

DESERT BLOOMS

January 2015

We are back to our regular schedule at Santo Niño. Despite the cold and even snowy days, everyone is happy to be together and in our usual routine after the holiday vacation. January has been a difficult month for us because it is the time many of our fragile children become sick with pneumonia. Yesterday some of us were remembering that two years ago was particularly rough. We lost Martin. Jesus, aka "Chuy", was hospitalized with pneumonia.

Brisa was diagnosed with a childhood cancer called neuroblastoma. But Chuy is still with us and will have a new little sister in May. Brisa was chasing her cousin (another Jesus) around the clinic and was showing off her fine motor skills threading colorful blocks to make a necklace. She was Mary in our Christmas posada.

Sister Carol and Cristina

were invited to the local kindergarten last week to work with the teachers and Reyna's class. They offered finger-painting like we do at Santo Niño and movement lessons. Imagine 31 kindergartners responding to the request to "move like a monkey"! At the end of the lesson Cristina brought a treat out of her bag. What else? Bananas!

School is not yet back in session for some of the siblings of the special children so they continue to come to Santo Niño during the week. Lesli, Oscar's big sister, was delighted to discover a Spanish version of Sheila the Magnificent by

Judy Blume. The book appeared in a donation during the Christmas holidays. She's been reading it aloud, sometimes with an audience of the younger ones who are as much amazed at her ability to read as they are caught up in the story. Thayli, older sister of Neftali, searched the bookshelf for other similar titles without success but later we were able to find a nice variety online at a reasonable price. We thought it a good use of our Christmas donations and three books should arrive early next week.

Before lunch we always gather in prayer, forming a circle of children, mothers and volunteers joining hands with walkers, wheelchairs and babes in arms. Two prayers are always voiced in one form or another: "I thank you, God, for what you have given me and for what you have not given me" and "Bless all those people who make it possible for us to have this place for our children." Then, after an Our Father and Hail Mary, Celia or Salvador lead us in

a rousing song that usually involves jumping and clapping, to the delight of all. During these cold days we've enjoyed some especially delicious

caldos (soups) served with fresh salsa, lime and warm corn tortillas. The mothers all pitch in to do the dishes after lunch. We have so much for which to be grateful. Especially community.



Our young readers, Thayli and Lesli

