

# ***For His Children***

a Christian home for children in Quito, Ecuador

June/July/August, 2003

Greetings to our supporters and friends!



**Tiny two-month old Roberto Martin** (at left), weighing less than 4 lbs., arrived via ambulance on May 6<sup>th</sup>. We wheeled the incubator into his new bedroom and welcomed him to FHC. Two social workers from the government's Maternity Hospital accompanied Roberto, as well as his 15 year old mother and grandmother. The young mother explained that serious family problems and economic difficulties might prevent her from taking care of her son. After several more meetings here at FHC in the following weeks, she made the decision that Roberto be cared for at FHC until he could be adopted.

Roberto now weighs 7+ lbs., and enjoys lots of cuddling and snuggling from everyone at FHC. He receives regular ophthalmological checkups due to his premature birth. The doctor believes Roberto's vision is only slightly impaired. An exam under general anesthesia later this month will give us a clear diagnosis. Meanwhile, Roberto receives Early Infant Stimulation Therapy to encourage his development.

**Maria de los Angeles ("Mary of the Angels")** (at right) arrived June 10, 2003. The Social Worker from the Juvenile Court in the Province of Cotopaxi told us that a baby girl was found by neighbors in the town of Latacunga. The police brought her to the hospital where she was diagnosed with hydrocephalus (excessive fluid in her head) and anencephaly (absence of brain tissue). Melinda made the two hour drive and brought Maria home to FHC.

Our pediatrician, neurologist and a CAT scan confirmed that without intervention, Maria de los Angeles' head size would increase rapidly. Surgery to place a shunt in her head would relieve the accumulation of fluid, keeping her head circumference to a normal size. Surgery was performed at the local government children's hospital. After three days, she was back home at FHC. Her prognosis is very guarded; she is blind and deaf, and her life expectancy will most likely be very short. We will love her and give her FHC's "famous" care and attention, knowing her little life is in God's hands.



**Lina** (at left) was admitted to the hospital in May for surgery to place a feeding tube directly into her stomach. She had spent the last five months with a nasal-gastric feeding tube, while we exhausted every effort to remind 1 ½ year old Lina how to suck from a bottle or eat from a spoon. Lina had a genetic syndrome characterized by microcephaly, slow growth and cerebral palsy. Our pediatrician said the gastrostomy was long overdue, so we scheduled a date for the surgery.

During the surgery, a major vein was damaged and Lina suffered a massive hemorrhage. A thoracic surgeon was called in to repair the vein, but not before Lina experienced numerous cardiac and respiratory arrests. A few days later, she underwent another surgery to correct damage to her intestines (caused by the lack of oxygen due to the hemorrhage). She remained in Intensive Care for three weeks before coming home to FHC. She spent one week in the "Intensive Care Nursery" in the Vaughn's living room, and then moved downstairs to be with her "siblings".

Our caregivers took excellent care of Lina, and all seemed well. On July 17<sup>th</sup>, after battling a week of unexplained intestinal problems, Lina died. At her burial the next day she was surrounded by those who love her: staff, caregivers, volunteers and neighbors.

Lina is now safe and secure with Jesus. We often reflect on what she went through in her short life...she was born in the coastal province of Manabi to a low-income single mother, was left at the hospital when she was a year old, was diagnosed with cerebral palsy; and came to FHC in November of last year. We thank the Lord for the time Lina was with us.



Felipe



Oswaldo



Jose Luis



Miller

**We have children waiting** for families...children with special needs. We think especially of happy and strong one yr. old **Felipe** (featured in our last newsletter), one year old **Oswaldo** with moderate psychomotor delay, and 1 ½ yr. old **Jose Luis**, (with moderate cerebral palsy), and let's not forget handsome 3 yr. old **Miller**, with liquid dark brown eyes and skin to match. Miller has important delays due to a brain injury before birth. These children, (well, all of them, really, but these children ESPECIALLY) fill our days with delight. They are the first to receive our kisses, and we always keep an eye on them to make sure they receive everything they need...but there's one big need that only YOU can fill...a family, a mom and/or a dad.

Our former co-directors, John and Cindy Snyder, were recently in Quito for two months working on the adoption of Michelle. Many prayers were answered when Michelle's adoption was completed, and on August 8, 2003, she entered the United States as a US citizen. The Snyders will return to Quito in a few months to complete Darwin's adoption, who is with them in the States. John and Cindy recently shared with us the following about children with special needs. Let God tug at your heartstrings about responding as He directs.

*"I am the child who cannot talk...you often pity me. I see it in your eyes. You wonder how much I am aware of, I see that as well. I am aware of a lot, whether you are happy or sad or fearful, patient or impatient, full of love... or if you are just doing your duty by me. I marvel at your frustration, knowing mine to be far greater, for I cannot express myself or my needs as you do. You cannot conceive my isolation, so complete it is at times. I do not gift you with clever conversation and cute remarks to be laughed over and repeated. I do not give you responses about my well-being, or comments about the world around me. I do not give you rewards as defined by the world's standards...I may never be able to sing a song. What I give you is so much more valuable...I give you opportunities. Opportunities to discover the depth of your character, the depth of your love, your commitment, your patience, your abilities; the opportunity to explore your own spirit more deeply than you imagine possible...I am the child who cannot talk.*

*I am the child who cannot walk...the world seems to pass me by. You see the longing in my eyes to get out of this chair, to run and play like other children. There is so much we take for granted. I want the toy on the shelf, I need to go to the bathroom, oh, I've dropped my fork again...I am so dependent on you in many ways. Sometimes people appear not to notice me; I always notice them. I feel not so much envy as desire...to stand upright, to put one foot in front of the other, to be independent. My gift to you is to make you more aware of your great fortune, your healthy back and legs, your ability to do for yourself. I give you awareness. I am the child who cannot walk.*

*I am the child who is mentally impaired. I don't learn easily, if you judge me by the world's measuring stick. What I do know is infinite joy in simple things. I am not burdened with the strife and conflicts of a more complicated life. My gift to you is to grant you the freedom to enjoy things as a child, to teach you how much it means to have your arms around me, to give you love. I give you the gift of simplicity. I am the child who is mentally impaired.*

*I am the disabled child. I am your teacher. If you allow me, I will teach you what is really important in life. I will give you and teach you unconditional love. I gift you with my innocent trust, my dependency upon you. I teach you about how precious this life is and about not taking things for granted. I teach you about forgetting your own needs, desires and dreams. I teach you to give. Most of all, I teach you hope and faith. I am the disabled child. Most importantly...I am a child.*

Taken from "I am the child" with permission.



**The therapy pool** looks pretty inviting! Of course it is lacking tile, doors, the overhead skylights, electrical and plumbing fixtures, but we can already imagine it filled and in use. Our contractor has turned over the completion of the project to us so that visiting mission teams and skilled volunteers can help with the finishing touches. For those who are reading about our therapy pool for the first time, construction started in February after several years of planning and fund-raising. It's over 15 sq. meters, has a wheelchair ramp and other special details for our children



with special needs. Adjacent are two bathroom/changing rooms and a pump room. So let us know if you and/or your church, family, etc. want to come and help! We have comfortable lodging to offer you (the original five-bedroom home on the FHC property is being repainted and furnished to house visitors and groups).

Additional funds are needed to complete the therapy pool as the size was increased by almost 30% over the original plans prepared in 2001. In addition, material and labor costs have added to the total so that we need to raise an additional \$15,000 to complete the project. Please keep this need in your prayers.

**We've been blessed this summer** with visits from three children who were adopted from FHC a few years ago. First we welcomed **Juan** (at right), formerly "Rommel Paul", and his mom, Janet Espinosa. Juan is almost three years old and lives with his parents in Madrid, Spain. Mother and son traveled to visit her family in Quito, while dad, Juan Carlos, stayed at home because of work. Juan is more handsome than ever, adores his parents as well as all his aunts, uncles and cousins here in Quito!



In mid-July, Bettina and Lars Nielsen traveled all the way from Denmark with their son, **Tobias** (at left), formerly "James". The Harder/Nielsen family is adopting a second son in Guayaquil. They stopped over in Quito for a few days to visit us at FHC. Tobias turns three this month, is healthy, active, alert, and a joy to his parents and grandparents, who also accompanied Bettina and Lars to Ecuador.

On July 20<sup>th</sup>, Peter and Marie Lindne (at right) visited us from Sweden, with their three children, Carlos, Lucas and **Emilia**. Pretty six year old Emilia was cared for at FHC when she was a baby, as well as receiving the love of two foster moms, FHC volunteer

Jody Cotton-Chelle, and the Aguilar family. Emilia was adopted by the Lindne family five years ago. Emilia is smart and quick to learn any new skill that her brothers learn! Peter and Marie were missionaries with the Covenant Church in Ecuador for several years. They were very happy to return to Ecuador for a visit after five years.



Our warmest congratulations to these three families, and our sincere thanks for taking time to visit us at FHC. It is a great encouragement to see how well these children are growing and developing. Please pray with us for God's abundant blessings for them.



**The Vineyard Christian Fellowship** from Red Bluff, California (at left) sent us a very special team to help us fix up the FHC group home. They built a bunk bed, painted, cleaned and made lots of repairs so that we can provide onsite lodging for guests, volunteers and mission teams in the future. We kept them busy with lots of tasks, but most important was feeding, holding, and loving the children. And since "babies are our business", it was a great blessing to have a pediatrician in the group. She was kept very busy since our (Ecuadorian) pediatrician was on vacation.

The Vineyard Christian Fellowship prints and mails our newsletters about four to six times a year. We are thankful for their support, friendship and commitment to FHC. We look forward to their next trip and spending more time developing our relationship with them. Their visits are always a time of real encouragement and growth for the entire FHC staff.

**A quick financial update:** our level of financial support is still down 25%. At a recent FHC Board meeting in California in June, a budget was adopted to reflect this decrease in support. Here in Quito, we continue to look for creative ways to cut costs without decreasing the quality of care. We examine the way we do things, the type of care the children receive, their needs and how we can better meet them, etc., so we can optimize the financial support we receive and improve the quality of care and attention. Thank you to all for your prayers and financial support.

#### **To remember in prayer:**

- Give thanks for good health for the children and our staff during this season of cold, windy, dry weather;
- We are grateful to God for answering prayer for our financial needs through the responses of our supporters. Thank you;
- We appreciate the love and support given to us during Lina's illness and death; and
- We are thankful for Clark's safe, productive and relaxing trip to the States in June for the FHC board meeting, and Melinda's family who so generously gave her much needed R & R in California and New Mexico in early August.

#### **Please join us in praying for:**

- The ups and downs of cross-cultural personnel development and management at FHC;
- Continued financial support;
- Funds and work groups needed to complete the therapy pool; and
- God to minister daily to the precious babies and children here at FHC. Sometimes we can't believe it when we think about the reality of why these precious lives are with us, and it breaks our hearts. Yet we know God is all-powerful, all-knowing, and all-caring. He holds them in His hands and loves them more than we will ever know.

#### **Thank you for your continued prayers and support,**

#### **Clark and Melinda Vaughn**

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#### **Tax-deductible donations may be sent to:**

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*Our sincere thanks to The Vineyard Christian Fellowship in Red Bluff, California, for printing and mailing this newsletter.*