

# DESERT BLOOMS

June 2011

You can tell summer is here just by opening up the freezer in our little clinic in Anapra. As temperatures heat up, we make sure to keep fully stocked with brightly colored popsicles! Even the adults (us!) enjoy the icy treats on the hot days, but it is mostly fun to watch the little ones waddle around, sucking down their favorite flavor and getting sticky hands from the juice. Soon there will be even more kids at the clinic as the schools are letting out for vacation. Summer is an exciting time!

Summer brings new life. Salvador Mendes has been working with us at Proyecto Santo Nino for about two years now. His wife, Teodora, or “Teo” for short, is a therapist at the clinic. They have seven children and are wonderful parents. Together, they are involved in marriage preparation for couples at their parish and serve as role models for many people in the community. Santo Nino is lucky to have both of them on our staff. Salvador is an especially thorough and dedicated worker. He can always be found cleaning up, fixing something, or working on any variety of special projects. Recently, he has been putting a lot of energy into the garden behind the clinic. He spent many days in May getting it ready – weeding, digging, organizing, and planting. He planted some vegetables as well as some lovely trees, flowers, and bushes. Now, he is watering daily and waiting patiently for his tomatoes, radishes, and figs to come up. It is our hope that soon we will be eating fresh veggies as a result of Salvador’s work!

Summer brings fun! To celebrate the coming of this more laid-back time of year, we had a summer party at the clinic last Friday! Many of our families came just to spend time together. We feasted on ham and cheese sandwiches and potato chips. The kids played Uno, colored, and ran around. The ladies sat together and played some cards and of course just talked and talked, occasionally taking a break to scold the kids if they got too rowdy. We also brought over a little foot spa and some foot creams and nail polish to pamper the ladies

a little bit. Many of the moms took turns soaking their feet and getting massages and pedicures. As the bubbles overflowed from the foot spa, some of the little kids scooped them up and put them on each other’s heads or blew them into the air. The room filled with contagious laughter.

Summer brings togetherness. Isidra, one of our therapists, lost her son Angel over a year ago. He was one of our oldest special kids, in his mid-twenties, and she had spent all of those years taking care of him. She sat by herself with tears in her eyes toward the beginning of the party, remembering him and wishing he could have been there. She still has those moments from time to time, she told us. But later, due to the encouragement of her friends, she was lying on a massage table, getting her toenails painted and smiling genuinely. It is a blessing to be a part of this community in which people really walk with one another. For women like Isidra, Proyecto Santo Nino is not just a work place, it is a home away from home. The other ladies are not just coworkers, they are family.

For us at Santo Nino, summer means sticky hands and faces, plants sprouting up, laughter, the pitter-patter of feet, genuine smiles, relaxation, and community. It means memories and, most of all, family. May your summer be filled with similar joys and blessings. We thank you, as always, for your continued support of our clinic and the family of people that makes it what it is.



## Photos

- Top right: Tania and daughter Reyna enjoy the foot spa at the party!
- Center: Salvador waters his plants