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WHAT'S HAPPENING

A Publication of International Children's Care
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Our Sponsors are the backbone of the ministry of ICC

Sponsors are the backbone of the ministry of ICC, and they come from many different backgrounds and economic circumstances. I have had the privilege of talking with many of them and it is always a very encouraging experience. Many of them share with us powerful testimonies about their sponsorship. Most of our sponsors are individuals who struggle with everyday challenges

like the rest of us. For many of them, sponsorship is a special sacrifice, a sacrifice of love—love for a special child with whom they have decided to share Jesus.

Some time ago I was going through our list of sponsors when one of them grabbed my attention. There was nothing particularly unusual about the name itself, but what caught my eye was the long list of sponsored children that flashed on my screen when I entered his name, seventeen altogether, one from each country served by ICC. For the next few days I could not stop thinking about this sponsor. Eventually I decided to call him and personally thank him for spreading his love with so many of our children, but I was not able to reach him that day.

One day I received a phone call. The person at the other end of the line identified himself as Pastor Abel Serrano. It didn't take me very long to realize I was



speaking to a very special person, a man with a superlative sense of love for orphaned and abandoned children. As our conversation progressed, I recognized I was speaking to the sponsor in our database with seventeen children under his name.

I said to him, "Pastor Serrano, I realize you are not a wealthy man. What motivates you to sponsor as many children as you do, seventeen?"

Without hesitation he replied, "My wife and I wish we could do more, but we decided that we would help at least one child from each of the countries ICC serves."



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A Personal Note

Dear ICC Family,

I received a call a few days ago that stirred my memory back at least 30 years. It was a woman's voice. "I was adopted through ICC and I was told that my mother was killed with me on her back. I have wondered for years if this is true and if I could learn more about it."

After hearing more details, I remembered her story. It was in the middle of the civil war in Guatemala. Although we had recently began the program for children after the devastating earthquake, now the civil war was bringing us children faster than we could build houses to care for them. The large property that had been given to us to use for the Children's Village was next to the property used by the military. They knew and appreciated the mission school that was already operating there. Soon after building our first home for children I became acquainted with the head officer of the military base, General Lucas. He was a brother of the President of Guatemala. His niece was attending the mission school and General Lucas was interested in their program.

The government was being attacked by guerrilla forces from outside the country, and it resulted especially in small remote villages suffering loss of life from the foreign attacks. The guerrilla bands tried to use these villages for bases for their activities. This kept the local army fighting these attacks and resulted in loss of life in the villages.

We were building the Los Pinos Children's Village on this property which is close to the army base. Ken and I rented a house in Guatemala City that we used as an office and headquarters as well as a place for us to live when we were there. Developing both the village in the Petén area next to the military base and a center in town to do business and receive children kept us both travelling back and forth. It was a full days' trip by car, so we were happy when the army began letting us travel on the army planes because of General Lucas' friendship and appreciation of what we were doing for the children.

One day when I was at our city place I received a call. "Mrs. Fleck, this is General Lucas speaking. They recently brought in two little children from the area of combat to the military hospital. They had been injured but are ready to leave the hospital now, and I would like for you to go and see them. I'll send a car for you."

I didn't have time to tell him I would rather drive myself there. Because of the war situation it

was dangerous to be in a government car. Soon a big limo drove up with two soldiers ready to put me in the back seat. I heard one say, "Where did you say we are to take her?" That gave me a moment of panic. Almost every paper told of killings and kidnappings, but we soon arrived at the entrance to the hospital.

The administrator of the hospital met us and took me to the nursery area of the hospital. We found a little girl approximately ten months old standing in her crib. A nurse explained to us, "She apparently was on her mother's back when her mother was shot and killed. You can see where a bullet took off part of her foot. No one knows who she is or where her home was, but we have called her Mercedes (Mercy in Spanish)." Little Mercedes looked to us, hoping we would pick her up.



[Sarah at Los Pinos when she was a little girl](#)

But there was another child they wanted me to see. It was Lazaro, who said he was seven years old. A bullet had grazed his head. There was no one to explain how it happened except they had come from a village attacked by terrorists.

The administrator explained to me, “General Lucas told me to give you these children. You would know what to do. He told me not to give them to anyone else, that you have the best place for children in Guatemala.”

The nurse helped me get the children into the limo. Little Mercedes was terrified and clung to my neck. Lazaro sat as close to me as he could get, and we went back to our house. I will never forget that night with two little terrified children that had never seen me before and didn't know where they were.

I finally rocked Mercedes until she fell asleep, but Lazaro cried and wailed for the mother he would never see again. I sat by his bed, talking to him and rubbing his back, until he finally cried himself to sleep. I would never know all that had happened to those little innocent victims of the war. I shed my own tears, feeling helpless to know how to comfort them.

It was General Lucas' plan that I take the children out to our Los Pinos. He arranged the necessary papers for them. We would go on the army plane. Juana, our director, was there to meet us. She already had decided that Mercedes would go to a home where the house mother was especially good with babies and small children. Lazaro went to a home where there were some boys his age, and they both finally adjusted to their new homes.

I wrote the story in the ICC newsletter, and we soon had a family asking to adopt Mercedes. Since we still didn't have our adoption program licensed, they went through an international agency and, with our cooperation, found a new home for Mercedes.

Lazaro had adjusted to his home with us at Los Pinos, but one day a man came walking into the village from a nearby town that had bus service. He asked Juana, “Do you have a little boy here with the name of Lazaro?”

When she said they did, he showed her the paper the army had given him to claim his son. He had been away from home the day of the attack. When he walked up to the house where Lazaro lived they all soon knew that he was indeed the father. It was a happy day for everyone and there was no question that Lazaro had found his daddy!

When Sarah told me what she knew of her story, I knew she was the little girl I had found at the Military Hospital. I asked her, “Were you happy in your new home?”

“Oh Yes! A wonderful Christian family adopted me. And I am so happy to know more about it all and that ICC was there for me.”

Sarah is just one of all the children who had suffered the loss of home and family, but who has a family now.



[Sarah begins her new life](#)

Our Sponsors - Continued

We spoke at length on that day and I was richly blessed by Pastor Serrano's testimony. The reason he had called that day was to ask for a package of ICC's literature and sponsorship videos. He told me how he and his wife are using this ministry for orphaned and abandoned children to reach others. They carry sponsorship brochures and videos with them to share with anyone who does not know about the children of ICC. "I cannot believe how many people haven't heard about ICC," he told me. "We are not happy with sponsoring just seventeen children. We would like to see all the ICC children fully sponsored, so we have made it our cause to encourage others to

became sponsors and experience the blessings we enjoy every day. There are many people out there who are missing these blessings because they don't know."

Every once in a while I receive a phone call from Pastor Serrano. Often it is for no other reason than to encourage us. Many times it is to tell us about the people he has come in contact with. Pastor Serrano is retired now, but his love for the destitute, for the homeless, for the widow, and especially for orphaned and abandoned children has not retired. He continues to work just as hard volunteering, and preaching, and being a voice for the voiceless of the world.

On behalf of all the children we love and serve, we want to thank each one of our sponsors. You are a major part of the life of our program. You are one of the reasons that over 4,000 abandoned children are successful God-fearing productive adults today. We cannot look at all the children who find refuge in our children's villages without thinking about wonderful sponsors. You may not sponsor seventeen children like the Serranos, but you mean everything to that little girl or boy for whom you are making all the difference in the world.

Thank you so much for sharing of yourself with our kids.

Joel Reyes

Director of Public Relations

A Personal Note - Continued

Sarah has written her story with what she had been told, but still she had the desire to know why her mother was killed and who she was. I told her about the civil war and the villages that suffered so much loss of life. We don't have room to include here what she wrote, but you can see it on our ICC blog. Just go to www.ForHisKids.org and then click on ICC Blog on the middle left or go to this address <http://www.forhiskids.org/iccblog/?p=943>. If you don't have access to the internet, please contact us and we'd be happy to send you a copy by regular mail. As you can see from her story, she realizes that she has a Father in Heaven Who was looking out for her, and she is committed to serving Him. We have decided to include her story in her own words. I am sure that you will be anxious to read it.



Sarah today

I feel so privileged to have been chosen to help build International Children's Care into what it is now, a means of providing homes, love, education and especially a Christian environment where children learn about a Father in Heaven Who loves them and is preparing permanent homes in a place where there will be no more sin, loss, death or suffering.

Thank you, every ICC family member, for your part in making this all possible.

With my love and prayers,

Alcyon
Alcyon