



## Newsletter for the Mission of Friendship

Diocese of Erie, USA

April 2025

### It is Always a Pleasure to Share the Nueva Vida's Success



The Estancia Nueva Vida program is characterized by the values, protection, and affection we give to each of our girls. We are able to provide this level of care thanks to the commitment of the staff and volunteers. They come together to organize activities and classes with the specific purpose of developing the girls' skills and potential. It is exciting for us to share with you the exemplary progress of our girls in these areas and even more exciting, share how much fun they are having in the process.



Last February, we had the visit of a volunteer named Aylin Ixba, who belongs to the Rotary Club of Mérida. She organized a workshop with the Nueva Vida girls titled: "Emotions," with the purpose of teaching the girls how to improve their daily lives through addressing emotions.

The workshop began by explaining each specific emotion; then the girls were asked to draw each emotion they identify with themselves. During the activity, each girl got the opportunity to bring out their artistic and creative side. It was incredibly moving to see how the girls depicted the emotions with which they identify. The section ended with the girls discussing their drawings, followed by them playing with piñatas, enjoying time together, eating, and celebrating with their new friends who made the workshop possible.

We continue to work together with everyone in the community who supports us. We would like to thank the volunteers for all the support and dedication they provide to our community. The efforts of all the donors, volunteers, and our team have been fundamental for the wellbeing and growth of the Estancia Nueva Vida. Volunteer altruism and generosity are good examples for us to follow. Thanks to their efforts, we can see a difference in the lives of our girls and our community.



## **OUR LIFE TESTIMONY --- THE UC ORTIZ / CALIZ ORTIZ FAMILY**

### **In Memory of our Sponsors: Patrick and Donna Reilly**

My name is Jade E. Cáliz Uc. I am the youngest daughter of María Teresa de Jesús Uc Ortiz. I want to share with you the story of the support I've received from my sponsors for many years through the Amigos program.

My siblings are: Maricela, Luis Emiliano, Miguel Angel Uc Ortiz, and Jonás Alejandro Cáliz Uc. We were all sponsored as the Uc Ortiz/Cáliz Uc family.

My Mother remembers in mid-2004, my sister Maricela entered the Nueva Vida Girls Shelter Program of the Mission of Friendship. We were all still little children. Since my mother didn't have a steady job, my sister Maricela helped her by selling miscellaneous items at school. Marilyn and Cari, the founders of Nueva Vida, noticed what my sister was doing and decided to find us a sponsor. Our first sponsor was Barbara Paulus, and then Morgan Paulus (her daughter), and when they could no longer help us, they found other new sponsors: The Dimperio's, then the Larrieu's, and finally, in 2014, our sponsors (who both may they rest in peace), Patrick and Donna Reilly.

After my mom found a steady job cleaning Monday to Saturday, she enrolled us all in the Salvation Army so she could work. She would pick us up on Saturday afternoons and spend the weekends together at home. Thanks to my mom's job and the support of our sponsors, Patrick and Donna Reilly (+), our lives became less difficult. We grew up and studied. My siblings finished middle school. When I finished, I decided to go to high school. My Mom applied for the Amigos Program to change my aid from in-kind to cash to help me with my high school and university expenses.

### **A brief update on our lives:**

Maricela got married to Ricardo David, who is a responsible dad and husband. They have two daughters. The girls used to get sick often when they were little, but their parents were taking them to the doctor every time until they got completely healed. Maricela worked when she was newly married, but then she got thyroid cancer. She began medical treatment, and thank God it's under control, but she can't work. She is a very good mother. She guides her daughters well, taking them to and from school and taking good care of her home. When she gets sick, my mom and the whole family support her by caring for her and her daughters.

Luis Emiliano is a responsible young man. Along with my mom, he is paying for a house that they bought through Infonavit (a government mortgage program). He is the father of a girl who he loves and supports. Emiliano wants the best for his daughter and wishes for her not to suffer the hardships he suffered as a child. He works at a hotel where he started as a janitor and then was promoted to receptionist.

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Miguel Angel and my sister-in-law, Merli Gabriela, have a son and a daughter. They both care for their family. He works as a delivery driver. He doesn't have his own house yet, so they live with us.

Jonás Alejandro is quiet and reserved, but he is kind. He doesn't hesitate to help the family. He works as a plumber's and electrician's assistant.

Since I was a child, I remember my mother's first job was cleaning, and she is still doing the same now. She is a great mother. She knows how to save money, and every year, she makes a small improvement to the house, and when we need support, she helps us.

Finally, me. I am finishing my degree in Gastronomy. I am very grateful to be in the Amigos Program. It has been a blessing for me and my family. The support I have received from my sponsors has helped me to pay for uniforms, tests, tuition, and school supplies. My last sponsor, Mr. Reilly, was the main reason I achieved my goal. Although I never met him or his wife, Donna (+), my family and I were saddened by the news of him passing away. We pray that they are enjoying their reward in heaven. We also pray for their children and Grandchildren, so that God always blesses them, as well as the Amigos Program, for all we receive.

With love, this testimony goes to my sponsors (+) and all the sponsors. God bless you.

### Jade Esmeralda Cáliz Uc



MORGAN (RIGHT) MIGUEL, MARICELA, MERLI, THAYSA, JADE, JONAS + MERLIANO



MARICELA UC ORTIZ  
A VOLUNTEER AND  
MAE CALIZ UC



JADE ESMERALDA CALIZ UC



MIGUEL ANGEL UC ORTIZ



LUIS EMILIANO UC ORTIZ



MARICELA EN SUS XV ANOS



JADE ESMERALDA CALIZ UC



MARICELA BAILANDO EL VALS CON SU MAHA



## A life of Sharing Love

With gratitude for many years of good service, we announce that the Medical Dispensary Program now has a new home. After several decades being part of the Mission of Friendship, it is now operated by San Jose Obrero Parish in Merida. For various reasons this change of management made sense – and will allow the Dispensary to continue its good work.

The Mission of Friendship would like to extend its love, gratitude, and appreciation to Dr. Silvia and her family. She was a wonderful person to work with and will forever be a part of our Mission family. Going forward, Dr. Silvia will continue to provide healthcare services in the Parish of San José Obrero. As a sign of support for this new endeavor, the Mission has donated all the medical supplies previously obtained to the Parish for Dr. Silvia and the Dispensary.

Dr. Silvia served the Mission so well for many decades. Our thoughts and prayers continue with her as she continues her ministry of healing.

In some additional good news: we also want to share with you that the Mission is continuing its assistance in health and care support. We are working alongside new volunteers who offer their knowledge, experience, time, and, above all, love to our community.

- In psychological health, the volunteer Clinical Psychologist, Antonio Alonzo Ruiz, provides psychological therapy twice a month. Additionally, he offers workshops for parents and guardians of all programs on addressing struggles or issues they may be facing.
- In visual health, we have the Optometrist Technician Gabriel Ruano, who supplies free eye exams and eyeglass lens replacements once a month at an affordable cost.
- Finally, Elsa Salazar, a former volunteer, is returning as a breastfeeding consultant for the Mission, offering assistance to people who want information, techniques, and alternatives on maternity subjects.

We are intensely grateful and blessed for all the volunteers who have, in one way or another, contributed in helping our Mission provide a better quality of life for our community.



## The Amiguitos' Children Grow... And the Daycare Grows with Them!

We are excited to share with you the wonderful progress of the children who attend the infant area of "Los Amiguitos" Nursery (these are babies from three to twenty months old).

Thanks to the early stimulation provided to them during the classes at the Daycare, the perseverance of our teachers, and the support of their families, we have observed positive results in the growth of our children. One example of these achievements is that two of the babies, who were admitted at only three months old, were able to begin walking earlier than usual. These results, and many others, are due to our encouragement of combining school and home efforts. Early stimulation and constant support from families are essential, so we always suggest some exercises to be done at home.

Countless of these good results would not be possible without the early Stimulation Toolkit that we were able to purchase. The Stimulation Toolkit is a fundamental tool for infants, because it aids in developing their motor and sensory skills. The materials we use in the nursery have been primarily donated, such as most of our educational toys allowing us to provide the babies with a safe and positive learning environment. It is an understatement to say that the "Amiguitos" families are grateful to the daycare program, because as they express-- they are able to go to work with the peace of mind that their sons and daughters are in good hands.

Our team wants to take this opportunity to once again thank each of you who have supported us at some point – either financially or with your prayers. There is still a long road ahead, however, we know if we continue working together, we will go even further... just like these little ones!

### Some Cultural Facts

Lent is a special time in México, especially in the Catholic culture. The Lenten season begins with Ash Wednesday, and as you know it lasts for 40 days, during which we observe the abstinence of eating red meat on Fridays. Well, here at the daycare it is not an exception, we teach our children about this beautiful and mindful tradition offering them a different menu on Fridays. We serve a meatless lunch which includes tortilla soup with hard-boiled eggs, papadzules (Yucatecan-style egg enchiladas), egg broth, potato pancakes, joroches (dumplings in a bean stew), and breaded fish. Then, after the 40 days of Lent, meat is returned to our menu on Easter Sunday.



# Memories and Culinary Traditions from our Sister Archdiocese of Tzucacab, Yucatán!

The Holy Week in Yucatán is always celebrated with majestic processions!



Holy Week -Merida City



Tzucacab, Yucatán



Tzucacab, Yucatán



Tinum, Yucatán



Colonia Yucatán



The Yucatecan community has a variety of 365 different stews, and this time of year is used to delight in stews without using traditional pork...Here some of them!



## A Note From the Director's Desk

I wish to express my deepest gratitude to the Amigos Program, Nueva Vida Program, and Sister Parish Program participants for the marvelous support you give to our sisters and brothers in Yucatán.

I would like to take the opportunity to encourage you to never forget that your financial support to these families and parishes means more than a simple help. It is an enormous blessing to them.

The Mission Office is now working with an online payment solution which provides you the opportunity to make recurring or one-time donations to the Mission of Friendship or to a specific program like Daycare, Nueva Vida, Amigos. Please find it on the Mission Office website.

We want to invite you to visit your Yucatecan family. Doing so is an unforgettable and life-changing experience. There in Yucatán the Mission of Friendship staff members are able to provide transportation, tour guidance, translation and lodging for a modest donation to the Mission of Friendship. Please prayerfully consider this possibility. As always please feel free to contact me if you have any question.

May God bless you and your family. HAPPY EASTER!

### Some Important Reminders

We would like to take this opportunity to remind you of important points:

- The Mission Office in Erie is still receiving donations sent by Amigos sponsors, Nueva Vida sponsors, Day Care sponsors and Sister Parishes by way of checks and online credit card contributions. These funds will be wired periodically to the mission account in Mérida. We are also receiving your cards, letters and photos for your Amigos family.
- Amigos sponsors can send special donations, in addition to their regular monthly contributions, that are earmarked specifically for their particular sponsored family as Easter gifts, birthday gifts or Christmas gifts. These special gifts are not added to the common Amigos fund. They are kept separate to be given only to the sponsor's particular Amigos family. If you would like to give a special gift just for your sponsored family, please make a note in the memo line of your check or enclose a note of explanation with your donation. Your intentions for the special gifts will be communicated to the mission staff in Mérida.
- As usual, this Summer the Mission Office of the Diocese of Erie is going to run a special appeal to support Amigos families with school supplies. Please consider helping us in this initiative in favor of the Yucatecan children... More details coming soon.

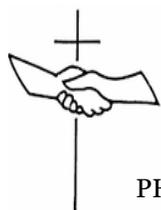
If you have questions regarding your donations, tax deductions or new sponsorship, or would like to communicate changes in your contact information or sponsorship status, please contact mission office director **Indira J. Suárez** by e-mail: [isuarez@eriercd.org](mailto:isuarez@eriercd.org) or by phone: (814) 824-1231.

Please know that we are grateful to all of you who sponsor a family in Mérida through the Amigos Program, supporting them with your prayers, and financial support.

We look forward to hearing from you!

  
Indira J. Suárez

Director of Diocesan and International Missions Office



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