tube that our neighbor, nurse Barbara Quiring, carefully monitors. Some good news, no... some *great* news for Lina is that she does not have epilepsy as originally suspected. We hope to feed her normally starting next month. A little discouraging is that a trial on medication to reduce her spasticity has not been too successful. Please keep this lovely little girl in your prayers that she would deeply feel God's love and our love here at FHC. *P.S. Lina would love to have her own forever family!*



**Raul was cared for at FHC** for almost a year. He was a quiet, beautiful boy, who turned three in February, 2002. Raul was diagnosed in late 2001 with a degenerative neurological disorder (Telangiectasia Ataxia), and his motor skills began to deteriorate. Our neurologist and pediatrician told us his life expectancy was short. In late December, Raul became very ill with a respiratory infection. When he didn't improve, we talked about his future, his care, and what our response would be. Together with our pediatrician, we agreed that Raul's last days and hours would be at FHC. Raul died the morning of January 3<sup>rd</sup>. As always, our workers were ready to help in any way needed. They prepared everything for his burial, and later that afternoon, a large group from FHC headed for the San Diego cemetery in

central Quito. We miss Raul very much. It was heartbreaking to watch his physical abilities diminish...but he taught us patience and compassion. We can honestly say we gave him the best love that FHC could give. We know that his body is now whole and healed and that he is in God's presence.

**In January, we welcomed 13 dear friends** from the Vaughn's home church, Church on the Mountain, in Crowley Lake, California. Led by Dean Rosnau, (who is also a member of FHC's Board of Directors), this team of plumbers, electricians, mechanics, contractors and "jacks of all trades", were every wife's dream! All Melinda had to do was mention a leaking faucet or a burned-out light fixture, and it was instantly repaired. This was such a great help to us as Clark is kept busy seven days a week as our only maintenance man at FHC. Apart from all they did (their main project was building a covered parking area for FHC's vehicles), they encouraged us and blessed us with their presence. Thank you to all of you who were a part of this team, those who supported them in prayer, financially, and through donations.





**In February, we were blessed** with a visit from a group made up of members of the AME Charles Street Church in Boston, and the Wellesley Congregational Church of Wellesley, MA. They were a group of high-energy teens and adults who helped care for the children, painted, and participated in the ground-breaking for the new therapy pool. Thank you to Pastor Martin Copenhaver, Vicky Lazell, and Lynette Holmes, team leaders, for blessing this ministry in so many ways. It was this group's presence at FHC that motivated us to begin work on the therapy pool. We are looking forward to receiving another group in mid-April from these same two churches. We know they will be pleased with the progress made to date!

**At Christmas, Phillip** (a junior at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, Prescott, AZ) and **Lesley** (a freshman at the University of California at Santa Barbara) came home to Quito for three weeks. They are doing very well, but say they missed hanging out with the children at FHC while up in the States. Clark and Melinda have been adjusting to the "empty nest", so they enjoyed having the family together again.



**Two new arrivals came to FHC** in the first week of March. **Daniel** (at left), was born February 23, and was brought to a local health center by passersby for immediate medical attention. He was then transferred to the government's Maternity Hospital, where he was hospitalized for 11 days, mostly under observation, until he was stabilized. After the social workers at the hospital called FHC, we went to meet him and bring him "home". He is doing well and has passed his first pediatric evaluation with Dr. Naranjo with flying colors.

Sometimes FHC receives a child from other children's homes when specialized care is needed. **Juan Esteban** (at right), 14-months old, arrived at FHC from a children's home in Ambato. The director reported some delays in Esteban's development, and asked if FHC would welcome the toddler so he could receive therapy, evaluations and individualized attention. Juan Esteban adapted immediately to FHC, is getting along well with the other children, and has charmed us all with his beautiful black eyes and sweet smile.



**Yes, we still have a child sponsorship program!** Our management of the program has been slow over the last six months as the program changed hands from Cindy Snyder to Melinda. We apologize to those of you with whom we have lost contact. We are organized once again, and ready to send out photos and news on the children. We need many more sponsors to get involved. Some ideas...your son or daughter's school class, an adult or child Sunday school class or program, a family project...these are some of the ways that a child can be sponsored at FHC for \$25.00 per month. Our children with special needs (who are the children on the sponsorship list) have little possibility of being adopted, and their needs are many. The cost of providing for their needs is growing. Child Sponsorship is a way to help financially as well as



getting to know one of our beautiful children who remain at FHC. Send Melinda an e-mail or note for more information. If you have sponsored a child in the past and we have lost contact with you, please get in touch with us.

*Eight-year old Rosa Elena (at left) is one of our sponsored children. She is proudly wearing a recent birthday gift from her sponsors.*



*At right, Veronica, Tatiana and Adriana wait for work to get started on the therapy pool. These three girls are in our Child Sponsorship program.*

**Special thanks to Barclay Bourdeau for designing and setting up our new FHC website. Take a look at it at [www.forhischildren-ecuador.org](http://www.forhischildren-ecuador.org). It's beautiful and informative!**

***Please keep FHC in your prayers:***

1. For the ministry's financial needs as donations have **dropped 40%** in January and February. We're trusting God to keep the ministry going...we're trusting that all of our donors are praying, trusting and donating, too;
2. That the preliminary approval of John and Cindy Snyder's (our former co-directors) adoptions of Michelle and Darwin would proceed smoothly;
3. For other adoptions in process: a local judge has refused to sign a decree enabling 16-month old Mateo to be adopted. The judge says he is "too busy". Ecuadorian law mandates three days to sign the papers, we have been waiting over two months. FHC's lawyer and Melinda made personal appeals; so far the judge has not signed;
4. Please pray for all of the children's health (it's cold season here in Quito); for our employees as we start up a weekly Bible study, for mature Christians who would help; and
5. For adoptive families for our children with special needs (Don't hesitate! Contact us for more information!).

**Thank you for your continued prayers and support of FHC.**

**Clark and Melinda Vaughn, Myriam Canacuan, Directors**

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