

SACRED GROUND

Offering hope. Restoring dignity. Worldwide.

Christian Foundation for Children and Aging

Volume 24, No. 2, Fall 2005

CENTRAL AMERICA

WITNESSING HOPEFULNESS
IN HONDURAS AND NICARAGUA



also inside . . .

- Missionary in Guatemala discusses poverty's effects
- Annual financial report
- Kid's Corner essay and art contest winners

CHRISTIAN FOUNDATION
FOR CHILDREN AND AGING

Founded in 1981

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President's Perspective

from Bob Hentzen



Working for God's humble people

Jesus came to bring freedom to the children of God. Yet, for many today, the future seems to hold little hope. Time moves on, yet their lives feel immobilized by the weight of poverty and insecurity.

At Christian Foundation for Children and Aging, we strive to work faithfully so that God's humble people will not just have more, but be more and live more freely. Sponsorship benefits respond to needs expressed by the community of sponsored persons, and extend beyond the material. Children have material needs, but they also need academic, emotional and spiritual formation – gifts of the heart. Sponsorship provides both. In the long term, the benefits can radically change the lives of the sponsored.

CFCA sponsorship is distinguished by personal attention and outreach to each sponsored person and family, and by our commitment to honoring the God-given dignity of each person. Helping the sponsored to live with dignity means to invite them to be authors of their own development and participate fully in their communities.

In living out the Gospel call to serve the poor, we are committed to operating an efficient and effective organization with integrity and accountability. As a result, CFCA assigns the most resources possible for the direct benefit of sponsored persons. I am pleased to report that in 2004, funding to our projects abroad represented 85.5 percent of our expenses, with 7.2 percent of expenses going for U.S.-based services to our sponsors and monitoring of our projects (program support services), 4.1 percent for administration and just 3.2 percent for inviting new sponsors (fund raising). For details, see our financial report on page 10.

By the grace of God, I spend about 70 percent of my days and nights in the CFCA projects around the world. I am inspired by so many dedicated families taking excellent care of their children, despite great challenges. I am also inspired by the love of the sponsors, donors and project workers for the children, youth and aging persons. I am grateful to all those who make CFCA's personal outreach possible.

COVER: Aleyda, 10, has been sponsored through the Managua project in Nicaragua since February 1997, after a CFCA subproject formed in her town, Masaya, located near the Santiago volcano. Through sponsorship, Aleyda receives life-enhancing benefits such as daily meals, clothing, educational assistance and regular medical checkups.

(Photo courtesy of Kristin Lile)

CFCA NEWS

Our hearts go out to those affected by Hurricane Katrina

Christian Foundation for Children and Aging is working to communicate concern for the approximately 5,346 sponsors in areas affected by Hurricane Katrina and take special care with their sponsorships.

benefits uninterrupted. Funding for these sponsorships will be provided from CFCA's general fund, where necessary, and from donations to CFCA's Sponsorship Assistance Fund.

CFCA's Sponsor Services team

blows from past hurricanes in the Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean, contacted more than 5,000 families to request special prayers for those affected. The Merida project is located on the Yucatan Peninsula, which was hit by Hurricane Emily, a Category 4 storm, in July. Some families served by the project are trying to recover from the loss of their homes in that storm.

In a letter to CFCA-Kansas, Bernardo Rodriguez, coordinator of the Merida project, wrote, "During these days of pain for many of you, we participate in this pain with you as brothers in Jesus Christ."

Father George Mathew, Breads project coordinator in Bangalore, India, expressed solidarity with those affected. He said that the staff, sponsored children and their families offer "our prayerful support for all out there who are suffering, lost lives or property. We, and especially the subprojects in India, know what it is to be devastated by natural calamities, as we have experienced it with the recent tsunami."

From Honduras, a country devastated by Hurricane Mitch in 1998, Jose Carlos Ortiz, coordinator of the Juticalpa project, wrote, "We are united in prayer for all those affected by the hurricane. May God encourage them in these times of uncertainty."

“ We are united in prayer for all those affected by the hurricane ”

- Jose Carlos Ortiz, coordinator
Juticalpa project, Honduras

"The heart of CFCA is full of pain for those who have suffered such disruption and loss at the hands of Hurricane Katrina," said Francis "Paco" Wertin, CEO. "We pray for those who have died. We ask God to guide those who have been separated from family and friends. We pray for hope for those who need it the most during these most difficult days.

"May the love of God be poured out in abundance to provide the strength necessary to rebuild lives and livelihoods. May our nation respond with overwhelming love and service by reaching out to those in such need. Those in need will certainly reach back and touch our lives."

Sponsored friends of those affected will continue to receive

is available to assist our sponsors affected by Hurricane Katrina by setting up temporary or permanent changes of address, telephone or e-mail, responding to requests for replacement photos and family histories of sponsored friends, and answering any questions sponsors may have. Changes of contact information may be completed online at www.cfcausa.org, by contacting Sponsor Services toll-free at (800) 875-6564 weekdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Central time, or by sending a letter to CFCA Sponsor Services, One Elmwood Ave., Kansas City, KS 66103.

CFCA in Kansas City has received messages of solidarity from projects around the world.

The CFCA project in Merida, Mexico, which has suffered severe

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CFCA NEWS

2006 DATES SLATED FOR MISSION TRIPS

Experience the traditions of another culture when traveling on a CFCA mission awareness trip. Enjoy the sights and sounds of sponsored children playing in their neighborhoods and CFCA centers, and have the opportunity to meet your sponsored friend. See the beauty of the country's natural landscape and how CFCA projects are working with sponsored children, youth and aging persons. For CFCA trip information, contact the trip coordinator at (800) 875-6564, trips@cfcausa.org or visit us at www.cfcausa.org.

Bolivia
Sept. 2-10

Colombia*
July 30-Aug. 6

Costa Rica
April 1-8

El Salvador
July 15-22
Aug. 19-26

Guatemala*
Feb. 4-11
March 4-11
April 29-May 6
May 27-June 3
July 8-15
Aug. 5-12
Oct. 28 - Nov. 4
Dec. 26 - Jan. 2,
2007

Honduras
April 22-29

India
Nov. 4-17

* It is advisable to register for these trips well in advance in order to reserve a space.

Dates subject to change.

Kenya/Uganda
September
(dates to be determined)

Mexico
Monterrey
March 18-26

Merida
March 25-April 1
Nov. 11-18 or 19

Cuernavaca
Sept. 30-Oct. 7
Juarez
Oct. 7-14

Nicaragua
Aug. 12-19

Philippines
January 21-31

Venezuela
May 13-20

Sponsor on quest to meet children receives Pilgrimage of Faith Award

This year's Pilgrimage of Faith Award recipient embodies the spirit of pilgrimage.

Sponsor Jerry Menard, 75, of Bourbonnais, Ill., is on a personal journey to visit all 16 of his sponsored children. He's visited 12 of the children so far.

"I asked the Lord to let me live long enough to visit all my children, and so far he's done his end of the bargain," Jerry said. "So far there are four children to date which I haven't seen. I keep telling everybody I've got to keep sponsoring kids, otherwise the Lord is going to say, 'OK, you've seen all your kids; come on, let's go.'"

Jerry was presented with the Pilgrimage of Faith Award in June at CFCA's annual awards dinner in Kansas City.

"I don't think there are words to describe how I feel in winning this award," Jerry said. "But deep down I hope you understand. These kids are everything to me."

Jerry's quest to see his sponsored children has taken him

to the Philippines, El Salvador, Colombia, Kenya, Nicaragua and Guatemala. The retired commercial construction supervisor and Navy officer began sponsoring children through CFCA in 1998.

Besides his sponsorship support, Jerry gives each child a gift from the heart. He travels with two suitcases – one for his clothes and another packed with toys that he crafted from wood. Jerry's dancing men are popular with older children, and younger children enjoy the toy dogs that

they pull along by a string.

The Pilgrimage of Faith Award was established in 1996 following the journey of CFCA's co-founder and president, Bob Hentzen, who walked from Kansas City to Guatemala to show his love for the poor and raise awareness of their realities and gifts. The award is given annually to honor those who share CFCA's core values and give witness to those values in their daily lives.



CFCA/Tim Deveney

Jerry Menard opens a present from his sponsored children Catarina (left), Angelica (right), and Victoria (not pictured) on the mission awareness trip to Guatemala in August 2005.

CFCA NEWS

Poverty leads to distorted view of world, missionary says

Poverty is a disease that destroys individuals, families, communities and the very fabric of society, Msgr. Greg Schaffer said at a CFCA gathering in Kansas City last June.

“We know it’s the biggest killer in the world,” said the CFCA board member and missionary in Guatemala for the last 41 years. “But what’s hard to see is what it does to the very core of the human being. It destroys his or her self-image.”

Msgr. Schaffer told the story of Celestino, a Guatemalan farmer who was his neighbor years ago. Celestino came home from work one day, carrying the big agricultural tools used by farmers in his community. The usual spring in his step was missing as he walked along the dusty street, looking down at the dirt.

“So when he came on by, I said, ‘Hey, how are you doing?’ Msgr. Schaffer recalled. “He stopped and looked me in the eye and said, ‘Father, do you really want to know?’ I said, ‘Sure, that’s why I asked.’ He said, ‘Well, I’ve figured something out today.’ ‘Oh, what’s that?’ I asked. ‘I’m an animal,’ he said. ‘Come on, you’re not an animal,’ I said. ‘You can think, you can speak, you can do what you want.’ He said, ‘Can I? I was working a



CFCA/Marcelo Gomez

Msgr. Greg Schaffer gives the keynote talk at CFCA’s 2005 Annual Gathering held in Kansas City, Kan., stressing the obligation to help bring about change through personal outreach to sponsored children, youth and aging persons.

guy’s field today, and he came and showed me how to work the hoe. I’ve been working with a hoe since I was 4 years old. ... I had to do it his way, or I don’t get the 50 cents he pays me.”

Celestino went on to say that the meager wage was not enough to feed his children adequately, or send them to school, or give them a decent place to live, Father Schaffer recalled.

“But I have to hold the hoe his way to get that (wage), but I couldn’t, so I couldn’t do my work right,” Msgr. Schaffer recalled Celestino saying. The farmer pointed to his house with corn stalks for sides, one window, a dirt floor and a grass roof. “Father,” Msgr. Schaffer recalled him saying, “I keep my

family in there. You wouldn’t keep an animal in there.”

CFCA has a “tremendous obligation” to help bring about change through personal outreach to children, youth and aging persons, and through building compassionate communities, Msgr. Schaffer said. When people are given a chance to help themselves and others in their communities, they will do it, he said.

Poverty destroys communities and leads to a distorted view that the world is made up of two kinds of people – the rich and the poor, the haves and the have-nots, the first and the third, the north and the south, Msgr. Schaffer said. The world is not divided, he said, it is made up of distinct and magnificent cultures in which people have a tremendous heritage, values, principles and gifts.

Since we all come from one creator, we are a world of brothers and sisters with a responsibility to work together for solutions to poverty, Msgr. Schaffer said. CFCA’s approach to addressing poverty – starting with the individual and extending to families and communities – promotes structural change from the bottom up, he said, adding, “That’s how anything has to grow.”



make sponsorship contributions online

www.cfcausa.org



PHOTO COURTESY OF KRISTIN LILE

The bright smiles of children welcomed sponsors touring a Managua subproject on a mission awareness trip to Nicaragua in August.

The strength, courage and hopefulness in

HONDURAS & NICARAGUA



PROJECT LOCATIONS AND STATISTICS

	Sponsored	Awaiting Sponsorship
HONDURAS		
1. El Progreso	2,348	131
2. Juticalpa	788	51
3. Ocotepeque	2,139	178
4. Santa Barbara	1,755	136
5. Santa Rosa	3,755	228
6. Suyapa	2,186	237
NICARAGUA		
7. Leon/La Salle	982	67
8. Managua	7,627	424

Statistics current as of September 2005



CFCA's co-founder and president, Bob Hentzen, spends about three-fourths of his year visiting CFCA projects around the world and meeting with sponsors on mission awareness trips. His reports from the field offer insights into the people, places and projects he visits.

Following are excerpts from Bob's most recent report from Honduras, where he met up with sponsors participating in a mission awareness trip in late June and early July. More extensive excerpts from Bob's travel notes from around the world are available online at www.cfcausa.org.



Bob Hentzen

President shares travel notes from Honduras

Heartfelt greetings from the CFCA projects. I write this time from Honduras, Central America, as we begin the second mission awareness trip to this beautiful, struggling country. CFCA has six projects in Honduras with more than 14,000 families involved (including 37 sponsored religious vocation candidates and 329 students on CFCA scholarships).

This second mission awareness trip to Honduras begins with a two-day visit to the CFCA Ocotepeque project. This project, quite close to the border of both El Salvador and Guatemala, is organized in 11 subprojects (mission sites). This project serves 30 rural communities and 16 neighborhoods around Ocotepeque.

June 27, 2005

We have spent this day with admirable sponsored families in the mountains surrounding Ocotepeque. What a joy to see mothers who have learned sewing and other skills at the CFCA Ocotepeque Cen-

ter moving forward, in spite of countless challenges. Every campesino (farm) child was sharply dressed and exactly sized.

We were divided into three groups to visit families. With the abundant rains, the roads are interesting, to say the least. In the peace of these mountains and in community with these people, I can only think, "There is no place on earth I'd rather be

this afternoon."

My group visited four families, each one tremendously inspiring. Once through the faithful and ever-present guard dogs, we were invited into humble, homemade hogares (homes) of adobe walls and earthen floors, with a soul of well-cared-for children, a wood-burning stove that says "C'mon in," and a hearth-warmed concept of resurrection lived each day, and I'm sure half the night, during the storms of this rainy season.

June 30, 2005

These two communities (Quebrada Honda and Plan de los Robles in the Santa Rosa project) are very much in the Honduran countryside. Of impact in these communities is the strong presence of the dads. They are keenly interested in and very grateful for the project. We expressed to all that we appreciate their coming together to greet and share with the mission awareness trip group. We recognize that they give up a day's wages to be here. We broke into five groups and visited as many homes of sponsored children as time permitted.

July 1, 2005

Our community prayer this morning included the personal testimony of a young family with two sponsored girls. At the tender age of 6, little Maria Teresa developed life-threatening heart problems. Through the help of her sponsor, she now receives essential treatment twice a week

(continued on page 8)

Travel notes

(continued from page 7)

in San Pedro Sula. The parents tell us that Maria Teresa is making progress. She really got to the sponsors when she said, "Thank you for giving me a piece of your heart."

July 2, 2005

With the sponsors delivered safely to the airport, I was able to spend the morning with 43 of our community promoters in the project of El Progreso. We held this meeting in the hall of the parish where CFCA



CFCA/OCOTEPEQUE PROJECT

The Ocotepeque project in Honduras offers sewing workshops in which families of sponsored children can learn to make their clothing.

Co-Founder Jerry Tolle spent his missionary years. These 43 promoters are CFCA's community contact people. Some women had left their mountain homes early, traveling on foot or horseback. Mostly we listened to the

beauty and strength of their faith and struggle.

Under a gentle rain, we drove to Santa Barbara. After Mass we had a meeting with 20 or so sponsored teens from the rural areas. During the week, they work hard in the fields and receive instruction by radio. On weekends, they walk into town, meet with teachers and participate in CFCA activities.

July 5, 2005

We negotiated logging roads in the back country to the small town of Guata, the most distant subproject of Juticalpa. Many times these roads are impassable because of mud and high water in the rivers.

In Guata we found 47 sponsored children, youth and their families. These simple, struggling campesino families expressed great gratitude for the CFCA presence. "Before, we lived isolated from each other. You are bringing us together."

We were delayed quite a long time on the mountain roads, when a truck loaded with cement and a bus got stuck and blocked the road. It was after dark when we gratefully got back to Juticalpa.

July 6, 2005

This was another full day among the campesino families in the countryside of Juticalpa. Inspiring is Erlinda, the abandoned mother of four who is building her own adobe home. On the four sides of the house, she and the children plant good looking crops of beans and squash. Special project monies are helping Erlinda and the children with the house.

Each of the 34 sponsored children of the El Rusio subproject wrote and performed a short poem about CFCA. Two of these sponsored teens are blind.

July 7, 2005

We are traversing the country of Honduras ... Juticalpa ... Tegucigalpa ... San Pedro Sula ... Santa Rosa ... Ocotepeque. Tomorrow we will cross over into Guatemala and make our way to the capital city in order to receive a large group of sponsors on July 9.

Thank you for traveling with us. I wish you God's blessings.

Group impressed by courageous spirits in Nicaragua

The Barrio El Calvario (Calvary) sits precariously on the steep side of a mountain overlooking the city of Matagalpa. Thousands of rural families immigrated to the peripheral slums of Matagalpa, to places such as El Calvario, after international coffee prices plunged and the bottom fell out of Nicaragua's coffee economy.

There are no roads, no running water and no plumbing in El Calvario, which is vulnerable to landslides. There is a single line of "stolen" electricity. Most houses are made of mud, zinc and plastic. The majority of households are headed by women, mothers abandoned by the men in their lives.

In all its poverty, El Calvario, an area served by the Managua project, made an indelible impression on a delegation of CFCA staff members who visited last May. The images of poverty are marked in their hearts and minds, but so are the strength, courage and hopefulness of the people.

One such person was Dora Blandon Valle. At age 48, Dora is raising two granddaughters whose mother died of insecticide poisoning. Both girls are sponsored through CFCA.

"A natural leader, she describes herself as thin and agile, so as to be able to handle the rough terrain of the well-named Barrio El Calvario," wrote CFCA President Bob Hentzen in his report on the trip. "She has ably headed up 125 families in pressuring the municipal government to allot them a place to begin anew their lives on a piece of property where landslides will not be such an imminent danger."

Dora did not have an opportunity for an education, and she is now pursuing her studies at the fourth-grade level.

Ana Martinez, who oversees Central American projects for CFCA in Kansas City, said the determination and spirit of Dora and others in the community are impressive.

"The whole community of El Calvario got together in a peaceful way to advocate for change," Ana said. "They wanted a safer place to live."

The community is working with the local government on a plan to relocate families to a safer area with improved infrastructure.

Another reason for hope in communities such as El Calvario and the Barrio Lucidia Mantilla,



CFCA/ANA MARTINEZ

Rafael Villalobos, regional coordinator for CFCA projects in Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Honduras, visits with families of sponsored children living at the Barrio El Calvario.

where the group also visited, is the presence of CFCA sponsorship with its emphasis on personal outreach and building communities of compassion, Bob noted.

"Unforgettable is a young mother with a 15-day-old baby, standing shyly in the door of her leaky shack, abandoned ... with no food, no medicine, little hope," Bob wrote. "Into this picture, by the grace of God, CFCA is able to offer a welcoming community of compassion. With personal outreach, we have the opportunity to literally save lives ... and, if we remain open to God's grace, perhaps be converted ourselves."

NICARAGUA COUNTRY STATISTICS *(Source: CIA World Factbook 2005)*

Population: 5,465,100 (July 2005 est.)

Age Structure: 37.2% younger than 15

Labor force: 1.93 million (2004 est.)

Unemployment rate: 7.8% plus underemployment of 46.5% (2003 est.)

Population below poverty line: 50% (2001 est.)

Editor's note: Occupations of CFCA families in rural areas are generally agricultural, including coffee and corn crops, raising cattle, trades and handicrafts. In urban areas, parents of sponsored children work in the textiles industry, in construction and as street vendors.

FINANCIAL REPORT

CFCA is committed to responsible stewardship

Sponsorship of children, youth, and the elderly remains the highest priority of Christian Foundation for Children and Aging. Through the continued generosity of our sponsors and donors, CFCA was blessed with 9.0% growth in 2004. For the full year, total sponsored children and aging increased to 297,669 and Total Public Support surpassed \$73 million. Funding to Mission Projects included 83.8% of available sponsorship income and 100% of donations for Christmas, birthday, scholarship and special

needs. Together, this represented an annual funding percentage of 85.5% to our mission projects worldwide.

Other expense categories as a percentage of total costs include Program Support Services of 7.2%, Fund Raising of 3.2%, and Administration of 4.1%. CFCA continues to monitor its Board Designated Reserves – funds set aside for future growth and operating contingencies. As needed, this reserve provides scholarship assistance to our mission projects,

development funding for CFCA's proprietary data management and information system (CASA), reserve funding for administrative and support services, and funding for capital equipment needs and office expansion. CFCA continues to operate from a converted warehouse. A major capital improvement project was recently completed in the spring of 2004 updating 6,000 square feet of office space within our headquarters building in Kansas City, Kan.

Statement of Activities for the Year Ended December 31, 2004

Support

Sponsorships	\$64,628,016
General Public	8,404,730
Total Public Support	73,032,746
Other Revenue	685,185
Total Public Support and Revenue	\$73,717,931

Expenses

Program		
Funding to Mission Projects	\$61,000,357	(85.5%)
Program Support Services	5,176,022	(7.2%)
Total Program Services	66,176,379	(92.7%)
Fund Raising	2,276,415	(3.2%)
Administration	2,925,635	(4.1%)
Total Project Support & Operating Expenses	\$71,378,429	(100%)
Net Asset Increase	\$ 2,339,502*	

*Designations/Restrictions of Net Asset Increase

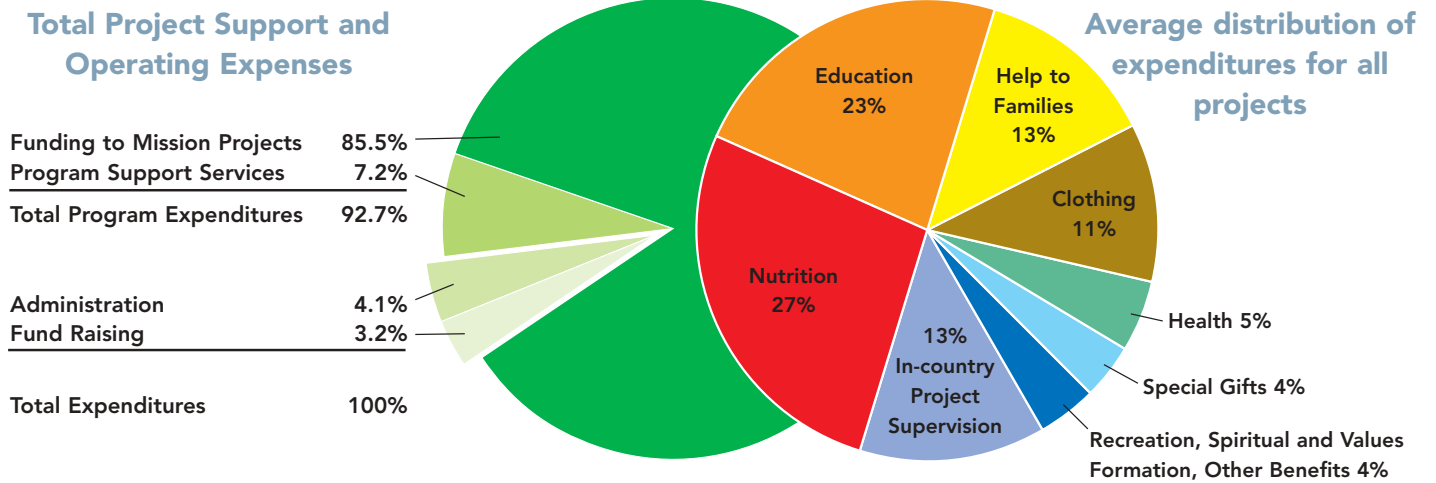
Advance payments from sponsors received in 2004 for distribution in 2005	\$2,403,027
Net additions to Board Designated Reserves, Property & Equipment	(63,525)
Total Designations/Restrictions of Net Asset Increase	\$ 2,339,502

Editor's note: Program Support Services is defined as U.S.-based services to our sponsors and monitoring of our projects.



Luis
Atitlan project
Guatemala

Your Contributions at Work



How our projects use CFCA funds

The pie chart (above right) represents an average distribution of expenditures for all projects in 2004. Please note that benefits vary by location according to needs, local resources and various factors.

- 27% **Nutrition:** groceries, meals, food vouchers, services of nutritionists
- 23% **Education:** tuition and other fees, books, school supplies
- 13% **Help to families:** housing repairs, beds, income-generating programs, training in income-producing trades, services of social workers, assistance with other special needs of families
- 13% **In-country project supervision:** overseas field staff, in-country design, delivery and supervision of benefits; in-country auditing, photos, translation of letters and other expenses related to fostering relationships between sponsored friends and their sponsors.
- 11% **Clothing:** school uniforms, shoes, sweaters, jackets, dress clothes, umbrellas
- 5% **Health:** check-ups, medicines, vitamins, diagnostic tests, medical procedures
- 4% **Special gifts:** gifts given to sponsored children and aging persons on behalf of sponsors for Christmas, birthdays and other special occasions
- 4% **Recreation:** talent development, participation in field trips, sports and the arts; **Spiritual and values formation:** religious and values formation including catechism classes, Bible study, faith sharing, retreats (CFCA works without religious or other prejudice); **Other benefits:** assistance with various needs of sponsored children and aging persons as identified by CFCA projects

SPECIAL THANK YOU

Funds from wills, estate plans benefit scholarship program

On behalf of CFCA scholarship students, we extend heartfelt gratitude for the thoughtfulness and generosity of our sponsors and donors who remember CFCA in their wills and estate plans. Unless otherwise designated, these funds go to support the

scholarship program, which helps students attend secondary school, college or vocational training and become leaders in their communities.

For information about designating CFCA in a will or estate plan, contact Planned Giving at

(800) 875-6564, Ext. 7144.

Following is a list of those who have included CFCA in their wills or estate plans and gave us permission to list their names as our way of saying “Thank you” for supporting the education of students around the world.

Donor List

M. Carol Ambuhl
Donna Jill Anderson
Robert P. Balles
Julia A. Barrett
John Bassett
Darlene Benjamin
Marion H. Benz
Beverly and Buddy Biggs
Gary L. Blanchard
Judith E. Bock
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Anna Zilboorg
John Zipprich

For information about designating CFCA in a will or estate plan, contact Planned Giving at (800) 875-6564, Ext. 7144.



CFCA NEWS

Family receives housing help through special funds

Sponsored child Juanita Marcela, from Christian Foundation for Children and Aging's Managua project in Nicaragua, has seen how God works through sponsors now that her family has a warm, dry place to sleep.

Juanita, 11, has lived with her grandmother, Juana Dolores, 80, since her mother died of a heart attack four years ago. Juanita does not know her father. Her grandmother takes care of her and her 16-year-old brother, whose growth and development were severely stunted by meningitis.

Juanita's grandmother, in poor health and struggling to care for her family, was faced with yet another obstacle three years ago: a strong wind barreled through the countryside lifting the fragile rooftop of plastic and tin off the house, and then dropping it on its side.

Unable to repair the roof and the walls, the family lived in what little was left of their house. Without a roof, Juanita had to use a plastic sheet to cover herself at night. Her grandmother stayed awake during the night, afraid that someone would enter the open house and hurt Juanita and her brother.

After a meeting of families from the community, Juanita shyly approached CFCA coordinators and explained what had happened. After seeing the conditions, the project contacted



CFCA/Managua project

Juanita (left), pictured with her grandmother and brother, is grateful for the compassion shown to her and her family through sponsorship. The family reports that their lives have improved greatly because of the help from sponsorship contributions and special funds that provided for repairs and improvements to their home.

CFCA headquarters in Kansas City to see if special funds were available to improve Juanita's home.

"The roofs in that area are very unstable," said Ana Martinez, who oversees Central American projects for CFCA. "The roofs are not secured to anything; they are just lying on top of the houses. It is understandable that a strong wind can easily destroy a roof."

CFCA sent \$1,300 to the Managua project to build a roof, walls, cement floor and purchase beds and kitchen supplies for the

home. CFCA utilizes special funds to help in emergencies and other situations of extreme need. The funds to improve Juanita's house came from a bequest from a sponsor who asked that the funds be used for needs in Central America.

"I used to dream of having a very pretty house in which I had my own room and where I am very happy living there with my grandmother and my brother," Juanita said. "Having this new house is a dream come true. We are very happy and thankful to have a safe place to live."

With this blessing, Juanita explained that her life and the lives of her grandmother and brother have improved greatly.

"Now I can relax at night when it rains because from now on, I will not get wet any more because of not having a roof on my house," Juanita said. She said the encouragement she is given through sponsorship to reach her dreams is one of the ways she feels the love of God.

"I have support through sponsorship and CFCA," Juanita said. "Sponsorship means that I have a person who gives me a hand to get ahead in life. Thanks to my sponsor's help, I am in school. I am fed. I am dressed and have shoes. I have a new house to live in. I have hopes to get ahead. I have one more reason to believe that God loves me very much."



KID'S CORNER

A section dedicated to helping children understand the gifts of the poor

Count your blessings essay and art contest

In the spring issue of Sacred Ground, an essay and art contest was announced for children ages 15 and younger, asking entrants to tell about a special blessing in their life. The winners will have \$50 donated in their names to a CFCA project of their choice. We would like to send out a special thank you to all the children who submitted entries for this contest. There were so many wonderful blessings shared. Choosing the winner was not an easy task, but the community at CFCA headquarters in Kansas City voted and below are the winners, along with entries that received an honorable mention.

**Winner Emily Damm, 9 years old
Quito, Ecuador**



"Shelter, clothes, family, friends, food, education, faith, nature, senses and happiness!!!"

Art Contest (Ages 10 and Under)

**Honorable mention
Katherine DeMarco, 9 years old**



"Grateful that we sleep under the same sky as our sponsored families."

Art Contest Ages 11-15

**Honorable mention
Megan Eve Fondren, 11 years old**



"There is room for everyone."

**Winner Annemarie Holbrook, 12 years old
Lima, Peru**



"I am grateful for being able to help the less fortunate."

Essay - Ages 10 and Younger

Winner

Brandin Dones, 8 years old
Quibdo, Colombia

My family has always been very special to me because they taught me to laugh and have a good time with my life. My sister and grandmother love to tell funny stories. The person who really does make me laugh until I cry is my mom. As a family we share plenty of hugs and kisses. (I do wipe my cheek after mommy kisses.) We always stick together whenever there is a problem. We help one another. We are there for each other. This is what a loving family is all about. I'm glad to be a part of one.

Honorable mention

Gabrielle C. Middendorf
8 years old

A loving family is a blessing. I have two sisters and one brother. My mommy buys us nutritious food. My favorite blessing is carrots. A loving family is my daddy kissing me at night. They all share with me their toys and dolls. I also have the blessing of not being poor. We also have a picture of the child we sponsor on the top of our family shrine. He blesses me with his letters.

Essay - Ages 11-15

Winner

William Jude, 11 years old
San Jose, Costa Rica

Hello, my name is William Jude. I am only an 11-year-old boy, but want to tell you about my experiences, how it happened, and how I feel about my blessing, CFCA.

It all started about three years ago. I was sitting in Mass, squirming around in my seat like most other 7-year-old boys do. I was looking inquisitively around at the statues of Our Lady and other holy people. Then another priest, besides our parish priest, came to the podium and started to speak. I was interested in this man. "Who was he? What did he work for?" were just some of the many questions I asked. I listened and learned about the Christian Foundation for Children and Aging. After the Mass, my parents sponsored a 2-year-old boy named José from Costa Rica.

I now help CFCA priests if they ever come into my state. CFCA is a joy in my life, and it will never leave me. I enjoy helping CFCA.

I personally think this is a really good organization for

kids like me to get involved in. That way, they will know there are people out there less fortunate than themselves and they need to help them.

I also enjoy CFCA because it is a Catholic organization. My favorite saying is by Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta. It is, "Everything is God's to give and to take away, so share what you have been given, and that includes yourself." I want to give myself to the poor, and one way of doing that is helping CFCA.

Honorable mention

Kinsey Seacord
11 years old

If someone asked me to write my blessings, my list would be as big as a humpback whale.

My most important blessing would be God and my faith. I know there are many people who have not received this blessing. I hope to share this blessing with everyone. It is important because my faith revolves around all my blessings. It guides me in my thoughts, actions, choices and words. I don't know how I would live without my faith. God makes most of my blessings, like my family. My family includes my mom, dad, brother and sister. I would never live without them. They encourage, support and provide for me. They help me choose the right things. They provide a house, food and endless love. Many people have lost family members, but I always say that "when someone dies, it's just delaying your visit with them for awhile until you join them in heaven."

Love is another blessing in my life. The world would not live without it. I have love surrounding me. Everywhere I go I see love and the face of Jesus in everyone, nice and grouchy. If there was no love, there would be no relationships, which means no childbirth, which means no one would survive. Without love, it would be hard to forgive others when they hurt us. I am so thankful for love. These are just some of the many blessings in my life.

Honorable mention

Jordan Shiltz
12 years old

I am thankful for having a grandpa who had [sponsored] three children through CFCA. He gave money for them to live a better life, but in May of 2003 my grandpa passed away at the age of 76. My mom, my aunt and my uncle took the responsibility to [sponsor] them and pay for them. I am also thankful for my mom because she cares for me and makes me live a better life.

I think everyone should [sponsor] a child and pay for them to make their lives better because there are some kids who go to bed hungry every night and can hardly afford clothes or to live in a house.



OUR MISSION

Christian Foundation for Children and Aging is a lay Catholic organization serving the poor at mission sites in developing countries around the world. Through sponsorship of children and aging, we build relationships of mutual respect and support while raising awareness in our own country of the needs and gifts of the poor and the mission outreach of the Church.



José, 2, was awaiting sponsorship through the Managua project in Nicaragua when Sacred Ground went to press.

For those affected by Hurricane Katrina

“The heart of CFCA is full of pain for those who have suffered such disruption and loss at the hands of Hurricane Katrina. We pray for those who have died. We ask God to guide those who have been separated from family and friends. We pray for hope for those who need it the most during these most difficult days.”

*Francis “Paco” Wertin
CEO, Christian Foundation for Children and Aging*

See page 3 for full story.



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