

Help bring our kids home

The first week of April brought both devastating and amazing news for the orphanage.

On Monday, April 2nd, DIF, Mexico's child protective services, removed the children from our home because we have not obtained our license of operations. Our staff called that day "the worst nightmare." DIF did not close our home; they temporarily relocated the children to licensed orphanages until we can obtain our license. It was a heartbreaking day.

Of the 130 orphanages in Baja California, only about 30 are licensed because it is such a complicated, expensive process. DIF is pushing to close orphanages that are not about to qualify or are not making enough progress.

A temporary setback

We have encountered several obstacles that have significantly delayed obtaining our license. The first is a lawsuit that was brought against our former contractor by one of his employees. The lawsuit named the orphanage as a co-defendant; by Mexican law we had some responsibility. The orphanage has now settled. The second challenge is that we have had several issues with our former contractor's work; we are now dealing with a new contractor. Third, we did not have adequate funding to complete the construction work needed to obtain the license. Finally, we have been going through a slow legal process to get the orphanage's land properly registered. (See *The poor woman's gift*, right.) We started this tedious five-part legal process back in 2016.

The amazing news:

Proof that God has a plan for us

On Thursday, April 5th, three days after the children were removed, a generous family who are long-time friends of the orphanage contacted us. They knew that we were lacking funds to complete our construction updates. They shared that they were giving \$50,000. This donation is amazing and means that we may have enough to complete the construction updates. This demonstrates God's timing and how He is working to bring the children back.



The poor woman's gift: God works in mysterious ways

Over 50 years ago, Maria, a very poor woman in the community, gave a piece of land with a building to start a church. A young pastor, our founder Ramon Espinoza, moved into the building with his wife Magdalena and three-month-old son Josue. They used half of the building for the church and the other half as their home. For a few years before their home officially became an orphanage, Ramon and Magdalena took in and cared for hungry, destitute teenagers and other children.

When Maria gave the land, she didn't go through the formality of obtaining a deed. At that time, it was common practice to file a paper at city hall that was often signed by the police chief. Today, the entire valley area has become popular wine country. Now, the orphanage's piece of land is extremely valuable. Maria passed away several years ago, but she was proud to share that her gift started the orphanage.

We truly need your help

Thanks to the generous \$50,000 gift, our new contractor has resumed construction. The El Sauzal Foundation has reallocated funds from several dedicated orphanage accounts. The orphanage staff have implemented every cost-saving measure they can, specifically with food, electricity, gas, and water. We need to maintain fully-trained staff to receive our license.

There are still some fees to obtaining our license of operations that we don't have an estimate for, including the cost to perfect the title for our land. (See *The poor woman's gift* on page 1.) Erika, our administrator, has worked fervently to determine estimates for these costs but has been denied information by the offices involved. The unknown expenses include:

- Notary fees to appraise our property to perfect the title of land
- Taxes owed for land
- Fee to apply for operating license



*I'll be
praying for
God's guidance
for all.*

Moira B
Puyallup, WA



The first two, notary fees and taxes owed, could be significant costs.

We also have had several unexpected large expenses, such as the settlement with the former contractor's employee in January. These have drained our funds so we have no reserves. The amount we receive monthly from you, our amazing donors, is barely enough for the orphanage's monthly expenses. Our finances are extremely tight!

Currently we need about \$15,000 for items we know the cost of. Add to this the unknown expenses.

We truly need your financial support and prayers.

Our home is (and always has been) in God's hands

Having served God's beautiful children for over 50 years is testimony that our orphanage is in God's hands and not ours. God established our home and we strongly believe He is not ready to close it. He has a plan to use this challenging situation to strengthen our orphanage. It will be filled with children again once we meet the numerous governmental requirements and receive our license of operations. We are working aggressively to obtain the license, and we believe that children could start returning later this summer.

With your financial help and prayers, we can fulfill the requirements and bring our kids home more quickly.

“We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose.”

Romans 8:28



The real feeling startled me

I've been visiting El Sauzal for 29 years. I've always cherished the moment of arriving at the orphanage, of being warmly greeted and openly accepted by the children. It is a comforting, happy, and exciting feeling, with the children running up to the car before I can even get out, yelling, "Patty!"

I visited in April, after the kids were gone. I expected that it was going to feel strange, but the real feeling startled me.

As we pull up, I see a worker walk by with an armful of laundry. Her children are with her, the two of them following her. The cook comes out of the kitchen to grab some supplies for dinner. The play structure is empty. The basketball court is vacant. No one runs by, dashing after a ball, laughing as they go, chased by other children. No one runs up as I arrive and yells, "Hola, Patty!"

I walk up to the room I'm going to stay in for my visit. It's right next to the old nursery. Normally I need to dodge busy toddlers, chattering, laughing and crying, rolling little toy trucks as they play. Normally there is a constant sound coming from these little ones.

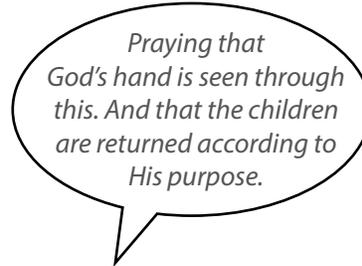
I am overwhelmed by the sadness of this beautiful home being empty. It is so much more than I expected, and I cry hard. This is not how this home is supposed to be. I need to do what I can to help bring the children home.

by Patty Meadows

"It took us about two years and around \$200,000 to get our license . . . this license issue is complicated and the rules are a moving target. Even from orphanage to orphanage, the rules and requirements seem to vary a lot."



*DJ Schuetze,
Door of Faith
Orphanage
Administrator,
Baja California,
Mexico*



*Praying that
God's hand is seen through
this. And that the children
are returned according to
His purpose.*

Tiffany W
Tacoma, WA



How you can get involved

- **Pray daily** that we will obtain our license of operations as soon as possible. Pray that God will continue to bless us with what we need to get the license - encouragement, wisdom, and funding.
- Share our need—at your church, at work, and with friends. You can find us on Facebook and Instagram under El Sauzal Orphanage and share that way also.
- Give as God leads you. You can use the reply device included or donate online at elsauzal.org.

Help bring our kids home! ¡Muchas gracias!

Serving without children

You may know that we have a dental clinic at our orphanage that provides free dental care for our children; we also deliver care for two other nearby orphanages, a local Mexican native reservation, and the poor of our community. Elizabeth (Eli) Rivera Kachirisky is our dentist, and she continues to provide dental services for the needy while we wait to have children in our home again.

Christine F
Stellacoom, WA

I will pray
for all of your children
and that they are well
cared for until they
come back.

Help bring our kids home

El Sauzal children relocated

El Sauzal Foundation, Inc.
P.O. Box 154
Auburn, WA 98071-0154
elsauzal.org



**El Sauzal
children
relocated**

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Inside:

- A temporary setback
- The amazing news
- We truly need your help
- Our home is in God's hands
- How you can get involved

