

“For I was hungry
and you gave me food,
I was thirsty and
you gave me drink,
a stranger and you
welcomed me.”

- Matt. 25:35

Spring 2011



New Beginnings

Asylum and Freedom: A Two Year Struggle

Having seen – *only once* – a photo of his father and visited only occasionally by his mother, it was 16-year old Elvin’s dream to join his 30 year-old uncle in the U.S. If both of them could send money to his impoverished grandmother caring for his two younger siblings, life for them would be less difficult.

In August 2009, Elvin set out from Honduras to accomplish his dream which, in reality, turned out to be an unforgettable nightmare for the teen.

The first month was spent hopping trains or walking with no money through Mexico. The only tolerable part of the journey was the food, which he had to beg for.

However, during the next three months, each day became a near death experience. Elvin was kidnapped in Mexico near the

U.S. border and held in a room with so many victims there wasn’t even room for furniture. During those three months, Elvin wore the same clothes and was often beaten when the phone numbers he was forced to give resulted in no ransom money. Incredibly, he was eventually released after those torturous three months. He finally crossed the border to the U.S. and was captured by Border Patrol in November 2009.

Elvin’s journey continued by being shifted from one juvenile detention center to another: a total of four. On his 18th birthday, in December 2010, he was transferred to the adult detention center in Port Isabel, Texas. During his two years in detention, Elvin applied for asylum.

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Elvin meets with Laura, his paralegal, as he plans his future. He wants to work in the U.S. to provide for his family back home in Honduras.



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Asylum and Freedom *continued from page 1*

His case was heard and with the help of Laura, a paralegal employed by ProBAR, a pro bono legal aid agency, he won and was granted asylum. Elvin was released and arrived at La Posada on March 24, 2011.

It was here Elvin learned that his uncle, who had been working in the U.S. in construction for seven years, was deported to Honduras in November 2010. Shortly after his arrival, his uncle was murdered.

What are Elvin's plans? Realizing he will be the sole supporter of his

grandmother and his two siblings, he holds on to his dream of helping them. Elvin hopes to remain at La Posada several weeks, studying English and connecting with his uncle's former U.S. friends who have offered him hospitality and a promise of a job.

You can help clients like Elvin create their own New Beginning. Please use the enclosed envelope or donate online at www.LPPshelter.org.

Saturdays with Jay Anderson

We welcome a new volunteer to La Posada, Jay Anderson. Jay is originally from Albuquerque, NM, and attended college at the University of Arizona.

"My experience of God in college and especially at the Catholic Newman Center gave me the desire to serve those in need," said Jay. "I organized volunteers to help the local Habitat for Humanity Chapter."

In 2007, Jay participated in the Habitat Bicycle Challenge. The cross country bicycle ride raised money for Habitat for Humanity in New Haven, Conn. After graduation, he worked for three and half years until his fiancée accepted a teaching position at St. Joseph's Academy in Brownsville, Texas. Jay made the move with her, which brought him to San Benito. He learned about La Posada through a fundraising presentation by Sister Zita at Mary, Queen of the Universe Church.

"I enjoy volunteering at La Posada because it is such a wonderful home for those who are in the legal process and



Jay Alexander on the John Deere he uses to mow the grass at La Posada.

need a place to stay. I love meeting the residents and hearing their stories, their hopes and their dreams."

Jay spends his Saturdays mowing grass, weeding garden and flower beds and cleaning the vehicles. Many clients have never used some of the lawn machines before so Jay is able to supervise and teach these life skills to them.

If you want to volunteer your time and talents like Jay, please contact us.

Sign up for Tuesdays in Texas!

Want to know the latest news at La Posada? Receive **Tuesdays in Texas, a weekly email** from Program Director Sister Zita Telkamp. Visit our website:

www.LPPshelter.org and enter your email address in the signup box on any page. We promise **we will never sell or transfer your email address.**

Going Green at La Posada

Recycling, gardening and composting are just some of the many ways La Posada saves money while teaching clients to take care of Mother Earth.

At La Posada, taking care of the environment and using natural resources is a way of life.

“So many of our residents are from countries where items like plastic bottles and cans aren’t commonly used or in such quantities,” said Zita Telkamp, CDP, program director. “We teach them not to just throw them away because they can be recycled.”

Every week, clients help sort plastics, paper, cardboard and cans so they can be taken to a local recycling center for processing. Other items are reused and repurposed in various ways around the shelter.

A recent grant from the Dominican Sisters of Springfield, Illinois, has enabled La Posada to improve and expand their garden capabilities. With the funding, they were able to purchase the equipment for a new irrigation system, fence posts, a fence, ten rain barrels and two composters.

Clients assisted in the design and engineering of the irrigation system. They also helped dig the two hundred yard, three foot deep trench needed to bring water from the Resaca, a former tributary to the Rio Grande. An electric pump draws 115 gallons of water per minute into PVC pipes to irrigate the crops. The composters



Sister Zita with one of the new additions to the orchard – a pecan tree.

create fertilizer to condition the soil by the addition of humus, nutrients and beneficial bacteria. The new garden now provides organically grown produce such as potatoes, carrots and zucchini to supplement weekly grocery purchases.

In addition to vegetables, clients and staff also enjoy fresh fruit from their newly expanded orchard. Thanks to a \$1,000 gift from Sisters of Providence of St. Mary-of-the-Woods, ten orange, three grapefruit and two lime trees were added. Pecan and peach trees, one of each, complete the orchard’s offerings.

No pesticides are used at La Posada, something Sister Zita is proud of.

“Growing up, my father owned an orchard and I remember the

spraying,” she recalled. “Here, we pull weeds and water by hand on the days we don’t use the irrigation system. The extra care and attention to the gardens means we don’t have to use chemicals. It’s another way we can protect the earth.”

The green efforts aren’t just limited to outdoor projects at La Posada. Staff and clients use vinegar as a key component in homemade household cleansers. It is effective in killing most mold, bacteria and germs, due to its level of acidity. It is also environmentally friendly and very economical. Vinegar is mixed with JOY dish detergent to make a shower and bathtub cleaner and with water to clean the wood laminate floors.

The benefits of going green at La Posada will have lasting effects not only on the earth, but on the clients. They are learning life skills they can use moving forward as they start their new lives in the U.S.

Go Green!

Try La Posada’s shower and bath cleaner for yourself!

2 cups of JOY dishwashing liquid
10 cups of vinegar
Mix together. Makes one gallon.



Recycling is sorted every week (above) and taken to a recycling center. New rain barrels (right) harvest rainwater that is put to beneficial use in the garden.





La Posada Providencia
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Mission Statement

La Posada Providencia, founded and sponsored by the Sisters of Divine Providence, is a ministry for people in crisis from around the world, who are seeking legal refuge in this country. The shelter staff provides a safe and welcoming home; mentors to promote self-sufficiency and cultural integration; and imparts values which witness God's Providence in our world.

2011 Quilt Raffle to Benefit La Posada

We are raffling this beautiful, hand appliquéd and machine sewn queen-sized quilt in a fall motif to benefit La Posada Providencia. Raffle will be held on Thursday, October 6, 2011. You do not need to be present to win.

Tickets are \$1.00 each or 6 for \$5.00.

To purchase tickets, please go online to www.LPPshelter.org/events or contact Colleen Price at 314.209.9181 or cprice@divineprovidencesisters.org. Tickets can also be purchased in person at La Posada Providencia in San Benito or Providence Center in St. Louis.

Don't miss this wonderful opportunity to support the many ministries of La Posada Providencia!

Zita Telkamp, CDP
Program Director



Quilt detail

www.LPPshelter.org