

For His Children

a Christian home for children in Quito, Ecuador

January/February, 2004

Greetings! We start off this first newsletter of 2004 with a short but very important message from OSWALDO, FELIPE and JOSÉ LUIS: "We're waiting...kind of impatiently...for families! All three of us are ready to leave FHC; our papers are in order. We chose our very best photos for this front page opening story which we hope will touch the hearts of some special families." Please help these three beautiful boys find forever families by spreading the word among relatives, neighbors and friends who might be interested in the life-changing experience that is adoption. Contact FHC for more details.



Oswaldo (at left in photo) is 18 months old, and you can tell there is a charming personality behind his tender smile. He is developing at his own pace (9-10 month level overall) due to slow brain growth. He is making progress thanks to his rigorous physical therapy program and the love and affection from our FHC caregivers. A perfect family for Oswaldo would be one that is willing to help him reach his potential whatever that might be. Surgery in March will correct his divergent right eye.

Felipe, 18 months old, (at right in photo), is affectionate and tranquil. He has surprised us with his increasing degree of mobility and control of his hips and legs. He can do the "combat crawl" at a good speed, and is crawling, too. He is sociable, observant, eager to please, and has shown us his best adaptation skills as he recently "graduated" from the Vaughn Baby Home to the Snyder Toddler Home at FHC. Born with myelomeningocele (a spinal cord anomaly), Felipe will need

some assistance (walker or braces) to help him get around. We're increasing his therapy and daily stimulation to help him do his best. A recent exam showed some seizure activity, which is controlled with medication. Felipe is waiting to show an interested family all he is capable of and all the love he has to share!

José Luis is 26 months old, (center in photo above) and smiles beguilingly at you, especially if you happen to wear glasses, too! José gets around by rolling his way toward his goal, using the combat crawl more and more these days. He can sit when placed in the position, and can easily move into a prone position when he wants. He is learning to hold the spoon while he eats and to drink from a cup. He'll babble with you when you show him you're truly interested! His overall development is at a 10 month old level due to asphyxia at birth. José is making slow but steady progress (he is diagnosed with moderate cerebral palsy) and is ready to give all the warmth and affection that he has for *his* special family...out there somewhere!

Departures and arrivals often coincide at FHC: on December 10th, handsome twin newborn boys arrived. Mauricio and Alejandro (in photo at right in the arms of Melinda) are the sons of an adolescent mother from another province who already has two children. Without family support, she could not take on the added responsibility of caring for two more, as well as continuing to work to support herself and her family. When another children's program in Quito was unable to receive the babies, they referred the case to FHC. Both boys are growing and developing well, having already graduated to separate cribs when they outgrew sleeping together width-wise in one crib!



Just a few days earlier, on December 8th, we were prepared-but-not-ready for the death of four month old José Melo. In a previous newsletter we shared that José experienced a blood disorder within days of his birth, resulting in very high levels of jaundice which permanently affected his brain and development. As is common with children suffering from severe neurological impairment, respiratory illnesses are life-threatening. When a second case of pneumonia proved to be too difficult to treat at home at FHC, he was hospitalized at the government children's hospital. Our caregivers were with him 'round the clock for two weeks in the Intensive Care Unit. When he had to be assisted mechanically with his breathing, we were very sobered, but didn't lose hope that he might

recover and come home again. On the evening of Dec. 8th, the hospital and our caregiver called to say that he had suffered cardiac arrest and did not recover. His tender spirit touched us all deeply, and we find ourselves thinking of him long after his burial.



4-month old José Melo.

We were surprised when we received a phone call in early February from the children's hospital: the social worker was meeting with a nun who lives and works in the Amazon-lowland village where José's family lives. It seems his mother had a recurring bout with a severe mental illness following José's birth, and when José was diagnosed with life-threatening kernicterus, the family decided that leaving the baby at the hospital was the "best" thing to do because of their difficult financial situation. Admitting the mother into the overcrowded public psychiatric hospital in Quito proved impossible. The discouraged family returned to their rural province to seek help locally. As José's mother recovered, she began to ask about her baby. The nun agreed to check with the hospital on her next trip to Quito...and that led her to visit us at FHC. We explained to her the story of how José came to be at FHC, his health, and finally his hospitalization. We were able to offer small but important memories of José for the nun to take back to his family...foot and handprints taken the day he arrived at FHC, a lock of hair, photos, the ID card from his hospital bed, a crocheted cap made by an American volunteer at the hospital, and of course a copy of his medical record and death certificate. The nun was even able to converse with several of FHC's caregivers who spent many, many hours with José before he died. A poignant story...but the circle seems complete now that we know someone in his family was thinking about him and asked about him...and we could tell his story.

Christmas is always a busy season at FHC. In addition to welcoming the Vaughn children, Phillip and Lesley, (at center in photo at right) home from college for Christmas vacation, we also welcomed Daniela Terán, Phillip's long-time girlfriend, as she visited her family in Quito, and Lesley's boyfriend and college classmate, Chris Chirone. We traveled to the coast and to the Amazon-lowlands, and had a great visit with them all. Meanwhile, the Christmas parties at FHC were taking place at a fast pace, including a neighborhood children's caroling party, and a few days later, a



visit to FHC from the U.S. Ambassador to Ecuador, Mrs. Kristie Kinney (at center with baby in photo at left). She accompanied a group of U.S. Marines stationed in Quito at the Embassy, who made FHC the recipient of the Toys for Tots program for Christmas 2003. In addition, we received checks from several of our faithful supporters which enabled us to decorate all three homes and celebrate a warm and hope-filled holiday with all our 30 children at FHC. Thank you!



Thank you to all who gave so generously in 2003! Our bookkeepers, Brent and Joyce Bourdeau of Divide, Colorado, (please thank the Lord for them in your prayers...as we do every day!) send us a monthly accounting of the donations received as well as the notes and cards many of you send to us. Your generosity and support is amazing, it is awe-inspiring, it is the fuel of this ministry, and we are very, very grateful. Thank you also to those who are participating in our Child Sponsorship Program. We are encouraged by its growth over the past six months. Your involvement in this program means that every child admitted to FHC will have a caring friend while they are cared for at FHC. Join up! New sponsors are so welcome! Contact Shirley Brinkley, our (volunteer) Child Sponsorship Program Coordinator at tsb@forhischildren-ecuador.org, or Melinda Vaughn at Melinda@forhischildren-ecuador.org. Thank you!

Gardeners surely know that pruning is necessary for increased growth. A FHC board member shared this thought with us during a recent visit...that pruning is painful, but is followed by a time of growth and improvement. This describes the

events of late December when we sadly ended our 6 ½ year relationship with Myriam Canacúan, our Social Worker. Her involvement and work quality began to decline early last year, and despite numerous conversations and evaluations, we were at a loss as to how to continue to motivate and encourage her. The events leading up to this very painful decision still puzzles and disappoints us, as we saw in Myriam the future of Ecuadorian national leadership at FHC. So until a new social worker is hired, we are all scrambling to cover all the responsibilities.

As a result, our schedules are too busy. We appreciate the support and encouragement that our staff at FHC has been. Verónica, our secretary, and Patricia, our psychologist, (at right with 2 ½ year old Christian) and our 26 caregivers have worked above and beyond the call to help keep things running as smoothly as possible. Amidst the stresses of banking problems in December and January, water delivery problems which necessitated ordering tanker trucks to fill our water cistern, and last but not least a sewer blockage last week, we credit your prayers and God's grace for enabling us to somewhat keep our "cool" during these stressful months.



The first arrival of 2004 is

Soraya, named after the neonatologist at the government maternity hospital who placed her in Melinda's arms on January 28th. Born on January 10th with low birth weight, Soraya has exceeded our expectations and is gaining weight and growing. She loves to be cuddled, and is enjoying her certain to be short-lived status as the youngest and newest member of the FHC family. Her adolescent mother expressed doubts about her desire to be a mother, and left the hospital without her baby daughter a few days after giving birth. We know God's plan for Soraya is perfect, and that He is blessing her and watching over her even in these very, very difficult circumstances. Please pray with us for this beautiful baby girl who has a special future ahead of her.

In January, five families were "born", when the Ministry of Social Welfare held the first Family Assignment Committee meeting in six months. During this time, the government restructured the Juvenile Courts, the adoption program, and the new National Council for Children and Youth, among other tasks mandated by the new 2003 Children's and Adolescent's Code. While this was going on, adoptions came to a halt. Extremely frustrated were waiting families and children, and the directors of

children's programs nationwide who had to wait with overcrowded nurseries and homes while the wheels of bureaucracy turned very slowly. Finally, in January, several of FHC's children were blessed with families: Emily, 1 ½, to be adopted by her loving American foster family residing in Quito; Darwin, 4 ½, to be adopted by John and Cindy Snyder; Mateo, 3, who has now joined his new Dad here in Quito; Samira, 18 mos., who will meet her new Mom from Spain in the next month or two; and María Cristina, 2 ½, who will be ecstatically welcomed in the next few months by her new parents from Italy. Congratulations to all, and our prayers of thanksgiving go up to God for His hand in creating these beautiful new families.

It was two years in the planning, one year in building, and it's finally completed ...our new therapy and recreational pool at FHC. Alexander (2 ½), was the first child to step foot in its 95+ degree water, and within minutes he had learned how to say "pool" and "splash" in English! We're beginning to organize all the details, such as pool safety, special therapeutic programs, recreational usage, etc. Meanwhile, within days of being filled, over half of the children have enjoyed the pool (as well as a couple of tired and overworked Directors!). The pool and all the benefit and enjoyment it will give to so many children are the result of the prayers, financial donations and hard work of FHC's supporters. Thank you from all of us who are enjoying it now, and those who will enjoy it in the future.





Visiting groups from churches in the U.S. blessed FHC in January: **Church on the Mountain** of Crowley Lake, California, the Vaughn's home church (photo at left), led by FHC Board member Dean Rosnau, and included Pastor Eric Stovesand and family, and **Stanwood Community Church** of Stanwood, Ohio, and **Mt. Eaton Church** of Mt. Eaton, Ohio, (in photo below), led by Craig Hewitt, sent

hardworking, highly skilled and encouraging friends who worked diligently during their 10 day visits to finish the construction of the therapy pool, bathrooms and mechanical room. Tile was set, walls were painted, electrical systems were installed and sidewalks were poured. Then within a few days, Clark was able to fill the pool and checked the heating and filtering systems and pumps. Thanks to all who were a part of these two teams and to those who supported them from home in the U.S. Life at FHC is richer and stronger for the love and encouragement brought by these team members. May God bless them all for their generous gift of time, energy, finances and love.



Join us in giving thanks for His blessings, and in prayer for:

- **families for Oswaldo, Felipe and José Luis!**
- **hiring a new social worker as interviews start in late-February;**
- **for wisdom, strength and health for Clark and Melinda as they balance the needs of the ministry.**

Happy New Year!

Sincerely,

Clark and Melinda Vaughn
Directors

For His Children

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