



"Please read about the orphans, and send a special gift to help one today."



Dear ICC Family,

This has been a challenging year—keeping up with the needs of so many orphan children who depend upon us for their total care. Resources are stretched. They are stretched even thinner this time of year. Yet there are many more hurting children who need help! I want to tell you more about that at the end of my letter and how you can help. But first, I want to share a little update about how you have made a tremendous impact on so many children.



Sharon and I recently visited the ICC Sweet Home Children's Village in Narsapur, India. What an incredible difference your support is making in the lives of these disadvantaged children!

Six of the children graduated this year from college – three from nursing and another three from Lowry Adventist College. It's thrilling to see these children succeed in their studies and prepare for a life of independence as well as a life of service.

On the Sweet Home Campus, the younger children are doing great. You can tell by their smiling faces and happy laughter. It's hard to believe that a short time back these same kids were suffering hardship and hunger, and they are now healthy and happy. What a blessing your support has been! You've made all the difference in the world to these kids. Many of them are orphans or were abandoned, but thanks to you now they are healthy, growing children.



The last time that Sharon and I visited the Las Palmas Children's village in the Dominican Republic we were able to attend the Adventist university graduation. Four of our young people had completed their degrees and were graduating. We visited with all the graduates the night we arrived. The kids wanted to come and share their appreciation for all the help and support given to them over the years while they were part of the Las Palmas children's village. Two other kids joined in. One had graduated previously and another was about to graduate. All these kids feel very blessed to be part of the ICC family—part of *your* family!

One afternoon before graduation, the graduates put on a service of thanks at the church. They shared stories, reminisced and thanked different staff members. When they introduced each graduate they explained why they came to Las Palmas and what they have accomplished as they graduate. They encouraged the rest of the children to take advantage of the opportunities they have as the younger children caught a vision of what they could become. None of their success would have been possible without you. Their lives have been transformed because of you and your generosity.



The school year is nearing completion in El Salvador where six children will be graduating from high school. Several students are taking advanced education. This project continues to experience great success with their children as they prepare for living on their own.

Two boys from the Romania ICC children's village completed high school this year. This was a milestone for that project as they were the first. Both are now working and one plans to attend university. Sharon and I visited this project recently and were inspired by the interests and ambition of several of the children. These children who were once a part of our receiving center on campus are now growing up to be healthy and talented young people.



Your support of the Patmos Children's Village is making a tremendous difference in the lives of orphan children in the DR Congo even with continued unrest in the country. You may recall that nearly three years ago we took in 13 new children from a refugee camp. The kids were on the verge of dying if we didn't help them.

I'm happy to report that all these kids are doing well and are flourishing. I shudder to think what might have happened if we didn't have your support in saving the lives of these children.

The majority of the children at the Patmos Island Children's Village attend our campus high school. This is a great challenge because of the increased costs and the desire of many of them to go on to university. In the last few years of high school, the students start specializing in the areas that they will be studying in university. The project administrator, Desire, is encouraging the students to study in different areas so that eventually they will be able to help the Patmos Island program with their education. It is a wonderful concept.

There are many children in other projects around the world that you have supported through your gifts this year. They include children in Mexico, Colombia, Brazil, Nicaragua, Ghana, and Zambia. Like their "cousins" in projects mentioned above, these children are also making progress toward living lives of independence.

As promised, I want to share a special need with you. I bring it to your attention, because I know you care so deeply about helpless and hurting children. This comes from Joel, project director in Guatemala. Here is an excerpt from his message to me.

Today we received a phone call from the Children's Court to ask us to receive a group of kids from an orphanage which is closing its doors. Soon they will be closing another orphanage. The reason these places are closing is that they are not treating the children with the dignity that they deserve.

The orphanages which are closing have almost 150 children and teens, but we can only offer space for six girls, ages 3 to 10.

Although Los Pinos has some empty homes, we can't offer more space because we don't have the budget needed to operate those homes right now. Some children which have been with us for some time now don't yet have sponsors to support us financially, and these six girls will come without any sponsors, and we don't know how long it will be before we can find sponsors for them.

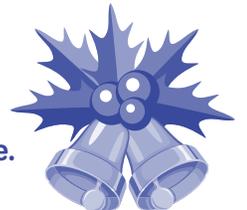
It hurts our hearts to know that many of these children will be put in government orphanages which are actually jails which have been adapted for this purpose, and they really don't have personalized attention like they receive in Los Pinos.

We, like in all the ICC Children's Villages around the world, try to reestablish trust in these children—trust in people and trust in God. Because of the abuse and abandonment they have suffered in their own family, they have stopped trusting in people, and they don't believe there is a God who loves children.

With the closure of these two orphanages, Los Pinos is the only one in the Northern area of Guatemala, which is 35% of the territory of this country. The region of Petén is as large as El Salvador and Belize put together, and it is impossible to care for the needs in this region.



**But we always pray to God that He will touch hearts of people who feel the desire to support this work of love, and we thank God for the sponsors and donors and institutions who are supporting us and have done so for a long time.**



God bless everyone who makes it possible for Los Pinos to be a City of Refuge for these little hurting souls.



I am reminded that Bethlehem could have been a City of Refuge for Jesus when He came to earth 2,000 year ago. Those with capacity could have offered their best. No doubt they would have if they had just known it was Him. Yet Jesus Himself tells us if we do good “to one of the least of these” we do it to Him. I believe that “one of the least” could accurately describe any one of these orphan children who is on the verge of being abandoned all over again. The orphanage they are living in now has become their home. It will soon close. And, what next? Yes, what next? The answer really depends on you.

With so many children needing help, Joel needs you right away so he can decide how many orphans he can actually accept.

You have been so generous in the past that I almost hesitate to ask. But when times are difficult, you turn to your closest friends. That’s why I’m writing to you today, to ask for your help. Could you send one last gift before the end of the year? As you can understand, this is urgent. Joel wants to accept as many children as possible. What a life changing impact this will have on all he can accept into the Los Pinos family. Wow!

What a challenge!

What an opportunity!

Send your gift today,

In His Service,



Rick Fleck

*P.S.* Thank you so much for reading, and for your generosity. I sincerely hope you can help care for the orphans losing their homes with a special gift.

