

*Desert Blooms*  
*February 2008*

Dear Sisters and Friends,

The month of January has flown by and we are already full of stories for this February edition. Last Saturday was “mothers’ day” at Santo Niño...

First a progress report on Mari, Ricardo and baby Jesus: The baby is still in the hospital and has been receiving high calorie / high protein nutrition intravenously as well as oral feedings. He has still not gained weight and there is still concern that he has some kind of syndrome, possibly even a type of dwarfism. His mother Mari came to the clinic last Saturday with Ricardo. She looked exhausted. Sister Carol noticed when she was showing one of the other mothers her swollen ankles. (In the public hospital there are no bedside chairs for the parents and so she had been on her feet by Jesus’ crib for almost two weeks.) Sister Carol motioned for Mari to lay down on an available massage table and Sofia, Lucy and Laurette came to help. Covered with a warm blanket and surrounded by the team of her friends, Mari slowly began to release her burdens. She cried and cried as the other women cared for her.

Meanwhile Gloria was sitting with Isela while her son, Giosmar, was enjoying the swing that hangs from the central beam in our clinic. Usually Isela is accompanied by her husband but this Saturday he just dropped her off with her two sons. Gloria asked Isela how things were going and the floodgates opened. Gloria listened and listened, understanding from her own experience how having a child with special needs takes a tremendous toll on even the best of marriages. When another massage table became available Isela didn’t hesitate to accept the offer of a treatment. By that time Mari was sleeping and the team of four moved to her side.

All the while the children of these women were tended by other mothers and volunteers. Ricardo was fed and Giosmar was bathed. Lesli and Gabriel, their siblings, were entertained with puzzles and games even as they kept an eye on what was happening with their mamas.

Later that evening when we celebrated Eucharist in our chapel at home Sister Carol reflected on how the women naturally prefer to work as a team when they offer treatments. “There is no concern for efficiency.” Time is not a worry. They just feel a natural healing connection as each one offers her gift or skill. Then Sister Janet told of finding Nena, Lucy’s daughter, in the driver’s seat of the van which was packed with our special children and their families, their walkers, braces, and bundles of diapers. Nena, with her hair in two perfect braids and a very runny nose, chewed on the cap of a Bic pen and laughed as she “drove” who knows where in her autistic mind. This was a good day at the clinic. This is an image of the kingdom of God. All aboard!