

MICAH MESSENGER

Mission Newsletter
November 2019



White Bear Lake
**UNITED
METHODIST
CHURCH**

Nourishing the Hungers of Life

*He has told you,
O mortal, what is good;
and what does the LORD
require of you
but to do justice,
and to love kindness,
and to walk humbly
with your God?*

- Micah 6:8 -

“UP and OUT of POVERTY”

**Nuestros Pequeños Hermanos (Our Little Brothers and Sisters)
“Raising Children. Supporting Families. Transforming Lives.”**

The year was 1954 in Cuernavaca, Mexico . . .

On a hot summer day a hungry, homeless young boy named Carlos entered a church in and was caught stealing money from the collection box in order to buy himself something to eat. Carlos was arrested, jailed, and due to receive a harsh sentence for his crime. The newly ordained American priest of the church, Father William B. Wasson, asked the court to show mercy. He asked the judge for custody of Carlos so that he could feed him, clothe him, and provide a home for him. The judge accepted his offer. Over the course of the ensuing months the judge continued to send boys to Father Wasson and by the end of the year, 32 boys were in his care and Nuestros Pequeños Hermanos was born.

In 1970, the first NPH home for boys and girls who had no place to live was opened in a refurbished old sugar plantation in Miacatlán, México and was given the name “Casa San Salvador.”

Today

Since its founding in 1954, NPH has assisted more than 20,000 children and is currently supporting more than 6,300 children (including 310 new arrivals in 2018) in nine countries: Bolivia, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua and Peru. One of their homes serves a very special population of people.

Casa Sagrado Corazon

Located in Guatemala, this home serves as a secure, loving place to live for nearly 300 children, many of whom did not have consistent access to food, shelter, education, and responsible care prior to arrival there. Casa Sagrado Corazon is a special place as it is home to many children with moderate to severe cognitive disabilities. In Guatemala there are very few homes equipped to address the needs and capabilities of children with disabilities. At NPH, education, inclusion programs and many health care and therapeutic services are offered children and young adults in need.



Fr. Wasson receiving the Jefferson Award, 2003.

“Education will take my children out of the poverty into which they were born.”

Fr. William B. Wasson
Founder, NPH

NPH Homes and Children . . .

All of the NPH homes strive to be self-sustaining and have been built to include:

- Living spaces with kitchens and dining halls
- Chapels
- Clinics
- Schools
- Workshops where children can learn trades such as carpentry and welding
- Farms/gardens to produce food for all

While many children raised in an NPH home are formerly homeless and live there until they reach independence, others may be entrusted to their care temporarily because their family is unable to provide for them or because they are referred to NPH through the local child welfare system. In accordance with the United Nations Guidelines for children living in alternative care released in 2010, they have developed the NPH OneFamily program to provide a continuum of care to children who transition from their homes to reintegrate with family.

Providing families with long-term assistance and the specialized support they need to care for their children, helps ensure that children's rights are upheld and they are empowered to reach their goals, while also helping to strengthen families and communities.

Health Issues in Latin America and Healthcare at NPH

Over half the children in the developing world are severely deprived of basic necessities, including adequate shelter, proper nutrition, safe water and quality health care.

- 43% of children under the age of 5 are chronically malnourished in Guatemala and 40% of the population in Nicaragua and El Salvador have no access to health care at all.
- 138,000 children in Haiti die each year from preventable diseases.
- Across Latin America 1.5 million people live with HIV/AIDS.
- Insect and water-borne diseases present large medical challenges across the region.

Prior to joining the NPH family, many of the children have never visited a doctor or dentist and are often suffering from malnutrition and/or preventable diseases.

Upon arrival to NPH all children receive a health check and are vaccinated as needed. If a child is ill, or has a chronic condition, the NPH medical staff ensures that he/she receives evidence-based treatment, safe cost-effective medicines, and any necessary therapy, including physical, occupational, art, speech and psychological. The staff also focuses on establishing healthy lifestyles so children can do well in school and excel as members of the NPH family.

Girls Empowerment Programs

NPH USA supports the homes, healthcare and educational programs of Nuestros Pequeños Hermanos (NPH) in nine countries. According to various reports of those countries:

- Half of the countries with the highest rates of femicide (murder of women and girls) are in Latin America, including El Salvador, which has the highest in the world.
- Up to 40 percent of women in the region have been victims of violence at some point during their lives.
- Households led by women remain poorer than those headed by men. Social norms still prevent working women from balancing family responsibilities and work outside the home.

One of the NPH Girls Empowerment programs in Bolivia, Guatemala, Honduras and Mexico is "Chicas Poderosas" (Powerful Girls). Through activities, discussions, workshops, service projects and field trips the young women develop greater self-esteem and confidence to voice their ideas and opinions, learn to make healthy and appropriate decisions regarding their relationships and life, and actively educate themselves about the world and pursue their dreams...and much more.

How can you help?

Planning is underway to help WBLUMC connect with NPH homes across Latin American and NPH USA to provide much needed financial support and advocacy. Watch for details in upcoming church publications.

Until next newsletter, peace to all.

Lori McBride

Missions and Faith Formation Minister