

*Desert Blooms*  
*November 2007*

Dear Sisters and Friends,

This is the season of gratitude and we find many reasons to give thanks to God for the blessings we receive each time we cross the border to serve at Santo Niño. We never cease to be amazed at the generosity of the mothers who bring their children to us. You would think that the stress of caring for a child with special needs in a situation of desperate poverty would drain all one's reserves of compassion. But it doesn't. Two examples come to mind:

Lucy, Nena's mother, lost her husband last summer to Lou Gehrig's disease. Now she is selling Avon as she tries to support herself and her two little daughters. When we needed extra help with Miriam this month she volunteered to take her into her home for part of the weekend. "She is a lot like Nena. I know how to handle her crises and we'll be okay." All we needed to provide was an extra bed and a plastic mattress cover. No problem.

Last winter Zoila had a hard time finding dry wood for the makeshift stove that she uses to heat her house and cook her food. She has been trying to save money that she makes selling cd's and candy at the international bridge so she can buy a gas heater this year. Carol and Peggy visited her house last winter and said you can't imagine a poorer place. It's close to the factory where she has a permit to sell candies and snacks, though, and she doesn't want to move. When she met a woman whose child had seizures like her own little Octavio, she brought them to the clinic. (She also shared her son's medicine with the child! Not a good idea!) Now he has seen our neurologist and since starting medication he is doing well. But the family is going to have to move from the little space they have been renting. Zoila offered them the possibility of building a room at the back of her tiny lot.

Even though it seems we always have what we need for medicines, diagnostic tests, hospitalizations, food and other supplies, the tendency is to hold back at least a little "just in case". While we're busy trying to be wise and thrifty stewards, these people reveal to us the God who packs each flower with more seeds than could ever be needed. This God grows melons right out of our compost pile. Surprise! In this God's kitchen there is always plenty in the pot and in this God's dining room there is always a place for one more at the table. Zoila brings us handmade rosaries and warm winter scarves. Lucy insists that we take the extra slices of sweet bread after lunch. And we get to make a fuss over the children they bring to us for care.

We who stand between those who give and those who receive and give again, experience a marvelous exchange. We are caught up in God's tremendous generosity. To the One who spends goodness like there is no tomorrow – and for each of you – we give thanks!