

Greetings from Mexico

"These hand-made clothes will become family heirlooms, the story will be told for many years"

Michel - San Pancho Hospital Volunteer



This is one-year-old Brittany and grandma (Mum was too shy to be in the photograph). Brittany is sporting a hand-made cardigan and checking out her new hand-made cuddly duck. A little while later she had a big happy smile as she hugged the toy.

Last summer St. Peter's began a project to make and donate baby clothes and items for the maternity and paediatric centre in the San Pancho hospital. San Pancho is a fishing village about an hour and a half from Puerto Vallarta. The hospital is the medical and maternity centre for the surrounding area. There is a great deal of poverty in the area and many mothers arrive to deliver their children with no clothes or blankets for their new-borns. A local volunteer - Michel - started a program to collect infant clothing and makes up gift packages for the mother's and their babies.

St. Peter's members donated over 35lbs of donated clothing, blankets and stuffed toys which we took with us to Puerto Vallarta in a large suitcase loaned to us by Mary DeGrow. We wondered how we would get the heavy, bulky case on the city bus to the intercity bus station. Luckily a friend from our church here was going to visit another of our friends who lives in San Pancho, and so he delivered the suit-case to him awaiting our arrival.

A friend who comes here in winter from Seattle, crocheted a number of blankets, and her sister made more knitted sweaters. Then some friends from the condo complex here surprised us with another bag of knitted clothing and hand-made toys. So we had another big bundle to take out to San Pancho in addition to the suitcase.

This morning (the first day of Lent) we were up early and caught a local bus to the bus station. It was one of those fast-paced-so-scary-you-just-have-to-laugh rides. Extremely bumpy - and noisy as the old bus rattled at break-neck speed over the cobble stones. But the fare is only about 60 cents Canadian so who is complaining.

We were in time for the 9 am Pacifico bus to San Pancho. This is a very comfortable, air-conditioned ride on nicely upholstered seats - with a movie (in Spanish). The fare - \$6 Canadian going and for some reason \$4 on the way back - for an hour and fifteen minute ride through the mountain pass.

We arrived at San Pancho and walked to the home of our friend Curt who drove us to the Hospital with the suitcase and big bundle of extras.



Curt in his dining/living room. Yes, there are no walls, the house surrounds a small but lush centre courtyard.

We arrived at the Hospital to be greeted by Michel and paediatric nurse Ana Louisa, with great hugs and Mexican kisses on the cheek.



Curt and Susan at the hospital



Curt, Michel and Ana Louisa with part of the mountain of clothing.

Michel and Ana Louisa were overwhelmed by all the beautiful clothes, blankets, bibs, toys etc. They were lost for words but just kept saying "gracias, gracias". They told us that this was a wonderful, unforgettable day and that you would be making countless mothers very happy. Michel said that it is difficult to say what they need most - as they need everything. But she indicated there was a very great need for sleepers. She also said that

the hand-knitted and crocheted sweaters and blankets etc. would become treasured family heirlooms. She told us that the families would talk about the story of receiving these items for many years.

Then they introduced us to Brittany and her mother and grandmother. She was wearing one of the sweaters we had taken to them last year and we presented her with one of the new toys.

Michel indicated that all of the clothing would be treasured and looked after and each item would be handed down in the family from child to child.

There was great joy in the San Pancho hospital today. Everyone was overwhelmed by your generosity. On behalf of Michel, Ana Louisa and all the mothers and children here, Muchas Gracias amigos - or as Michel wrote to us "Abrazos y gracias".



Unloading the suitcase



A sight fuzzy photo of Ana Louisa - trying not to cry