

We hope our summer newsletter finds everyone enjoying some restful and fun vacation. Just two months have passed since our last newsletter, and they were busy ones:



We have a social worker! After six months of searching, interviewing and waiting, we finally welcomed Cecilia Salinas to our administrative staff at FHC (in photo at left with one of her favorites, Gabriel). Cecilia worked several years in the Maternity Hospital, and four years with Holt International Children's Services in Quito. She brings years of knowledge and insight to her job, and she has been a great help with her mature opinions and ability to calmly handle the most frustrating of circumstances. Cecilia is mom to two teenagers. She really enjoys her new job, even with a long commute (two hours by bus each way). She works four ten-hour days at FHC which allows her to take three-day weekends. Please keep Cecilia in your prayers as she assumes a job with great responsibility at FHC.

Lots of new arrivals (nine!) were welcomed at FHC since our last newsletter. This unprecedented number of new children admitted to FHC means we have exceeded our maximum capacity; tiny 3-lb. Patricia brought our current total of children to 43. We find it very difficult to say "no" when the Maternity Hospital calls with the case of a newborn needing a home. All of our new arrivals are beautiful, as you can see in the photo below (from left to right) **Patricia, Galo, Celeste, Estefanía, Dennis, Jonathan, Mario, Ana Barbara and Samuel.**

Celeste, Estefanía, Dennis, Jonathan, Mario, Ana Barbara and Samuel.

Galo and Mario (both arrived at FHC on May 19th) and **Estefanía** (arrived June 29th) were sent to FHC from the Juvenile Court in Latacunga.

Mario's history has very few pieces to the puzzle: his mother was indigent and unable to care for her son. After giving birth on May 9, she left him in the hospital. When he arrived at FHC, he spent almost a month in FHC's

"Intensive Care Unit" (Clark and Melinda's living room) because he weighed four pounds and needed some extra love and attention. **Galo** was found on the doorstep of a home in a residential neighborhood in Latacunga on May 15, as was lovely **Estefanía**, on June 13; a witness believes her mother was a high school or college student.



Samuel arrived on June 29th from the government children's hospital. Samuel was found on the street and was estimated to be three days old. He was taken to the hospital by the police. A couple of days later, FHC was called to welcome him. He is handsome, healthy, and has made a place for himself at the Vaughn Infant Home (which means when Samuel is not happy, we hear about it!). **Dennis** (born January 13) was brought by the police on a Friday evening in early July, when his mother was charged with being under the effects of alcohol in a public place. Both parents visit frequently and we hope

Dennis will be reunited with them in mid-September. **Ana Barbara** (born February 18) was welcomed at FHC after almost five months in the government children's hospital. Ana Barbara was found by a woman passenger under the back seat of a provincial bus headed to Quito. The bus driver accused the woman of being the baby's mother and that she was trying to abandon the 2 lb. baby girl. Stunned, the "good Samaritan" was forced to get off the bus. She made her way to a local hospital where immediate care was given. She was then transferred to the children's hospital where neonatologists and nurses worked to bring this tiny, almost unrecognizable human life from near death to an amazing 5.95 lbs. when she was discharged to FHC on July 21. Barbara now weighs over 8 lbs! **Celeste** (born June 9, approximately) was found abandoned in the northern province of Tulcan, near the Colombian border. She was transferred to Quito in an ambulance, where she spent almost 40 days in the hospital, and was discharged to FHC on July 30. Celeste is diagnosed with Larsen Syndrome, which is characterized by multiple dislocations of the joints (knees and hips). Intelligence is usually normal. Doctors are concerned, however, about possible neurological problems caused by asphyxia shortly after birth. She will need heart surgery later in September. Please keep Celeste in your prayers for a full and speedy recovery. A nearby government hospital sent a tiny premature (31 weeks) baby girl to FHC in early August, **Dorothy Patricia**. Patricia's mother went into premature labor on the street after a confrontation with her boyfriend. Mother and child were taken to the hospital in an ambulance. Patricia spent 39 days in the ICU before being able to adapt to life outside the infant warmer. She weighed 3 1/3 lbs. the day she arrived at FHC, August 6. She received one-on-one care from Melinda upstairs in the "FHC ICU", and is now doing well. **Jonathan's** story began on July 10, when he was about two days old and was found in a church in a community about an hour from Quito. An employee found the baby, called the priest and called the police. On the way into Quito, the police took the tiny baby boy to a nearby pediatrician, who pronounced Jonathan tiny, but healthy. Within a couple of hours, Jonathan was welcomed at FHC, on July 15. He had a shaky start to his young life, but he is now doing well and gaining weight.



In a recent newsletter, we shared the story of 1 1/2 year old **Esteban Rubén** (in photo at left with his parents), whose young parents were detained by authorities. We worked hard to set up counseling sessions, visits, etc. We had agreed on approximately a four month stay at FHC for Rubén, while his family organized a place to live and found permanent jobs. On a Friday night in late July, we were shocked to have the parents present us with a court order to release the child. The court never called or communicated with FHC; no doubt the judge was responding to pressure from the parents. Without knowing any of the details of the case, the Judge ordered the child to be returned to his parents. We are in favor of family reunification, but we have seen many efforts fail. Without proper counseling and supervision, we were very concerned for Esteban's welfare. We explained to Esteban what was going to happen... and handed him to his parents. This scenario of Courts and Judges failing

to consult with the parties involved in child welfare cases and making very unilateral decisions is common throughout the country. Because we care for children who are "abandoned", it doesn't happen often at FHC, but when it does, it's very difficult. We wish Esteban and his parents the very best in the future. (And yes, we are planning to talk with the judge!)

Adriana, (in photo at right), 10 years old, came out of a second orthopedic surgery in top shape in early July. Her medical history includes osteomyelitis, which caused the bones of her lower right leg to deteriorate. A visiting pediatric orthopedic surgeon from Minnesota, U.S.A, Dr. James Gage, performed a miracle on Adriana's leg several years ago, which enabled her to walk for the first time. In July 2004, he performed an operation to slow down the growth of her other leg, so that both legs will be almost the same length when she is a teenager. We are very grateful for Dr. Gage's expertise and interest in Adriana and several other children at FHC with difficult orthopedic problems. Adriana is now out of her fiberglass cast and walking again!





We welcomed three groups from the U.S. in July. A joint team of members of the **Charles Street African Methodist Episcopal Church in Boston**, and the **Wellesley Village Church in Wellesley, MA**, blessed us incredibly. The team members helped take care of the babies and children at FHC, they participated in an outreach to the city

sanitary landfill, poured a concrete parking pad at FHC, and spent four days in an indigenous village high in the Andes in the province of Chimborazo, where they painted a village church, supervised activities for the children, and had a great time relating to the locals (in photo above, which includes members of the church in Miraflores, Chimborazo). It is great to watch relationships develop among two very different cultures. A visit to an indigenous community in the mountains of Ecuador is a unique experience, and all agreed that this was no exception!

A team from the **Vineyard Christian Fellowship of Red Bluff, California**, (at right) also visited FHC in July. This energetic and detail-oriented group of friends painted the inside of the Group House (where the teams stay when they visit FHC), poured a cement sidewalk, tiled a bedroom floor, held babies, participated with therapy and playtime in the pool, and even fit in an overnight trip to visit the Verbo Church's Medical Clinic in Cuenca. (VCF Red Bluff also generously prints and mails out our FHC newsletters six times a year!)



Thank you to these two hardworking and supportive groups who came to spend time at FHC. You left us stronger, encouraged and more beautiful than when you arrived!

In late July, **Sierra Bible Church of Sonora, California**, stopped by for a couple of days and blessed us with a party for the children, complete with clowns and balloons. They delivered two big gift bags to each child filled with new clothes, shoes, toys, blankets, etc. from church members. Thanks to their amazing organizational skills, and willingness to travel to Quito overloaded with suitcases, our babies and children are the best dressed kids in town, with new, fuzzy warm blankets! A visitor from the U.S. recently remarked, "Wow, I expected to see the children at FHC wearing worn out and old clothing...your kids are better dressed than children in the States!" We agree. They are. They look beautiful, as they should. Thank you, Sierra Bible Church and to all who bring us donations of clothing, toys and blankets.



What's new with our project to open a children's home in Latacunga? In our last newsletter, we shared the plans to expand FHC's programs to the city of Latacunga, two hours south of Quito. Some questions we have been asked are: "**Why Latacunga?**" We believe God has shown us His will to open a home in Latacunga, a tranquil city of 50,000, (photo at left) where there exist no programs to care and protect babies and very young children at risk. The need is great. Already this year, FHC alone has received six

children abandoned in Latacunga's province of Cotopaxi. Since we have passed our ideal maximum number of children cared for at FHC, by being able to care for children *from* Latacunga *in* Latacunga, it will reduce the number of children cared for in Quito, thereby opening up space for additional children. **"Why not expand FHC-Quito?"** While the demand for FHC's care is high and the number of children currently at FHC is unprecedented, we do not plan to significantly increase the size of FHC in Quito in the near future as we believe we might lose the personal touch and individualized attention that has been a unique part of FHC's care. The increasing number of children needing care and protection in the province of Cotopaxi means that there is a great need to work toward *child abuse/abandonment prevention, family reunification, and supporting families at risk*. This can only be done in the geographical area where the need exists. The population of Cotopaxi province is one of the most underserved and poverty-affected people in Ecuador.

"What needs to be done to start the new program?" 1) Following the direction of our FHC Board of Directors, we have started training administrative staff for the new home. We have been working with two bright young professionals, a child psychologist and a social worker, who have spent time at FHC-Quito and already are helping with several cases in Latacunga. 2) We have discussed the project with Juvenile Court authorities in Latacunga, and they have indicated their support of the home and have offered their help in any way possible. 3) We have found a four bedroom home (in photo at left) just a few miles south of Latacunga. Its huge playroom, office space, two living rooms and $\frac{3}{4}$ acre of land seem to make it the best option to rent for the first year or two of the program. We would need to have sufficient funds collected to sign a lease, and then we would start equipping and furnishing the home. We estimate the operating costs for a home for 10 to 15 children during the first year to be approximately \$50,000. Our initial efforts at fundraising for this new home have already brought in \$15,000.



"How can we help?" We are asking for prayer for this new expansion of FHC's ministry. Prayer will supply the wisdom, energy, strength and provision for the needs of the new program. And we are asking our supporters to make a commitment in addition to their usual giving to support this new outreach. We sense that the home will be opened before the end of the year, and we are really excited about it! We are excited also about how God is touching the hearts of friends to give above and beyond their normal support, so that we are now 1/3 of the way toward raising the money to fund the program for the first year. **Please prayerfully consider how you can help with this new outreach, and contact us.** We appreciate your continued prayer and support. Thank you!

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY, FHC! 2004 has brought some pretty amazing growth and new plans for the ministry. We're blessed by your support, because without it, this ministry wouldn't exist. Thank you from all of us, for **14 years** of faithful giving to minister to His children in Ecuador. Yes, in early August 2004, we celebrated 14 years in Ecuador. We (Clark and Melinda), and our children, Phillip and Lesley, moved from Mammoth Lakes, CA in 1990, and started caring for children as a foster family. We now estimate that about 400 children have been blessed by FHC's care since 1990. Most are adopted in Ecuador, Europe and the U.S. A handful is still with us (Alexandra, Veronica, and Rosita), a small percentage was reunited with their birth families, and a small number are with the Lord. It's a pretty neat story when we stop and take a look back at how it all started...and we're very sure it's going to be an amazing story to look back on in 14 more years! *Thank you for being such an important part of this ministry.*

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