

Tres Islas Orphanage Fund's spring mission weeks Labors of love and lots of laughter

By Ruth Clarke

The Tres Islas Orphanage Mazatlán in 1987 when she disweek - when Tres Islas donors in the orphanages and the oppormake improvements to five tunity to serve them. Today Mazatlán orphanages - takes Hernandez purchases all food, place April 10th through 16th this school supplies, shoes, uniforms year. During mission weeks, do- and backpacks for the children. nors seem to fly "like busy bees with joyful hearts" from orphanage to orphanage making improvements, lunching with the children, sharing games and crafts, cooking and laughing a lot, according to Donelle Manton who founded the organization in 1987.

"Between 25 and 40 donors from across Canada and the United States participate in each spring mission week," Manton explains. She credits her husband Tom for devoting as much time as she to the fund's endeavors. Their efforts have garnered results. Orphanage directors say without Tres Islas, they wouldn't be able to provide for the children as they do. One hundred percent of every donation helps the children—none is taken for administration, salaries or compensation.

This year in addition to other generous donations, Canadian benefactors purchased seven new washing machines for four of the orphanages, Manton gratefully acknowledged, who also praised Tres Islas facilitators Lena Brown and Gaudelia Cruz Hernandez for their consistent help.

"Lena's daily presence and assistance are invaluable," she says. "Tres Islas accomplishes much of what it does thanks to Lena's good ideas, vast knowledge and devotion to the youngsters."

From helping Hernandez coordinate weekly grocery purchases to taking donors on tours, Brown obtains estimates for orphanage improvements, then purchases materials and appliances on behalf of Tres Islas – which the Mantons gratefully acknowledge as an immense undertaking.

It was Hernandez who introduced Manton to Orfanatorio ■ Fund's annual spring mission covered the plight of youngsters



Reconstructing basketball backboards at Ciudad de los Niños

Organizing each spring mission week actually begins the year happening... it's a glorious sight before.

"Each December, we make initial 'scouting' visits to the or- sion week, Tres Islas phanages, meeting with directors hosts to learn needs and which areas re- Orfanatorio Mazatlán quire improvements," Manton for children, donors and explains.

"For example, we created re- the annual Tres Islas Orceiving rooms in the orphanages, phanage Fund Volunteer complete with shelving and stor- of the Year award will ages bins. Donors keep the bins again be presented, recstocked throughout the year with ognizing an outstanding daily needs."

"From January through years, has substantially March, we coordinate with direc- contributed to help imtors finalizing upcoming im- prove life for children in provements," she says. "We in- Mazatlán's orphanages. form donors of the needs – because Tres Islas donors fund the spring mission weeks," she ex- the children's lives, visit Tres plains, adding, "Loyal donors Islas Orphanage Fund's website: fund improvements even if www.orphanagefunds.org, write they're unable to attend."

Throughout the week, donors paint, landscape, replace wornout mattresses, restore volleyball and basketball courts, stock receiving rooms with supplies, and update facilities—all done with a sense of accomplishment and connection with the children which results in their returning to help year-after-year.

There's also time for fellowship and fun. The first Sunday, donors host an annual beach barbecue and afternoon on the beach for the children. Donors purchase the food, La Costa Marinera Restaurante prepares it as their gift to the children and donors serve the children.

"The barbecue begins with a giant prayer circle where everyone holds each others' hands, as the fund's chaplain offers a prayer of thanks – first in Spanish so the children may understand – then in English."

"Waiters tell us that patrons pause to witness the prayer circle and many get teary-eyed when they learn what to behold."

At the end of each spring mis-

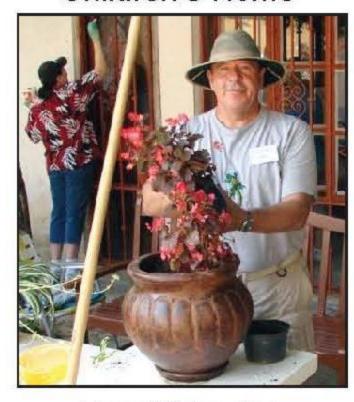
directors. On April 15th individual who over the

To help make a difference and participate in

email@orphanagefunds.org or phone 1-888-459-8463 (U.S.) or 1-541-459-7535 (Int'l).



Flying kites at the Salvation Army Children's Home



Beautifying the courtyard at Flore Ser



Assembling shelves at Hogar San Pablo