



Care for Kids La Paz



Care for Kids La Paz Newsletter

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From the President's Desk

Months and months before her big day, Stephanie couldn't contain her excitement for her upcoming fiesta: her Quinceañera. A Quinceañera is the Hispanic tradition of celebrating a young girl's coming of age - her 15th birthday. It recognizes her journey from childhood to maturity. The customs could highlight God, family, friends, music, food and dance and, depending on what's important to a family, not necessarily in that order.

The origins of this festival are shrouded in the history of the Mexican people. Believe it or not, the Quinceañera originated with the Aztecs about 500 B.C. It was said that when turning 15, Aztec womanhood was reached. To celebrate womanhood, there was a festival for the young woman, which included the mother and other women of the

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community instructing the girl in her duties and responsibilities, urging her to follow the correct path, and remaining true to her people and their traditions.

Probably due to the Spanish influence, the fiesta generally begins with a Catholic mass although it is celebrated in other Christian churches too. Stephanie, not being Catholic, had her ceremony at the Christian church her family frequents.

The planning of a Quinceañera is as involved as other major life celebrations like a baptism or wedding. While many families celebrate the event depending on their financial ability, the core traditions and customs are often the same.

Keeping with the Mexican tradition of time, Stephanie arrived an hour late. The church was packed and helpers were still buzzing around making final arrangements.

Stephanie belongs to a tambourine dance ministry at her church. When she stepped out of the car in her beautiful lilac coloured ball gown, she and her brother walked down the aisle under the canopy of hands of the girls from this tambourine group. Her sister, the flower girl, went first, tossing handfuls of confetti along the way.

Similar to a wedding but in the Quinceañera tradition, the flower girl is a special, symbolic member, representing the little girl the Quinceañera once was as everyone celebrates the woman she's now become.

In keeping with Stephanie's lilac-coloured theme, sweet-smelling lilies were attached with lilac bows to plastic chairs, and the cloth on the pulpit, Stephanie's bouquet of flowers and her brother's shirt were all lilac.

At the front of the church was a chair opposite the podium where Stephanie sat, with her brother standing at her side, listening to the pastor speak. "We are gathered here," he said, "in God's presence, to give thanks for the fifteen years God has given Stephanie." He went on to say that this is a happy age, when young girls hold many dreams. It's also a difficult age because this is the age when a young lady becomes accountable for her spiritual life and she will begin to make decisions with greater responsibility and become more independent. The pastor read many passages from the Bible and explained how they pertained to Stephanie's life and, at the closing, he reminded her to give thanks to her parents for all they have done for her and for this very special day.

At the end of the service, the tambourine dance ministry, including Stephanie, performed two of their lively dances, constantly in motion, twirling, swirling and tambourine tapping. While skilfully played in the choreographed movements, the tambourine became an energizing instrument beautiful both to hear and watch. The dances were ones of joy infused into the dance steps and movements. What coordination it takes to master the patterns of the dance steps in sync with the rapping of the instrument! (And I always thought that all you had to do was tap the

tambourine on the side of your leg and voilà! sound)

Lastly, Stephanie's mom and dad each gave a short, tearful speech for their little girl who wasn't so little anymore. Before the guests moved to the banquet hall, to tables set up outside on a warm spring night, Stephanie conveyed her feelings towards the festivities, thanked her family for all they've done for her, and then thanked us for coming.

I didn't stay for the rest of the events but many more traditions are incorporated into the banquet and dance, traditions that tell the story of a day where Stephanie began as a child and ended in her newly acknowledged position of a young woman, loved and adored by all who witnessed this celebration and most of all her family who gracefully brought her to this day. For photos of the event, click [here](#).

Earlier in the month, Sandy and Mono Robben, who live part-time in La Paz, and two employees who work in El Mogote development, visited Vista Hermosa for the first time. Hugo brought toys for the younger boys and girls and Maude donated kids' clothing. Both donations were a huge hit, as always, because the kids get so few gifts. We also visited a family who gave us beautifully crafted embroidered place mats the mom stitched herself. Such delightful and humbling moments! For photos, click [here](#). Until next month,

God bless.
Barbara

The Face of Angels: Profile of Children of Vista Hermosa



Angel - 14 years

Translator: Jael Sepulveda

CFKLP: Angel, perhaps you don't remember but when you were six you were the first child I interviewed just after the charity came into existence. You were such a charming little boy who's grown into a responsible and respectful young teen. Let's see how things have gone in your life since then. Tell us a little about your family.

Angel: I've got two brothers and a mom and dad. My father works as an electrician in the maintenance department of the army. My older brother is studying geology at the university and my younger brother, well, he's still mischievous. My mother is a stay-at-home mom and she's also a hairdresser.

CFKLP: Your older brother was receiving a scholarship with us through junior high and high school. I'm glad he's doing well. What is the most important thing your parents have taught you?

A: Respect others, behave well, achieve my goals and not to be lazy but to work hard.

CFKLP: Those are excellent values. Are you able to fulfill them all? (He smiles) I've seen how respectful you are and how well you carry yourself. Where did your family come from? Have they always been in La Paz?

A: No, they moved here from the state of Guerrero. The military sent them. I was born here.

CFKLP: Why is education important to you?

A: It permits me to open my mind, to see things for what they are. It's useful to get a good job.

CFKLP: You take education seriously, you're a hard worker and you're bright. Where do you see your future going?

A: I'd like to be an electrical engineer or a geologist. I find learning and investigating about the earth very interesting. I'd like to get a good job and have a family. And to help people who have needs.

CFKLP: You're always welcome to help in our charity. To help others is a noble virtue. How has the scholarship helped you and your family?

A: The money my family would spend on me can now be used for something else my family needs. Such as spending the money on my younger brother's education. He needs things for school. With the bus transportation, I can get to school without having to walk. The scholarship makes me more responsible.

CFKLP: Tell us where you're doing your community service and what you're doing.

A: I help in the DIF (Department of Infants and Family) building in the community. I sweep floors and teach kids how to use the computers and how to use the computers for research for their homework. I like it because, on one hand, I help DIF and, on the other, it helps people. It's taught me to be respectful. Now I'm not just thinking about myself but others. I also have to arrive on time so it's taught me to get there on time...(he smiles) well, most of the time.

CFKLP: What do you think about having to do community service each month?

A: It's good because we learn to work hard because having a job is not easy and it teaches us to respect time.

CFKLP: What are the most important lessons your parents have taught you about education?

A: If you want to know things you need to study hard. Education gives you a good economy and a good salary allows you to buy the things you need. Education makes your brain grow up.

CFKLP: Tell me about a personal achievement that makes you proud?

A: My marks really improved and I reached my goal. That makes me proud.

CFKLP: A few weeks ago we met so I could help you with some problems you were having in English. How did that go for you? Did it help?

A: I went from a 7 to an 8.5. I don't like learning English but I need to learn it to get a better job.

CFKLP: Good news on your marks! Who has influenced your life and how?

A: My parents. They've taught me many things such as having respect for everyone. My father finished high school and my mom junior high. I hardly know anyone who's finished university and has a career.

CFKLP: You need to work very hard if you want to get ahead in life. If you were President of Mexico, what would you change to improve this country?

A: I'd put in more public services, build more schools, have more scholarships for everyone, give more help to the poor like food, medical care, hospitals. I'd build more parks and recreation areas and police stations and catch drug dealers. For those who lack water like in Vista Hermosa, I'd pipe in water, hand out free food, make more material available to build block houses.

CFKLP: Wow, that's quite a list. What does poverty mean to you?

A: When someone doesn't have a good house or good economy. Sometimes the poor can't pay for a good school and can't get a good education.

CFKLP: Before we close, is there anything you would like to say to our readers?

A: There are kids here in Vista Hermosa who want an education but they can't afford it. If the readers are in a position to help someone finish their education, they'd be helping out not just the student but the whole family. Thank you.

CFKLP: Click [here](#) to read the first interview with Angel in 2006.

How Can You Help?

Please remember to use the search engine [GoodSearch.com](#) and [GoodShop.com](#) so that our charity can earn money every time you search the internet or shop on-line. Go to their website and select Care for Kids La Paz (Dilworth, MN) as your designated charity. It doesn't cost users a thing and those pennies can really add up! [GoodSearch](#) [GoodShop](#)

We are now on Facebook! If you already have a Facebook account, go to the Care for Kids La Paz Facebook page. If you'd like to receive updates on your newsfeed such as photos or events, please 'Like' us and 'Share' us. Liking and sharing us helps us get around. [Facebook](#)



Help spread the word about Care for Kids La Paz. Do you belong to a group or a school who would like to hear more about us? We'd love to come and talk about our work. Better yet. Visit us in beautiful La Paz and you can give your own presentation.

If you have any children's books in Spanish you'd like to donate, please contact me at: careforkidslapaz@yahoo.com [Email address](#)

There are a number of students with good grades who would like to have a scholarship. If you would like to share in a special relationship with a student and their family, please drop me a line for more details at careforkidslapaz@yahoo.com [Email address](#)

If you're travelling to La Paz, please keep a little space in your luggage for books, toothpaste, toothbrushes, pencils and children's vitamins.

Please keep our charity in your prayers!

May your hearts be continually filled with the love and peace of God.

Mission Statement

Care for Kids La Paz is a non-profit charity dedicated to improving the lives of impoverished children and families in La Paz, BCS, Mexico. We provide long-term support by guaranteeing access to food, health care and education to children.

Through our commitment, Care for Kids La Paz strives to achieve lasting improvements in the quality of life of underprivileged children giving them the opportunity to become healthy, self-reliant individuals.