



OCIMA

Overseas and Continental Independent Mercy Association

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November 2010

Dear Friend(s) of OCIMA,

Recently, I read the following and it reminded me of Father Nick and how OCIMA was founded.

*It's not enough to have lived. We should determine to live for something.
May I suggest that it be creating joy for others, sharing what we have for
the betterment of personkind, bringing hope to the lost and love to the
lonely.*

Father Nick actively sought to share his talents and his love of life in a way that made a real difference. And through OCIMA, we continue to make a difference in so many lives. Let me share some of the messages we received this year from our friends in Guatemala and Ecuador.

From Casa Hogar Santo Domingo...

Just this past week, I received a booklet written by the many girls and young women who have found a home at the orphanage in Santa Elena, Guatemala. In each of their testimonials, they talk about the love they experience(d) at the *Casa Hogar* (meaning "house and home") and how their experience there continues to help them find their way – as wives, as mothers, and all as well-grounded and educated young women who can contribute back to the community. Many of them have come from situations that I hope none of us ever has to endure, but they have been able to experience hope and joy at the *Casa Hogar*. And I can tell you first-hand that these girls share their joy ten-fold.

I think of Xoila who is now in her early thirties. She was abandoned and delivered to the orphanage when she was about 18 months old. She now lives on her own, and works in the pharmacy at the Clinic (also supported by OCIMA). Her face radiates love and joy. She says "I'm happy and feel complete in who I am and what I do."

As with Xoila, the *Casa Hogar* has been a loving home to many girls – providing an atmosphere for mental and spiritual growth, and an environment that allows the girls to become self-confident, sensible citizens with a sense of compassion and responsibility. And so, *Casa Hogar* embodies the heart and soul of OCIMA.

When Sue Hug and I visited this past February, Sister Marcella gave us a tour of the dormitories and was so proud to point out the new roof and expanded bathroom facilities, made possible through your contributions. The *Casa Hogar* is pretty much at maximum capacity with 37 girls ranging in age from 2 to 17, but I have yet

to hear of a child who has been turned away. Many of the little ones have now grown up and are dealing with the trials and tribulations of being teenagers. Next on Sister Marcella's wish list is to build an open-air gathering place so that the older girls have their own space to be teenage girls in a safe environment.

From Centro Educativo de Nuestra Señora de Esperanza (CENSE)...

The school in Santa Rosa, Guatemala is in a region that suffered greatly from the volcano at Pacaya and from Hurricane Agatha this past year. The school diverted a portion of the funds that were raised through the Saint Irenaeus raffle last year to help families of students whose homes were destroyed or who lost parents, brothers and sisters as a result of these disasters. This is the first year the school has requested additional support from OCIMA.

From GSFEP in Ecuador...

In January of this year, OCIMA received a thank-you letter from Jose Tonello (Bepi) – a good friend of Father Nick's and OCIMA's, and the current Director of both GSFEP and *Un Canto a la Vida* hospital. OCIMA has long supported GSFEP due to its work with the Mayans and the establishment of micro-coops. We have also contributed to the construction of the hospital, which began several years ago so that the 800,000 poor living in southern Quito would have a place to obtain healthcare. You will be happy to hear that the hospital became fully operational earlier this year!

As a result, the funds we sent to Ecuador in 2009 were totally directed toward the support of the micro-coops. Bepi wrote:

"...we are now facing some economic difficulties due to less international help directed to Ecuador. This year we will feel this [downtrend in contributions] even more after the terrible tragedy in Haiti.... We need OCIMA to continue demonstrating with their work that Father Nick is alive and continues helping the poor of Guatemala and Ecuador through his collaborators/benefactors."

I know Father Nick would have been thrilled with the completion of *Un Canto a la Vida* hospital – a safe haven for the poorest of the poor to be treated with dignity at a time when they are desperate to find help. Now OCIMA continues its primary mission in Ecuador by assisting those who are willing and able to help themselves through micro-coops. OCIMA helps to make dreams realities in Ecuador.

From the OCIMA Board...

Over 99¢ of every dollar you contribute goes directly to Guatemala and Ecuador. There is so much more to tell you about how you are impacting the lives of people several thousand miles away. When Sue and I were in Guatemala, we visited the homes of families for whom OCIMA is providing special medical attention through the work of the Nutritional Center in Morales. We met nine-year old Christian who is suffering from years of neglect – not because he isn't loved by his grandmother and aunt, but because of a lack of education. Your dollars help to fund programs to monitor/evaluate the health of children and mothers in remote areas, but these dollars also go toward teaching the basics of diet and hygiene so that these situations can be avoided in the future.

To this end, we would also like to help fund a nursing-school annex to the Clinic. I was horrified to learn about some of the arcane customs that simply defy reason, but are still practiced in some

remote villages. There is no such thing as a nurse in these parts of the country. Even if only a few young men and women were to return to their villages after an education in nursing, what an improvement that would make! And who would the villagers trust more than one of their own?!

We haven't even talked about the Clinic, the Day Care Center, or the Food Program. ***It is truly a miracle that we were again able to send two shipments of food to Guatemala in 2010!*** In the past, we've talked about the great need for this food. We wish each one of you could see the eyes of just one person who is the beneficiary of this food. They are so grateful!

We thank you all for your continued support. Please help OCIMA continue to create joy for others, share what we have for the betterment of personkind, and bring hope to the lost and love to the lonely.

We'd like to develop an e-mail list so that we can notify you when we post updates to the website, or if there is any special news we'd like you to know. For example, once translated, we will post the testimonials from *Casa Hogar*. If you'd like these updates, please write your e-mail address on your check memo, or send us a note.

From all of us at OCIMA to all of you, we extend our best wishes for the coming holidays and holy days that you may be enjoying and celebrating. Peace to all of you, and I wish you health and happiness in the coming year.

Maria Curreri
OCIMA President

FINANCIAL REPORT — 2009

FUNDS AVAILABLE:

Donations in 2009:	\$ 182,447
Distribution from Endowment Fund:	5,296
Carryover from 2008:	233

TOTAL FUNDS AVAILABLE:	<u>\$ 187,976</u>
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PROJECT DISBURSEMENTS:

1. GSFEP (Ecuador) – Cooperatives & campesino bank	\$ 15,000
2. School in Chapas, Santa Rosa	36,400
3. Nutritional Center in Morales	27,500
4. Clinic, Orphanage and Day Care Center in Santa Elena	56,600
5. Purchase and packing of specially formulated food for the malnourished	50,000

TOTAL PROJECT DISBURSEMENTS:	\$ 185,500
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<u>EXPENSES:</u> ¹	<u>\$ 1,340</u>
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TOTAL EXPENSES & DISBURSEMENTS:	\$ 186,840
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<u>CARRYFORWARD TO 2010:</u>	\$ 1,136
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¹ Expense ratio (i.e., expenses as a percent of total funds available for 2009) is 0.71%. Expenses include P.O. box fees, postage, envelopes, auditor, and bank fees.