

News from Villa Infantil

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Villa Races to Meet Compliance Deadline

FAILURE MAY CAUSE SHUTDOWN OF ORPHANAGE

As many of you may know, in early July, Villa Infantil had its first comprehensive state inspection. The state presented Madre Maria with a list of items that must be met if the Villa is to operate as an orphanage after November 28, 2011. While many of the items were simple to address and have already been accomplished, some require substantial amounts of funding. To address this issue, we have put together a fact sheet which is attached to this newsletter or you can download it from the home page of the website. The fact sheet includes the actual items that need to be addressed, the status and cost, if known.

This is an emergency situation and Villa Infantil needs your help!

Cash and Check Donations can be made

by contacting Friends of Villa Infantil at info@friendsofvillainfantil.org or through Credit or Debit Card at Foundation for Lake Chapala Charities at <http://www.lakechapalacharities.org> by using their PayPal account. After filling out information on the Foundation's site, you will be taken to PayPal Mexico. The first box in the form allows you to change your country to US (Estados Unidos) or Canada which changes the language to English. If you live outside Mexico you will need to do this to get the proper name and address fields. You may print out a receipt when your transaction is complete. Donations given through the Foundation are tax deductible. Please be sure to specify when donating either way that your donation is for **Regulations Compliance**

Foundation for Lake Chapala Charities

MAKE TAX DEDUCTIBLE DONATIONS ONLINE

Donating from afar can be difficult. And sometimes you want your donation to be tax deductible. Now, thanks to the Foundation for Lake Chapala Charities donating just got much easier. You can now use your credit card, debit card or PayPal account to make donations directly to the Villa. At the website, choose giving and then

press the donate now button. Fill in the form, choosing Villa Infantil as your chosen charity and indicating how your would like your donation to be used. When the form is completed and you choose the continue button, you will be taken to PayPal Mexico. The first box in the form allows you to change your country to US

(Estados Unidos) or Canada which will change your screen to English. You may need to do this to get the proper name and address fields. You may print out a receipt when your transaction is complete. The Foundation is a registered 501(c)3 and recognized by the US Internal Revenue Service.

Note from the Editor

Such a short time since our last newsletter and so much has changed. When I was first notified about the list of compliance regulations the Villa needed to meet I could only think that there was no possible way the Villa Infantil would be able to complete everything before the November 28th deadline. I will admit that it seemed absolutely impossible. A

very negative “gloom and doom” attitude hit me. And then I thought, maybe, just maybe...

The response from supporters has been incredible. Every day brings new stories of new donors. The little Villa on the shores of Lake Chapala is a wonderful home for children and people know that and are digging in and helping out.

Many, many thanks to the fabulous donors and amazing volunteers who are working non-stop to make sure the doors to the Villa Infantil are open for many years to come. We have a way to go but we’ll make it!

Sally



The Upside of the Story

When the Villa received the list of 30 State Regulations Compliance and given such a short time to comply, there was, initially, a sinking feeling and lots of negative thinking but during the past few weeks as we have been working to get the word out to people and asking for help, some wonderfully positive things have happened.

Past sponsors and donors are letting us know that they will help in any way they can. Current sponsors and donors are offering financial help in addition to their monthly child

sponsorships or donations. Rick Feldman at The Foundation for Lake Chapala Charities is working closely with us so that donations may be made through the Foundation via Pay-Pal.

Steve and Fernando at Casa Flores and their work are featured in an article on Page 3, Jeanne Chaussee of the Guadalajara Reporter is getting the word out, a fundraiser is being planned and individual donors just keep coming!

While many donors have come forward, the need for additional

funds remains. Some of the compliance items are ongoing, such as the dietician and the doctor. Watching what has happened so far makes us believe donors will continue to come forward and these needs can be met.

Our focus remains, as always, on the children. Our sincere thanks to all of you who are helping ensure that the Villa remains open and home to the 23 children currently there and for those precious little ones who will make the Villa their home in years to come.

Website Gets Fresh New Look

We are happy to announce that the Villa Infantil website has just been updated. It has a fresh new look with brighter backgrounds, new graphics and layout. Some of the pictures of the children were taken as recently as last week. There is detailed information about the Villa’s current crisis in complying with state regulations and easy access to donation information. There is a fact sheet that is updated weekly outlining

the progress that has been made and what items remain to be completed as the Villa Infantil races towards meeting the deadline of November 28. The new website is the result of lots of work by volunteers both Lake-side and in the US. We hope you enjoy the new format! Please take a minute to visit the updated Villa Infantil website at www.friendsofvillainfantil.org

THANK YOU DONORS!

You have answered the call and giving at a time when many of you are really feeling the poor economy. Thank you for your help at this time of urgent need.

You are the best!

No More Leftovers!!

Thanks to the Lunch Group, Sister Blanca can take a break from lunch duty in the kitchen two days a week. Dedicated members of this group make a delicious lunch for the Villa children on Tuesday and Thursday every week. Twenty three children with very healthy appetites ensure there are no leftovers. If you would like more information on the Lunch group, please contact Geoff Long grofflong@yahoo.ca or (376) 766-3993



SPONSORSHIP

Please consider sponsoring or co-sponsoring a child at Villa Infantil. A contribution of \$30.00 USD a month will help provide an education and assist in assuring the general well-being of a child

Casa Flores - Supporter Extraordinaire

In our last issue we recognized Steve and Fernando, owners of Casa Flores in Ajijic for their support of Villa Infantil. That recognition was well deserved.

Fast forward four months and we find ourselves scurrying to meet compliance deadlines that seemed financially impossible. Once again, Steve and Fernando have stepped up to the plate.

As well as giving their own financial support to the Villa,



they have been instrumental in getting the word out to their guests, both former and present as well as to the lakeside community in general. Their contacts have been extremely generous, following the example of the

Lakeside B&B owners.

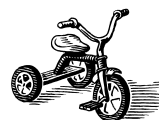
We urge you to check out their link on our website where you will receive information about a special promotion. Follow the instructions and a portion of the cost of a room will be donated to the Villa. What a win-win situation. You or your friends get to stay at beautiful Casa Flores and Villa Infantil gets a donation!

www.friendsofvillainfantil.org/casaflores.html

Thank You Sponsors!

On behalf of Madre Maria and the children, we would like to give a special **Thank You** to our wonderful sponsors. You have stayed with us through thick and thin, in spite of a sometimes unfavorable economy on both sides of the border. Your

continued financial support helps provide an education and assists in assuring the general well-being of your sponsored child or children and is **very** much appreciated. We couldn't do it without you!!"



Newsletter Credits

Thanks to Sandra Cartwright, a supporter of Made Maria and the Villa Infantil for more than 10 years for her invaluable input and research, and thanks to Barbara Finnerty, a supporter no longer at lakeside but, as many of you will re-

member, a staunch friend of Villa Infantil for her thoughtful and careful input, attention to detail and writing. Without them we could never have had this newsletter.

Lunch story photo credits: Geoff Long



Compliance Fact Sheet

The purpose of this sheet to bring forward questions and answers regarding how Villa Infantil, an orphanage located in San Pedro Tesistan on the south side of Lake Chapala, is working to comply with state regulations and what areas of need still exist. These questions were answered by Madre Maria who is in charge of the Villa.

Q: Who are the regulators? Are they state or federal?

A: The Regulators are from the State of Jalisco

Q: Why are all these issues coming up now. What about past inspections?

A: This is the first state inspection of this type to addressed fire safety, emergency exits, record keeping and the like.

Q: Approximately when was the inspection done?

A: The state inspection was done in early July 2011.

Q: What is the time frame for meeting/fulfilling the regulations requirements?

A: According to Madre the deadline for compliance is November 28, 2011. Since the State presented their list of compliance issues, there has been a surprise visit from a state inspector. The inspector observed the changes that have been made and that are in progress.

Q: What are the regulations that need to be met?

A: There is a list of thirty line items, 28 originally and two added later on. Several of the items on the list are administrative and have already been addressed and are now in compliance with the regulations.

Some of the physical changes that need to be made to the casitas where the children live are underway. For example, the exterior window sills are being trimmed so that there is no chance for a child to injure themselves if they happen to run up against the building.

Another compliance requirement that is underway is that a nutritionist has evaluated the children and determined each child's individual needs, so this is started and will be ongoing.

The regularly scheduled services of a psychologist are required. A local psychologist has made a commitment, and also a donor will pay the \$4,000 pesos for the first month of service.

Some of the items on the list do require substantial amounts of money, and donations are needed to make the needed changes. The six exit doors, two doors for each casita, need to be replaced so that they can be easily opened with a push bar. \$49,500 pesos will cover three of the emergency related line items on the compliance list: Six replacement emergency exit doors, a panic alarm sensor system for each casita and five fire extinguishers.

Q What is the volunteer organization, the Friends of Villa Infantil doing to help Madre and the Villa comply with the regulations?

A: The FOVI is working closely with Madre to resolve the regulation compliance issues. Friends of Villa Infantil is the organized group that administers the sponsor a child program, and holds major fundraising events activities. Members of the group bring lunch for the children to the Villa on a regular basis, currently two days a week.

Compliance Fact Sheet (Continued)

Q Is anyone else helping?

There are additional volunteers who individually and in groups are making donations or performing services. For example a local fumigation service provides its work, a requirement for compliance, for free. Other examples are visitors who often stop by and make a donation. Some visitors return on a regular basis, either weekly, monthly or annually.

The owners of Casa de Las Flores in Ajijic have a collection site for donations at their B&B, and make other significant donations themselves.

Whether you join in with the FOVI group or make an individual effort, all help and donations are greatly appreciated by Madre Maria and the other Sisters at the Villa Infantil.

Q: How can I help the Villa in this current crisis?

A: Having to comply with a long list of regulations by a set date, or else face being shut down by the state, is a crisis that is different from the Villa's other times of urgent need. Meeting the state's conditions and regulations is do-able. Donations are needed to help Madre Maria make the changes needed, before the November 28, 2011 deadline.

The state is increasing their supervision of the physical safety and the overall well being of the children at the Villa Infantil. This oversight is a result of a tragic day care fire that happened in Hermosillo in 2009 which resulted in the loss of many lives. Of course the increased oversight is good, as we all want the children to be safe and have all their needs met.

Attached is the full list of items. As costs become known, they will be posted. As regulations are met, we will also update this sheet. As shown on the sheet, these requirements are being taken very seriously and the Villa is working very hard to be in compliance for the deadline.

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Compliance List Items

These are Updated Weekly on the Website

<http://friendsofvillainfantil.org/Docs/Compliance.pdf>

1 and 2. These were administrative and have already been met.

#3 Services of a Psychologist 4 hours a day Monday-Friday. Madre received a clarification on this. The services of the Psychologist can be performed at his/her office and/or at the Villa rather than being on staff as originally required. Madre has a commitment from a local Psychologist and also a donor who will pay the 4,000 pesos for the first month of service. – **IN PROCESS**

#4 Services of a Medical Doctor (again, not necessarily on staff) but available 24/7. Madre has talked with 3 local doctors to see if they could "take turns" to cover the 24/7 requirement - no commitment yet. **NEEDED**

#5 Services of a Social Worker - Madre has talked with DIF and they will provide this service. **COMPLETED**

#6 Administrative - Documentation - **COMPLETED**.

#7 Administrative - Manuals - already taken care of. **COMPLETED**

#8 Administrative - employment descriptions for staff – **IN PROCESS**.

#9 Services of a Nurse - No schedule given for this requirement. However, Madre does have a commitment from a Nurse in San Cristobal who will help on this. **PENDING**

#10 Nutritionist – There has been a visit and dietary changes have been suggested for some of the children. This is off to a good start and some of what the group has done so far has been free of charge, but money will be needed on an on-going basis. **PENDING**

#11 Separate administrative offices/reception area/waiting room for private consultations Construction has begun to make the necessary space – **IN PROCESS**.

#12 Smoke Alarms **COMPLETED**

#13 - Fire awareness, protection and on-going inspection - Fire Department will take care of this. **IN PROCESS or COMPLETED**

#14 – Emergency Lighting – **COMPLETED**

#15 Fire extinguishers - **COMPLETED**

#16 Panic Alarm sensor system for each casita at a cost of 11,400 pesos **COMPLETED**

#17 Smoke detectors/Fire Alarms, .. **COMPLETED**

#18 Nutrition information for each child. The group came up with individual needs for each child, etc. so this is started and will be on-going. **IN PROCESS**

#19 Thermometers for all refrigerators and freezers **NEEDED**

#20 Temperature regulators for all refrigerators and freezers **NEEDED**

#21 Upgraded filter system for water from well and any other water source. **NEEDED**

Compliance List Items (Continued)

#22 Fumigation service - Madre already has a local company who provides this service at no charge. **COMPLETED**

#23 Removal of all storage boxes, large toys, unnecessary furniture from the childrens' bedrooms so that they have clear access to exit the building in case of an emergency. **COMPLETED**

#24 Emergency doors - the sliding glass doors that lead from the play room off the corridor in each casita and into the laundry area are too heavy for a child to open in the event of an emergency. These doors have to be replaced with doors that have a push bar. **NEEDED**

#25 Secondary emergency doors - once the children get through the above mentioned doors, there is another smaller door which leads from the laundry area to the outside grounds. This door has a key lock and since all emergency doors have to have the push bar to qualify as an emergency door, these have to be replaced with push bar doors also. Since all the casitas are set up the same - there will be six new doors needed at a cost of 28,200 pesos. **NEEDED**

#26 List of emergency numbers posted in all casitas and outside buildings - **COMPLETED**.

#27 Emergency fire drill training - every 2 months. **COMPLETED/IN PROCESS**

#28 Copper piping/installation needed from gas tanks to Villa buildings and system with key shutoff capability and written instructions for emergency disconnection of gas, electricity, water, etc. Caretaker is familiar with the layout of these services so he will take care of this. Cost 840 pesos. **IN PROCESS**

#29 - This wasn't in the original list of regulations, but the investigators told Madre that all the windowsills have to be removed because they jut out and are at a level where children running past the windows could get injured. **IN PROCESS**

#30 - Also not on the list but given to Madre as a requirement - the steps outside the small doors, which will become the secondary emergency doors, have to be removed and a ramp put in so that the children will have a clear shot to the outside once they exit through the secondary emergency doors. **IN PROCESS**