

February, 2008

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# HCN Update

## A Day with Animals and Arches

*Welcome to the Family*

**FERNANDO JOSÉ AND HIS BROTHER, RAMÓN DAVID**

**INGRID AND ANDREA**

**WE NOW PROUDLY HAVE 31 CHILDREN AT THE CENTER**

**Current Character trait**  
**Obedience**  
**February 19-April 1**

Have you ever looked at a raccoon or squirrel and thought, "Wow, someone should put this in a zoo, so everyone can admire this marvelous creature!" Or when was the last time you got really excited about eating a hamburger from a fast food restaurant? Chances are, your excitement level for the day to day regularities of life might just not be up to par. On the other hand, the kids at HCN recently spent a day in Managua at the Nicaraguan National Zoo and McDonalds, proving by their energy and enthusiasm that sometimes normal is just plain neat.

Winkler, who I have called "my monkey" since the day I met



Winkler poses in front of the monkey cage at the Nicaraguan National Zoo

him, insisted on showing me the chimpanzees and posed for a picture in front of the monkey cage. From snakes to goats, lions and tigers, the kids were pointing at animals they had never seen before, and their eyes were lighting up with great excitement.

As Jacob and Esau ran around the cages

tugging on my arms exclaiming, "Have you seen this yet?" and "Come over here!" I was reminded that kids see beauty in situations that we so often overlook, because we have grown overly accustomed to things.

Once at McDonalds, the children sat down to wait for their cheeseburger happy meals. With ketchup and mustard on almost each face, the children were really enjoying their burgers, fries, and sodas. Once they were finished, they played on the indoor playground equipment, as well as the Nintendo game system. After finishing up the afternoon by eating ice cream cones, we boarded the bus and headed for León.



Joel at McDonald's in Managua, happy to be eating a Happy Meal



Elmer is eager to show this exotic bird!

## Cerro Negro Adventure

Dust was flying everywhere as we bounced along in the back of the truck. Although we were dirty from head to toe and only at the very beginning of our adventure, 6 sets of pearly white teeth were gleaming as the older boys at HCN smiled from ear to ear on our way to climb the volcano Cerro Negro. Kevin, Eddy, Jacob, Esau, David, and Elmer never looked so amazed.

Step by step, inch by inch, we climbed up the rocky side of the black volcano. The boys were wide-eyed with wonder as we got closer to the top and further from the

the narrow ledge where the wind blows hard, Jacob looked up at me and said, "Bethany?" and then gripped onto my arm with both of his little hands. As one of the most independent children at the center, it was fascinating to witness him learning a lesson of depending on others.

At the top, it was obvious that the boys felt the grandeur of their accomplishment by flexing their muscles for pictures. While sliding down the side for the process of going down, the boys were laughing and already talking about the next time they would climb Cerro Negro.



From left to right: Jacob, David, Esau, Elmer, Eddy, and Kevin on top of Cerro Negro, proudly representing HCN by forming the letters out of rocks.



Climbing up the volcano with friends and Omar Alvarado. What an adventure!

## Finding True Love

With Valentine's Day coming up, there could not have been a better time than the present to share with the older girls at the center just how special they are, and how much they are loved. A group from Northside UMC, Jackson, TN, planned a dinner for our young ladies, including Mabel, Karla, Alexea, Andrea, Jenny, Jennifer, Diana, Chilo, Ivania, and Ingrid, at a newly renovated hotel in León. Upon arrival, each girl received a red rose to make them feel extra special. Later, Jenny, Jennifer, Diana, Ivania, Chilo, and Ingrid stayed for a most important talk from the True Love Waits series.

The dinner was nothing short of fancy, as we were served salads, bread, and our main course while constantly having our drinks refilled and being asked if we needed anything else.



From left to right: Ingrid, Jennifer, Jenny, Ivania, Diana, and Chilo pose in front of a fountain at The Pearl.



The girls enjoying their meal together.



The waiter attending to the girls at dinner.

As possibly one of the first times the girls had eaten in a restaurant, it was amazing to see them with puzzled looks about having choices of what to eat, wondering what salt and pepper shakers were, and saying politely, "This is not what I ordered. I wanted a hamburger," when they brought out the salads. After assuring the girls that the salads were a part of the dinner for which we did not have to pay extra, they were satisfied and began to enjoy the meal. Their humility and willingness to eat the food they were provided with reminded me how

spoiled we often are by our decisions about where to eat and what to eat. Even our decisions about seasoning foods to our liking caused me to ponder my own selfishness in wanting things exactly my way. When the girls prayed and blessed the food, it was a sincere gratitude for the things they had received.

During the talk with the oldest girls at HCN, Daphne Moses, Ashley, and Heather shared with the girls their worth and beauty. Our young ladies were told about God's great plan for marriage, and what a treasure it is to

wait for the right person to arrive. They were assured that only God's love can complete them, and that purity in all forms is very important.

Another blessing was to have HCN's director, Lillian Sacasa, translating for the girls who love and respect her so very much. Lillian did a superb job of explaining when the girls needed a better understanding of something, and she made it clear to the girls that they should feel comfortable sharing with her or asking questions at anytime. We will be continuing this True Love Waits series with our girls.

## A word to our sponsors:

We could never be able to do the activities and events we do without you! You are a great blessing to us as we partner with the Nicaraguan people to bring about change. These children are learning, growing, and becoming the young ladies and young men that God wants them to be. With great sincerity, thank you for making a difference!



Back row: (left to right) Daphne, Bethany, Jenny, Heather, Ingrid, Jennifer, Chilo, and housemother Johania. Front: Ashley, Diana, Lillian, and Ivania