

Santa Barbara, Honduras, July 2018

“¿Nos va a leer unos libros?” “Will you read us some books?” That was the first question from the boys of the *Hogar de Niños* when we arrived on our recent trip to Santa Barbara, Honduras. Several friends in the U. S. made it possible to purchase Spanish children’s books for the boys of **Casa Banks** and for the younger girls at the **Hogar**. During our week there, I read about 20 different books to the children. Some favorites they asked me to read three or four times.

We also took some balls for the boys, jump ropes for the girls, and games of checkers and chess. McKenzie, a former U.S. intern at Casa Banks, had taught some of the boys to play chess. Owen reviewed the rules with them, then took on all comers. The old gringo (Owen) was sweating bullets (or bishops) as twelve-year-old Dionisio came within a hair of winning!

Many of the children at the orphanage have suffered abuse and neglect. A two-year-old named Ever is no exception. A year ago, he was brought to the *Hogar de Niños* where he is loved, nurtured, and taught about God. I overheard him singing at the top of his lungs, “*Gloria a Dios, Aleluya*” to the tune of “**Praise Ye the Lord, Hallelujah.**” Ever loves to be around adult males. When he first sighted Owen, he ran to his arms, calling him, *Papi* (Daddy).

One purpose for the summer trips to Honduras is to provide a respite for the workers at the orphanage, a 24/7-kind-of-job. We wanted to come alongside and encourage the staff, interns and volunteers who work tirelessly with the children. It was a joy to hear the testimonies of the workers and volunteers, describing the ways God has blessed them while they care for the children at the *Hogar*. All of the workers affirmed that they have received far more than they have given.

While we were there, we attended a going-away party for Yasmina and her family. Yasmina has been the **Hogar** director for one-and-a-half years. Please join us as we pray for a director to take her place.

We met with key people that helped further the process of making the Imaging Center, *Hogar de Esperanza* (Hope House) into an NGO (Non-Governmental Organization) recognized by the Honduran government.

This month the 100 kva transformer was connected to the Casa de David and a team from the US arrived to install the imaging equipment in our clinic. Each step brings us closer to opening the imaging center in the lower level of **Casa de David**. We believe the equipment we have and the machines on our wish list will have a far-reaching impact on the lives of many Hondurans.

It was hard to say goodbye to the children at the orphanage. As we were leaving, many of them asked, “¿Cuándo van a volver?” “When will you be back?” The next planned Honduras Medical Mission trip to Santa Barbara is October 26 to November 2. In the meantime, we keep these precious children close—we carry them in our hearts.

Anita Lovejoy

See the following website for photos: www.hopechestforwomen.org