



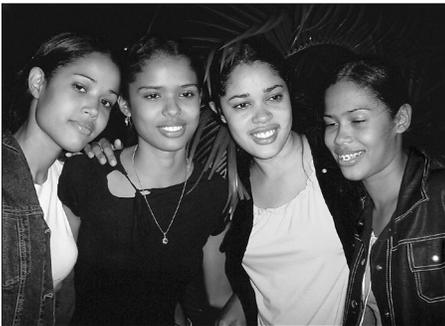
QUIE PASA

WHAT'S HAPPENING

A Publication of International Children's Care
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Lost Sheep



The Paulino Sisters (from left to right)
Anyelina, Leidy, Luz and Yanelis

Miracles never cease to amaze us at ICC. The story of the Paulino sisters; Luz, Anyelina, Yanelis, and Leidy is a modern retelling of Jesus' parable of the lost sheep. What was written so long ago is still true today.

This story begins 19 years ago when the Paulinos, a family of six, lost their mother. Mrs. Paulino died when her youngest daughter was only one-and-a-half years old. This daughter was adopted. The remaining sisters stayed with their father but, being alcoholic, he could not care for his remaining family. Mrs. Fleck's letter will relate how, with God's help, the remaining three sisters made their way to ICC.

The details of this story are very extensive and due to space requirements it has been neces-

sary to create a "Reader's Digest" condensed version.

The oldest Paulino daughter, Luz, has recently been working with her aunt and a therapist to heal her emotional scars and to try and remember details from her past, including those of her youngest sister. Luz has not known anything of her youngest sister for almost 19 years. All previous efforts to find her sister were in vain since she had been told the girl had moved to the United States. The therapist encouraged Luz and her aunt to pray and ask God to reveal her whereabouts. Over the years Luz's aunt had prayed that God would protect the youngest daughter.

Joeli, our development worker in the Dominican Republic, has a friend who helps her look after her children. This friend normally goes to visit her daughter Leidy in the capital, but one week recently, Leidy came to visit her. When it was time for Leidy to return home, Joeli's friend asked Joeli to help Leidy get to the bus stop because Leidy was not familiar with the area. On the way to the bus stop Elsa, one of our girls from Las Palmas (also catching a ride with Joeli) mistook Leidy for Anyelina, Luz's sister. Only then did Joeli notice that Leidy and Anyelina looked surprisingly alike.

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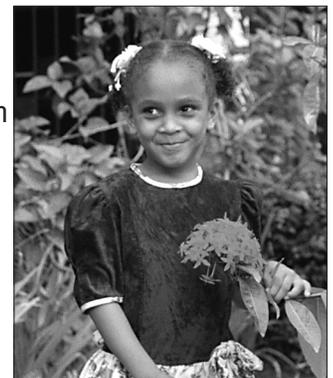
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Sponsorship Department



Lost Sheep continued

The next day when Leidy's mother came to work, Joeli questioned her about Leidy. During this conversation, Joeli found that Leidy was adopted and the details of the adoption were extraordinarily similar to the events surrounding the adoption of the youngest Paulino sister. Joeli then contacted the administrator of Las Palmas and arranged a meeting between Luz and Leidy's mother to compare details and find out if in fact this was Luz's lost sister. Luz met with Leidy's mother so she could be compared with Leidy. Luz and Leidy have a few similar physical features, however greater similarities were noted in the girl's gestures, voice and demeanor. Now there were no doubts. God had responded to their prayer. Luz, Anyelina, and Yanelis had found their lost sister!

But this was only the beginning. After Leidy's mother had agreed to reunite the sisters, she had to find a way to confess the truth. Leidy was unaware that she was adopted.

In the effort to reunite the girls, it was also found that Leidy's adoptive parents divorced when

she was five years old. Leidy was now living with her father's friends in very unfavorable conditions. After some discussion ICC came to believe that it was in the best interest that the girls live together as a family as this would provide Leidy with better opportunities.

Unfortunately before Leidy's mother could tell her about the adoption, Leidy's father told her everything. Leidy was emotionally shaken and all appeared ruined. Yet, it was trusted that God had a happy ending. The Las Palmas staff counselor spoke with the distressed mother and Leidy. It was explained that the Las Palmas staff understood Leidy's difficult situation but also explained how Leidy's sisters had waited for this moment for almost 19 years.

With some apprehension Leidy accompanied the counselor and the Las Palmas administrator to see her sisters for the first time in 19 years. The reunion was both happy and tearful. That night, the three older Paulino sisters returned to Las Palmas with the best Christmas present that they had received in all their life, their lost sister.

Regardless of her being raised in an unfavorable environment, Leidy grew up fearing God and has become a strong and mature young lady. She registered in the school of Psychology at Autonoma University. She works to support her studies and also helps at home.

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A Personal Message

March 2004

Dear ICC Family,

It is hard to realize that 26 years ago International Children's Care was founded, and that we have now completed 25 years since Ken and I went to Guatemala to open our doors for children. While the devastating earthquake was the catalyst for the actual beginning, it was the civil war in Guatemala that put the pressure on us to grow much faster than we had anticipated. The little victims of this dreadful conflict were brought to us faster than we could prepare for them. We were building more houses as fast as the funds were available. I was writing these monthly letters from the beginning, and our ICC family grew as people responded to our desperate need to help to care for these children with such critical needs.

The day came when we felt ready to expand into another country with abandoned and hurting children. Ken and I thought of our years in the Dominican Republic when he was the president of the Adventist conference there. As in Guatemala, I soon became known as one who was concerned about homeless children. One day a car came to our door. It was one of the workers from the office. He handed me a note from my husband. "This little lady with her two children came to the office, wanting to give me her children. She says her husband is sick and they can't feed them. I know you will know what to do about it."

As I read the note I saw the mother get out of the car with a baby in her arms and a little girl by her side. It was a sad, hopeless story she had. Some of her children were pretty well grown and she had already given away some, but these two little ones were the last of their family of 13 children. It was obvious that she was sick, barely able to carry the baby. I listened to her story, but didn't want her to make a hasty decision. Situating them in our guest room, I told her, "Just don't worry right now. We'll find some solution." She stayed with us for several days, resting and eating good food. She only weighed 70 pounds. We soon realized that she wasn't able to carry on, and her husband was too sick to work. It was dreadful to see her making the decision to give away her children, but she did have the comfort to know they would be in loving, Christian homes. Two pastor families in that area of the world adopted them.

As our program for the children became more solid in Guatemala, my mind went back to that sad scene, and I knew there were hundreds of children in the Dominican who also needed our help. We took our idea to our ICC Board of Directors, and they voted that Ken and I should go to the Dominican Republic to do a survey of the need, the feasibility and what land might be available.

Homes For The Homeless

"Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." Matthew 25:40

The needs were great, and every research indicated a green light. But it took several trips to come up with the right solution for land. We wanted to be near the Adventist University in the middle of the island. At first it seemed an impossibility. Land wasn't cheap in that area, and we had begun to look at farms further away. But, in answer to our prayers, a large farm of just over 100 acres was offered to us about a mile from the university. It belonged to two different people, both Adventist workers in Puerto Rico. As I remember it, one of them donated his part and the other gave us a good price. Pastor Ray Jacobs and his wife, Bertha volunteered to help us get the program off the ground. Their dedication was invaluable. Our dream for Las Palmas had become a reality.

But we needed a permanent director, someone with experience with children. We thought of Gladys Williams Lora, who had been Ken's secretary years before. We knew she was the director of a school. When we approached the president of the conference to ask permission to call her, he readily agreed, saying we couldn't find a better person. The next thing was to convince her to come. We found her school and her little cottage next door. When we started to state the reason for our visit, she smiled and shocked us with the words, "You don't have to tell me why you are here. My answer is yes." Then she went on to explain. "Recently I had a very unusual dream. I thought I was caring for a lot of little children over near the University. I didn't know how or why, but I told God, 'If this is something You want me to do, just let me know.'"

Ken and I knew that this was our answer. I sat there with tears in my eyes. God had led us every step of our way in developing ICC and The Pines in Guatemala. How wonderful to know that He was also with us in this!

There have been hundreds of children rescued there in that country, all of them with a story, but there is a special girl, Luz Belkis, who drew my attention when I visited. She had such a winning smile. Her story was different. Her mother died when she was 6 or 7, and her father was an alcoholic. Only her aunt, a Christian, could help her, but she was poor and struggling. Luz and two of her younger sisters were finally brought to us but she was 15 years old. She struggled with the feeling of loss over her mother and lack of security in her life, but God became very real for her. She didn't have a sponsor for awhile, and felt sad when other girls heard from their sponsors. When Rick and Sharon decided to sponsor Luz she was thrilled and looked to them as her special parents, even though she had house parents. She spent a few months with Rick and Sharon after her first years in college. Now she is working as a translator in the sponsorship program, reading the letters that come in English to the children. She loves to go to the homes and interact with the children. Her desire is to work for ICC and be involved helping other children who suffered the loss of parents like she did. She says, "I feel God is calling me to continue working for ICC, to work with the children. I don't know what I'm going to do in the future, but that's my desire. I am secure in knowing that God has a plan for me."

Heaven will tell of the changes in the lives of children because of what people like you have done in opening up your heart to help them,

With our love and prayers,

Alyson and Ken