

Tres Islas Orphanage Fund

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IRS Federal Identification Number: 84 -1408725

The History of the Tres Islas Orphanage Fund

The Tres Islas Orphanage Fund is solely dedicated to helping orphaned children and children in orphanages in Old Mexico.

It is a non-profit, charitable organization registered with the Internal Revenue Service in the United States. Our EIN number is 84-1408725.

The Tres Islas Orphanage Fund began in the mid-1980s as a one-person effort to help orphaned children in Mexico when one of the founders of the Fund, who is a newspaper reporter by trade, was sent to Old Mexico with a bag-full of film and an assignment to "photograph the children of Mexico."

Little did the reporter know at the time how that one assignment would change her life.

She photographed children everywhere: on the beach, in the plazas, in the church, on the street.

Then one day she sought out an orphanage after learning that there are thousands of orphanages throughout Mexico. Of course, the children in the orphanage had to be represented in her photographs as well.

On that day, the Tres Islas Orphanage Fund began.

The name of the orphanage she went to is Orfanatorio Mazatlan. It is located in downtown Mazatlan, Sinaloa Mexico at 227 Zaragoza, OTE. It is the oldest orphanage in Mazatlan and was founded in 1902 when an epidemic of the bubonic plague left many children without parents.

Primarily, it is a girls' orphanage although little boys also stay there when they have sisters who are living there - thus maintains a sense of family.

The conditions at the orphanage that day back in the 1980s were sad. While the good people of Mexico give all they can to support orphanages, due to their own family needs and an economy, which is far less than ours, they often cannot help as much as they would like.

The Mexican government does not provide full-time support for orphanages, or, as the Fund likes to refer to it, as "carte blanche" assistance.

The first time she went to the orphanage, she immediately went out and, with the help of the lady who today buys food for the orphanage through the Tres Islas Orphanage Fund, bought as much food as she had pesos in her pocket because there was hardly any food in the orphanage.

There were only a few eggs, some tortillas and beans - certainly not enough food - and not enough nourishing food - to feed 25 hungry children.

She began treks to Mazatlan four times a year to buy food for the orphanage.

Back home, she began having photo/poetic art shows where she would sell her photography and poetry with all proceeds going to buy food for the children.

Then she began to tell friends and family.

One day, she decided that perhaps others would want to help on a regular basis. But this Fund would need to be different because so much money donated in the name of "charity" actually goes for administration and not solely for helping others - who are truly in need.

So, the Tres Islas Orphanage Fund was founded on the premise that 100 percent of all money donated would help children in orphanages in Old Mexico - first to buy nourishing food for the children, second, medical and educational and last, shoes, clothes and other supplies as conservatively needed.

In return for each and every donation, a copy of the store receipt - signed by the director of the orphanage or the principal care giver who is at the orphanage at the time of delivery - would be sent back to the donor to verify their money was spent to help needy children in orphanages.

In addition, the name, address and telephone number of the orphanage would be provided to each donor and, donors are always welcome to visit the orphanage and participate in the children's lives.

This way, donors know - because they can verify for themselves - that there is no "pie in the sky" child and no "pie in the sky" orphanage.

Each year, donors are provided an annual report wherein it is detailed exactly how much was spent for groceries, shoes, clothes, medical and educational and other needs with the name, address and ages and names of children in the orphanages provided to donors.

The name and location of the banking institution, how much money is in the account and what interest accrued on the money earned is also provided to the donors.

The Fund was founded on the basis of being totally honest - down to every penny and having an open-door policy with all contributors. And, it is believed that because of this, that donors will genuinely feel good about making contributions to the Fund because of the way the Fund is conducted: with 100 percent of every donation going toward orphaned children in Old Mexico, because of the verification for each donation and lastly, because of the detailed accounting provided to donors.

Thus far, approximately \$137,000.00 U.S. dollars has been spent on helping orphaned children in Old Mexico.

The Fund serves four orphanages in Mazatlan, Mexico, full-time.

There are approximately 100 children (total) in the four orphanages.

The orphanages the Fund serves are:

1. Orfanatorio Mazatlan
2. Salvation Army Children's Home
3. Hogar San Pablo
4. Ciudad de los Ninos

The Fund serves the orphanage Alburgue Infantil on as as-needed basis.

It takes approximately \$130.00 U.S. dollars a week to feed the children in each of the orphanages, for a total of \$520.00 per week for all four orphanages.

A typical week's worth of food includes: seven servings each of vegetables and fruits, seven servings of low-fat, high-protein meat, including chicken, pork and beef, pasta and pasta sauce, six dozen eggs, four boxes of cereal, pancake mix and syrup, whole grain breads, strawberry marmalade and seven large boxes of Jell-O.

Additionally, the Fund buys the children all their school supplies, school shoes and school uniforms, as well as pays for all necessary medicines.

So, the Tres Islas Orphanage Fund truly does fill the gap in feeding the children.

The Fund also upgrades the orphanages pertaining to health, safety and welfare improvements as required. From sealing roofs against the monsoon rains, to painting, to upgrading bathrooms and kitchens, and sewage systems, to creating playgrounds at the orphanages, the Fund helps ensure the children live in a sanitary and safe environment.

Donors gather in Mazatlan twice each year, in May and December, to participate in the children's lives and to make the necessary upgrades.

Working together (alongside the children who love to help!), getting to know the other donors and improving the children's living conditions, is a wonderful experience that forever changes each person who participates.

We invite you to join us on these restoration weeks.

We would be honored to have you consider the Fund for your charitable contributions. The Fund needs help in continuing to make a positive difference in the children's lives so they may grow up healthy and so that when they leave the orphanages, they leave productive members of society.

Many people ask about buying items in the U.S. and Canada and either taking them down themselves or shipping them down.

The reason it is best to buy items for the orphanages in Mexico is because:

1. In order for anything to be legitimately claimed as a tax-deductible donation for the contributor, the money must be deposited into the Tres Islas banking account which is recognized by the IRS as a not-for-profit, charitable organization. Then, the item(s) can be purchased with that money and a copy of the receipt for the item(s), always signed by the orphanage director for verification, is sent to the contributor.
2. It is extremely difficult to take supplies for between 25 and 30 children in a car or on the plane.
3. Anything taken to or mailed to Mexico is subject to tariffs. Even for an orphanage.

And, the amount of the tariff assessed depends on who is "on watch" at the time. In most cases, the tariff to bring anything in or mail it in costs as much, if not more than purchasing the item in Mazatlan would cost.

A few years back, a well-intentioned professor from Canada wrote, asking about sending clothes from Canada to the children at the orphanage.

All of this to him, with heavy emphasis on the tariffs, but, sadly, he evidently either didn't believe or, possibly didn't trust what he was told.

He mailed the clothes.

The tariff was so high, the orphanage director couldn't pay it. She had to send the clothes back to him.

Like she explained, if the orphanage could afford to pay the high price of the tariffs, they could afford to buy the items they pretty much have to beg for.

4. Mazatlan has about everything we do up here. Including Safeway grocery stores.

Most often, because the purchase is for an orphanage, it is possible to negotiate a pretty good discount.

An example (albeit a bad one) on one of the founders. . .one time she found what she thought was a great discount on toilet paper in the U.S., so she bought tons of the stuff. (Well, not actually, but it was apparent the check-in person at Stapleton Airport, a very nice Mexican National gentleman, thought so as he cast his eyes on the many, many bundles before him).

She explained where the toilet paper (along with the numerous other items) was headed - wanting him to know that she was trying to be a good neighbor, hoping, because it was going to an orphanage, he would pass it through and not charge her for the added weight.

She says that all of the free-passage in the world was diminished when he kindly asked her, "Senora, don't you think we have toilet paper Mexico? Don't you think it would also help a poor Mexican man and his family who sells toilet paper as well as these other goods if you bought it down there?"

5. Buying locally, even in a foreign country, creates friends. It helps the economy, it builds goodwill and dispels the myth that we are not all Ugly Americans (there are plenty of those down there).

Last, and surely most important, buying what the orphanage needs in Mexico helps shopkeepers who, themselves, have families and children who are also very much in need.

Thank you again, for considering the Tres Islas Orphanage Fund for your charitable contributions. It has been a pleasure to share information with you regarding the Fund and especially, about the children.

Please feel welcome to contact the Fund via phone at 1-888-459-8463 or email the Fund at: email@orphanagefunds.org to learn more how you can make the difference of a lifetime for a child in need.