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QUÉ PASA

What's Happening

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Seeds of Growth in Mexico

El Oasis Farm Dedicates and Plants a New Crop

One bright and early Spring morning, El Oasis children followed their house parents to a big and empty field. Farm workers and friends also met there. That would not be an ordinary morning. It was the prayer and dedication ceremony for a new season of growth at the El Oasis Farm. The sleepy children must have felt excited to be part of such a momentous event!

As the sun peeked over the horizon, a special prayer took place. It recognized God's hand in protecting the little seedlings of the farm and, by extension, providing for the children of El Oasis.

The children then participated in planting some of the first seedlings! They gathered small shovels and, with the help of parents and older siblings, placed little plants into the earth. By seventh-thirty, farm workers began to plant the crop in earnest. Thus, a new season of growth began at El Oasis Farm.

Throughout the year, the harvest of jalapeños and other produce helps to sustain the children's village. It helps to generate funds for operating costs, enabling your contributions to stretch even further.



El Oasis Farm launched a new season of growth by planting and praying over little seedlings during a special dedication ceremony. Just as the new seeds will grow into a fresh crop, so the children of El Oasis will grow into healthy and happy adults thanks to your care and nurturing support!

This is only possible thanks to your support, and thanks to the protection of our Heavenly Father over those 55 acres of farmland.

Yet, the farm is not the only harvest that is being planted and prayed over at El Oasis Children's Village. Each child that comes to live at El Oasis arrives like a little seed that needs planting in rich soil.

Before arriving, children quite often experience pain and loss. Many would have died from malnutrition or neglect if not for the timely intervention that brought them to El Oasis. Now, with the nurturing care that you help to provide, the children have a chance to grow into healthy and happy adults.

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Honoring the Mothers and Fathers Who Care for His Kids

YOUR support makes a transforming difference in the lives of ICC children. Yes, you help provide nutritious meals, warm beds, clean clothes, quality education, and medical attention. Yet, as critical as these things are, there is no more important thing you help to provide than mothers and fathers who give the nurturing care that is essential for the children to thrive. **Dedicated and effective Mothers and Fathers are an extension of your love and care for the children!**

As a tribute to the dozens of house mothers and fathers who sacrifice and toil and spend their physical and emotional energy caring for the children, we wanted to share a behind the scenes view of the life and experiences of Julio and Lillian, from the ICC children's village in El Salvador. They have served as house parents for orphaned and vulnerable children for over 20 years. Before the worldwide pandemic struck, ICC president, Rick Fleck, sat down with Julio and Lilian and asked them a few questions. Here is an edited excerpt from that interview.



Lillian and Julio, long time house parents in El Salvador

Q: How many children have been in your family?

Julio: At the beginning when we were working here with Maranatha, we had 44 children. It was a mixed group of boys and girls. *(Editor's Note: When ICC took over management of this project from Maranatha Volunteers International there were several large homes that housed dozens of children each. Over time, we worked to reduce the size of each family to create a more natural family feel for the children.)*

Lilian: How we did that, I don't know. Two times we were ready to leave because there was too much stress. At the time we had so many children, and we had a lot of little ones. So, the director said that if he would take away some of the little children that we had and put them in a different home, maybe we would have less stress.

Julio: To get everybody ready to go to church or to get them ready to go to school, that was a real challenge!

Q: What has been the most rewarding thing for you serving as house parents?

Lilian: We were able to help many children spiritually, also we were able to help them with their feelings and social issues. A lot of these kids think of us as their parents, as their mom and dad. They still write to us on Facebook and WhatsApp and keep in contact. Some of the kids that were the most rebellious ones are now some of the best.

One girl who had been rebellious and who was a difficult child came to me and was crying and asking for forgiveness. She said, "I was so bad. And you had so much patience with me. I appreciate it, and I'm so sorry." I told her, "It's okay, you were just a child. I understand that."

Another thing that's rewarding is that the children come and visit us with their children now - their families. They come and they joyfully tell their children, "Look,

these are my parents. They're your grandparents. This is where I lived as a child."

Q: Julio and Lilian then shared how they taught the children to be responsible.

Julio: We developed a point system to work with the kids. For example, if they didn't clean their room, they would have three points added to their name. If they didn't wash their clothes, they would get one point added for every piece of clothing they didn't wash. Once they got five points, they couldn't ride a bicycle or go out on the playground. And if the group would go swimming, they couldn't go.

We also gave the children the opportunity to be able to erase some of those points. That would be by cleaning the living room or working in the yard a little bit. Then they could go to the list and erase one of their points. Then they would have their privileges back. We always did

Honoring the Mothers and Fathers - Continued

it in pencil, because that way they could erase the points.

Lilian: A lot of the children didn't want to have points added to their name and then have it erased. You could still see that it had been erased. It was stained. So, if they misbehaved, we would say, "Okay, you need to go put a point up there on the list."

The child would say, "No, no, no, don't put it up there yet. Right now, I'm going to go out and do a job, and I'll get it back and then you won't have to put a point on the list. Then at the end of the week the child would say, "I came out white. Mine doesn't have any stains on it."

In our house we were calm. We didn't have to yell at the children. We didn't have to nag. If the kids didn't care about the privileges, we said, "Fine, you don't have to go." It was very easy, because we didn't get upset about it.

It was the children's own thing that they were managing themselves. The good thing was that they would do their work singing and being happy. They weren't upset.

Q: Could you share a story of a child that was helped a lot by this program?

Julio: There are many stories, but one that comes to my mind is Hector (not his real name). When he came, he had no family. He was totally an orphan. We were his only family and still are. Even when we would go on vacation or if we would have a day off, we would frequently take him with us because he would tell us, "You are my mom and dad. I have nobody." He really bonded with me.

I've been the maintenance person here and work in everything that

has to do with electricity, plumbing, and any kind of maintenance work. So, Hector ended up being with me a lot and learned all of those things. He told me one day, "I like electricity." So, I told him, "Maybe you should go and study it and learn how to work with electricity."

Lilian: You helped him with his homework and assignments.

Julio: Yes, I helped him with his assignments and everything that he did. When he left and became independent, he got a job at Walmart. He is the maintenance person for electrical issues with all the Walmart stores in the area. He learned plumbing here, and he is doing a lot of that at Walmart as well.

Everything he learned here he's doing with them now, even carpentry things. They like him because he's a jack-of-all-trades.

He knows how to do everything. Anytime he has a problem he's not sure how to handle, he'll call me and ask, "What do I do about this issue?" He comes to visit whenever he has a day off. He called me one day and said,

"Thank you for everything that you taught me, because now it's coming in really useful."

Lilian: He doesn't have any Sabbath problems at work. He is a leader in the Pathfinder club and is always in church.

Q: Is there anything you would like to say to the ICC family of supporters?

Lilian: I'm grateful to the donors for all of the help that they have given and are giving. We see so many lives that have been changed. Many of the kids are professionals, they are independent, they are doing well. It's all because of the donations and the support that they have gotten over the years.

Julio: Many lives have been changed.

Lilian: We have three boys of our own, and even their lives were impacted in a very positive way by living here. Our older boys are both engineers now, one was seven and one was three when they came here. We are eternally grateful for you and for all the donors for the education that our children were able to receive.

Support ICC Families Today

Show Appreciation "In Honor of Parents" with a Gift

For over 20 years, Julio and Lilian have invested their lives in the children of ICC thanks to the support they have received from donors like you. The results can be seen in grown children, like Hector and others who are successful, contributing members of society, and who continue to maintain the spiritual values that they were taught.

This month, please consider giving a special gift in recognition and support of the mothers and fathers who patiently and lovingly care for the children. Your gift is very much needed as we enter the lean, summer months, and it will directly benefit the children by helping to provide the care that they need. Use the response coupon or donate online at www.forhiskids.org. Be sure to designate your gift as "In Honor of Parents." On behalf of the children and house parents, thank you for the blessing you are to them!

Baptisms at Patmos Children's Village



Thank you for the support you give that enables ICC children to learn about Jesus and make decisions for Him! Photos blurred to protect the identities of the children.

Thank you for making it possible for children to learn about Jesus. What a thrill it is when they decide to be baptized! Recently we received a testimony from one of the young men from the Patmos Children's Village in the DR Congo. He shared what led to his decision to be baptized. Here is an edited excerpt:

When my parents died, I became an orphan, and nobody said they would care for me. As I was suffering helplessly,

an Adventist pastor knew my suffering; He knew that I had nobody to take care of me. There was an organization called ICC which was receiving children whose fathers and mothers had died, and I was admitted.

Years later, an older boy at Patmos became my closest friend. He insisted that I go to sing in the choir, so I agreed to become a member. We sang at an evangelistic campaign led by Pastor Ongasa. This pastor's

sermon was about the signs of the last days. It was good preaching and very touching. By the end of the campaign, I accepted the call to be baptized. The whole group of young people in the choir was also baptized.

Not long ago, another baptism was held at the Patmos Children's Village. Désiré, our village director, shared the following exciting news, "We did an evangelistic campaign for 2 weeks, and we baptized 16 souls including 12 children from the village of Patmos. May God be praised."

The choice these children made to dedicate their lives to Jesus is a direct result of the support and love that you so freely give. Many of the children only learned about Jesus from their time at the children's village. Please join us in praising God for the decisions these children have made to accept Jesus as their Savior.

Seeds of Growth in Mexico

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Caring people, such as donors and parents, help to water the children with love. The Christian family structure creates a rich soil for children to grow strong roots. Freedom from poverty and neglect provides a bright ray of sunshine to help a wilted child blossom.

This nurturing care is only possible because of the support of loving donors!

As the children grow, that care is then returned in a rich harvest as they share the love they received with others! Grown ICC children often decide to give back to the community through careers of service, or even by working at the children's village. Whatever career path they choose, the lives of those around them will be touched by the love they exhibit.

Thank you for helping to nurture these children as they grow! Your care is changing lives!



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(800) 422-7729

DougC@ForHisKids.org

When soliciting funds for a specific need, we occasionally receive more in donations than requested. In those instances when we do receive more money than solicited, those extra funds are placed in "Alcyon's Angel Fund." To protect the privacy of our children, ICC uses fictitious names in the Que Pasa when referring to minor children.