

**Greetings to our supporters and friends!** Here we go with the top ten news stories at FHC...plus this year's official FHC holiday photos. So as to not waste any space, let's get started!



**Three-month old José** arrived in mid-October after we received a phone call from the hospital social worker. José had severe jaundice in the weeks following his birth at home in Tena in the Amazon lowlands. The chemical associated with jaundice, bilirubin, had saturated the brain tissue, causing irreversible damage (kernicterus). José's eyes were almost a fluorescent yellow when Melinda met him on the fourth floor of the children's hospital. José then went with Melinda across town to our pediatrician's office. Dr. Naranjo said it is rare to see a child affected with kernicterus, even in a developing country. Had Jose family sought medical attention immediately after birth, he may have recovered with no serious consequences. We have been unable to locate the birth family; we thought we had an abundance of information, but our efforts have been unsuccessful. The damage to his brain is severe, and our neurologist prescribed medication to control seizures. His hearing is affected; but he does respond visually. In early

November, he had two bouts of pneumonia, but with the competent and professional care of our *tías* ("aunties") at FHC, he is recovering well. Our caregivers monitor his oxygen levels, take his temperature, feed him slowly and patiently, they administer respiratory therapy and in between all these tasks, they fit in lots of cuddling and affection. We know José senses that love in his spirit. Please keep him in your prayers.

**In early October**, Ron and Glenda Allan, Directors of The Ark Children's Home in Riobamba, contacted us to receive tiny six month old Esteban as he needed specialized medical attention and care. With Sarah and her husband, Jeremy, leaving for Canada, (Sarah was the supervisor of the infants at The Ark) the Allans asked that Esteban be transferred to FHC, where he spent five days in FHC's Intensive Care Unit (Clark and Melinda's living room). We learned how to care for him and his very special needs: a respiratory infection, a heart condition typical of children with Down's syndrome, and a colostomy. Faced with these delicate medical conditions, we rolled up our sleeves and gave Esteban our best. We were shocked when our caregiver woke us at 5 am just five days after Esteban was welcomed at FHC, to tell us that he had stopped breathing. CPR was unsuccessful; later, our pediatrician said the stress on Esteban's heart was most likely the cause of his death. Just a few days earlier, the cardiologist said the problem was much more serious than originally diagnosed. Later, there were phone calls and paperwork, and then a trip downtown to the National Funeral Society to get a casket...it was a busy morning. Melinda carefully and gently prepared Esteban for burial, and we said our goodbyes.



Our caregivers were devastated...Melinda had handpicked several of our most responsible women to take turns caring for Esteban. When a baby dies on their shift, it's easy for them to think they did something wrong, despite all of our reassurances to the contrary. A few days after Esteban died, Sarah Allan (in photo above with Esteban) called to share a vision she had about Esteban.

She asked that we share it with our caregivers, hoping that they would feel comforted by it during this difficult time. Sarah saw (in her mind) a parent/child relationship...*when a parent leaves their child with the babysitter, they sometimes come home to find the baby fussy, irritable, and inconsolable because he is in the arms of a stranger. When Esteban passed from his last moment of life through death, to heaven, Sarah saw God gently taking Esteban from our caregivers' arms. Esteban immediately was comforted and at peace. Speaking as Esteban's Father, God seemed to be saying to the caregivers, "Thank you so much... I'll take care of Esteban now."* Sarah's vision was of immense comfort to our ladies. Marcia, (who was caring for Esteban when he died), asked for a copy as a memory of this sweet tiny baby boy, and also as a reminder that God is always with her while she works at FHC.



**We had a lovely visit with Nataly** and her family in mid-October (at left). Nataly joined Fausto, Susana and their son about three years ago. At right is Lesley Vaughn, 15, in May 1999, when Nataly arrived at FHC from the Maternity Hospital. Nataly is now four, very intelligent and beautiful. It was very special for us when Susana called and asked if they could come and visit so Nataly could renew her relationship



with all of us at FHC. Adoption is not always discussed openly in Ecuador, and many parents hide the fact that their son or daughter was adopted. When Susana shared with us how she tells Nataly about her “first family” at FHC, it was especially meaningful and encouraging to us, and we are very pleased for Nataly that her parents are open and honest with her. Our caregivers were thrilled to see Nataly; several of them cared exclusively for Nataly during the nine months she was with us. We pray God’s blessings on this beautiful family.

**Two-month old Verónica Cristina** (at right) was transferred from a children’s home in Ambato in October when she was diagnosed with “erosive esophageal hemorrhage”, a scary name, but treatable with medication. Cristina weighs 8 lbs., has wavy black hair and black eyes. Cristina was born to an adolescent mother who was unable to care for her. While she is receiving medical attention and care at FHC, her case will be reviewed by the courts for the possibility of adoption. In advance, we thank you for your prayers for improvement in Verónica Cristina’s health and for her future.



**The police usually show up**

unannounced, and so it was on November 12<sup>th</sup> when three officers, two Indian women and an 8 day old baby drove in the gate. The story: a 17 year old mother had frequented the local open market during the past few days, asking if anyone would take her baby. The young mother said her family threatened to disinherit her if she kept the baby, and the baby’s father couldn’t be located. María Dolores, one of the Indian women, took the baby. Vendors in the marketplace called the police, and soon the woman and baby “Luis” (at left) were explaining the story to us at FHC.

María Dolores is 21 and said she desperately wanted to have a baby. She cried when we told her that that it would not be possible for her to take Luis home. The police explained that Luis had to stay at FHC until investigations could be carried out and the courts decided Luis’ future. María Dolores returned later in the day with a paper identifying baby Luis’ mother’s name and date of birth. The next day, the baby’s grandfather heard what had happened, found María Dolores in the marketplace, and María took him to FHC. Carlos, the grandfather, says he and his wife want to take care of Luis, they are baffled by their daughter’s behavior, and said they never threatened to disinherit their daughter. Carlos has visited and/or called daily. On November 17<sup>th</sup>, he brought his wife and daughter to Quito (the family lives in the province of Chimborazo). We felt sufficiently assured that Luis will be well cared for by the family. Tonight, Luis is reunited with his birth family, and we are very happy for all of them. Your prayers are appreciated as this new family starts life together with little Luis.

**Klever has a family!** David, Beth and Noah Brinkley, of Georgia, USA, spent four weeks in Quito while adopting 2 year old Klever. The Brinkleys fell in love with their new son a year ago while on a church mission trip to Ecuador. (David’s parents, Tom and Shirley Brinkley, are missionaries in Ecuador and volunteers with FHC.) Klever was officially matched

up with Beth and David on July 2, 2003. Then followed three months of unexpected delays, until finally, in mid-October, they received word that they could travel to Quito to begin the adoption.

David is a youth pastor and Beth is now a more-than-full-time mom to 4 year old Noah and Klever. When the new and improved Brinkley family (in photo at right) flew home to the U.S. on November 15<sup>th</sup>, we sent them off with our prayers and blessings. Congratulations to this beautiful new family!



**From Melinda:** As if I don't already have enough to do...I'm planning and executing (along with two other directors) a year-long pilot project for directors, social workers, psychologists, and caregivers, as well as for the doctors, lawyers and therapists that work in children's homes. FHC, St. Vincent of Paul Children's Home and the Swedish Society for Child Welfare decided to plan and promote the course. We selected six children's homes in Quito to participate in the workshops to improve the quality of care offered in our homes. We will cover such areas as legal, medical, psychological, and administrative-



management. We have all made a commitment to attend the monthly meetings and occasional weekend retreats which are designed to help and encourage those involved in working with children at risk, and to update our knowledge in a variety of areas concerned with the management of a home. In the photo above-left, (I'm at the far right, front row), are directors, psychologists and social workers at our meeting on November 14<sup>th</sup>. We discussed the procedures involved when a case referral is made to our homes, our information gathering methods, the importance of recording as much data as possible, and standardizing the admittance form so that all our homes are recording detailed information. We also talked about the importance of the initial interview, taking a look at the environment, our attitudes, verbal and body language, etc. when conducting an interview. We dramatized and then evaluated two interviews, one involving an Indian woman with a baby, and the other involving a 12 year old victim of sexual abuse. We are learning a lot! Please pray for all involved in these workshops!



**We proudly present our FHC holiday photos!** With 29 children being cared for at FHC, the logistics of organizing a group photo would be overwhelming. We decided to take individual photos: of the five gorgeous girls in the "Faith House" (at left), the beautiful babies in the "Vaughn House", and the loveable toddlers in the "Snyder House". **Happy holidays to you and your family!**

At left our older children of the Faith Home: our caregivers Norma and Clara, with (l-r) Adriana, Alexandra, Rosita (back row), Tatiana and Verónica; all are nine years old.

At right, the little ones of the Vaughn Home: back row, caregivers Nancy, Alicia, Monica and Adriana, holding Cristina, Nataly, José Luis\*, Paúl, Abraham, and María de los Angeles. On the sofa are: Daniel, Sandra, Roberto, Oswaldo\* and Felipe\*. The \* means they are looking for a family!! One child Jose is missing from the photo as he was on oxygen and couldn't be moved easily. (Just in case you were counting!)



At left, the Snyder Home toddlers with our administrative staff, back row: Clark with Samira, Verónica, our secretary and office manager, with Dayana and Myriam, Myriam, our social worker and co-director, with Jonathan, Patricia, our psychologist, with Miller, and Melinda, with Alexander. Front row: Alicia, Cristina, Mateo, Sylvia, David and Cristian.

**Thank you** for caring, for reading our newsletters, for remembering FHC in your prayers, for your financial support, and thank you to all who have taken time to visit and spend time at FHC. We're encouraged by what God is doing through *you* in this ministry to His children.

Sincerely,

Clark and Melinda Vaughn  
*Directors*

**For His Children**

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