



# One Family News

November 15, 2004

## Tacna, Peru

It has been a while since our last newsletter. As you will see in the pages that follow, *One Family* has been busy. We went ahead with our plan to help street children in South America and sent two containers full of medical supplies, clothing, bicycles, food, computers and sports equipment to an orphanage in Tacna, Peru. The problem of homeless children there is just as pervasive as it is throughout Central and South America. We chose Tacna because we knew of a Catholic Priest from San Francisco who is working in Tacna. He is a person whom we could trust to accept these shipments and use them to help these children. Father Green has spent the past 40 years in Peru building schools, hospitals and care centers to help these children. Now 80 years old, he is still building and he travels to the United States once a year to give talks about the plight of the children in this part of the world. If you recall, in 2001 there was a very strong earthquake that was centered in Tacna. Many homes were destroyed and countless others were deemed uninhabitable requiring major repairs. Father Green arranged for pre-fab homes from Chile to be trucked to Tacna. He obtained shipments of used garage doors from the United States which quickly became walls for shelters. Our first shipment had been delayed for 40 days in customs due to paperwork problems, so it arrived just a week before the earthquake. It was perfect timing for the situation, because it contained food, medical supplies, and clothing. While one container was a "drop-in-the-ocean" when compared to the tremendous need at that time, it's timing made it very effective. The second container left San Francisco a few months later full of bicycles, clothing and some computers for the schools. Father let us know that the bikes have become invaluable for the workers who have been

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*This boy in Tacna Peru is warming himself by a fire and enjoying the early morning sun. There are many street children in Central and South America who could really use some help.*

## A New Source of Supplies

One Family has been working with other organizations in the San Francisco Bay Area to get better use out of our talents and resources. It has become more efficient to share warehouse space, labor and, in some cases, shipping container space. Our supply line was given a real boost when we developed a working relationship with the Central Contra Costa Solid Waste Authority. They collect recyclable discards from around the Bay Area, separate the materials and turn them into crude material for

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## Kabul, Afghanistan

As a result of our partnership with the Afghan Center in Fremont and the East Bay Center for Creative Reuse, *One Family* had the opportunity to send a container of relief supplies to Kabul, Afghanistan. The supplies were intended to help set up a school for training job skills, and to provide some basic necessities. The population in Afghanistan is in dire need of basic education, particularly training in skills that would enable the students to become productive and to support themselves and their families.

Representatives from the Afghan Center traveled to Kabul and presented their plan to members of the interim government including the interim leader Hamid Karzai. They proposed setting up an occupational school in Kabul which would provide short term (6 month) courses in construction, business administration, health care, plumbing, agriculture and other skills. The plan was enthusiastically received, a site was offered and work began to renovate the building so it will accommodate the classes. The school is named ARISE for Afghan Retraining Initiative for Self Employment.

The *One Family* shipment arrived October 20, 2003 with school equipment and supplies, bicycles, clothing and medical supplies. The clothing was immediately given out to 260 of the students in the program. Stuffed animals were put in the three day care centers that were set up to care for the young children while their parents attend school. The bikes were distributed to selected honor students from

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## Tacna, Peru



Father Green stands by the container. The Customs official has to break the seal on the door and check the contents before the container can be unloaded.

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spending hours commuting by foot to work in Tacna each day. *One Family* had been repairing each bike before sending them, however in this last shipment we sent a number of bikes that needed repair and we included the parts to fix them. Father Green was receptive to the idea that he would use local labor to make the repairs. He saw it as a means of developing skills in the community and he paid the workers with a bicycle. A true entrepreneur, Father Green is always alert for opportunities and is quick to develop them for the people he serves. They have been benefiting from his talents for 40 years.



The volunteers are shown unloading a gurney for the hospital. This shipment was full of medical supplies, food, clothing and computers for the school.

## Nicaragua

### Casa Santiago



Another shipment arrives in Nicaragua at the orphanage on Ometepe island. Ometepe is about a one-hour ferry ride from the mainland out on Lake Nicaragua. The orphanage, called Casa Santiago, is home to 284 children. The clothing, medicine, bicycles, computers, toys, sports equipment and school supplies that you've donated are a tremendous help for the orphanage and school. Aside from the medicines and some of the school supplies, most of these items are not new. They have been repaired and cleaned and given a new life among these less fortunate people. If everyone had the opportunity to see how important these "discards" are in these "third-world" countries, the landfill problems in the United States would be resolved and so much more would be available to help.



Boys from Casa Santiago on the island of Ometepe. The volcano Conception is in the background.



Two boys (obviously sports fans) and two girls check out some new clothes. It is obvious they are very happy with their choices. It doesn't take much to bring a smile to their faces. Children here are just as active and hard on their clothes as children everywhere else. These shipments of clothing are always well received.





**IN MEMORIAM**

*Since our last newsletter we lost two incredible people who were instrumental in our ability to serve the needy refugees in Croatia and Bosnia..*



**Fr. Leonard Orec, OFM**

*January 20, 1928 - January 21, 2002*

**Father Leonard** was in charge of Medjugorje MIR, an organization that was set up during the war to accept and direct international aid to those who most need it throughout Croatia and Bosnia. He helped us with every shipment. Each container was a donation to his organization which enabled it to pass through customs in each country. He then held the shipments for us, gave us interpreters, found trucks and volunteers to help us, and guided us as we made deliveries to the refugee camps. During the war years, his organization was responsible for delivering over 46,000 tons of humanitarian aid from all over the world to the refugees. After the war he encouraged us to continue helping, to never give up the battle against hunger and poverty. He asked us to expand our efforts to include other parts of the world. He was particularly concerned about the conditions in Africa where people are starving by the millions.

Father Leonard was passionately trying to leave the world behind him a better place than what he found. For his work, he did not get recognition from the powerful and the rich, but from the hungry, sick, lonely and abandoned. In his eyes they had priority; not their religious, nationality or social status.

This was a great man! It was a privilege to work with him and an honor to know him.



For many years, **Father Slavko** served the people in the Herzegovina section of Bosnia. During the war he built a beautiful orphanage which is arranged as a collection of homes. Several children are in each home with an adult in charge of their care. The adults are refugees who themselves were homeless. The orphanage is a loving, caring environment where the children are overcoming the emotional and physical damage that was done to them by the war.

Father Slavko always seemed to be around when we needed help. One incident occurred when we were taking 30 suitcases filled with medicine to Bosnia. Each airline that we flew on ignored our obvious violation of their extra baggage rules. They never questioned us nor requested that we pay for the 26 extra bags. They just let us pass (probably in shock!). We were very concerned with what would happen as we entered customs in Croatia. As we got onto the flight taking us from Rome to Split, Croatia, we ran into Father Slavko. He was interested in how things were going for us and what we were planning on this trip. We discussed the medicine and our concerns. When we arrived in Split, we were whisked right through customs without one bag being opened. Father Slavko arranged this with the customs officer.

While he is no longer with us, we have no doubt he is still helping us overcome obstacles.

### **Role Models For Us All!**

*You rarely hear of people like **Father Leonard**, **Father Slavko** and **Father Green** in Tacna, Peru, but there are many in our world just like them. They are working everyday, unnoticed with no desire for personal recognition. Their every thought is on how to improve the lives of the poor around them. One of the benefits of the work we do at One Family is that we get to meet them and work with them here at home and on our journeys. It is inspiring for us to see their dedication and all that they are accomplishing. Our world is a better place because of them!*

## Volunteers

Without the volunteers none of this could happen. Most of the donated items need cleaning or repairs before they could be sent. These generous people know that they are making a difference with each bike they repair.



There is always a need for bicycles. They are a valuable means of transportation. Above two volunteers make repairs. To the right, bikes are fixed and ready to go. To the left, the container is almost packed and ready to begin the journey to Tacna, Peru. Below, the shipment arrived in Tacna at 10pm. Volunteers worked into the night to unload it.



This shipment had a little bit of everything. We kept the container open as donations continued to arrive. By the time we were finished rearranging and adding, it was a challenge to get the doors closed.





## Afghanistan



The clothing is inspected, sorted and put into bags by a group of volunteers. By having the clothing organized before shipping, the distribution at the receiving location is much easier.



Bags of clothing are stacked on pallets ready to be loaded into the container. Plastic bags protect the clothing and yet are flexible so the clothing can be used to fill open spaces in the container.



Using fork lifts, pallet jacks and lots of hands, it took only three and a half hours to load the 40 foot container. Sometimes, because of the odd shaped items, it is like a puzzle to get every bit of space filled. This is where the clothing in bags comes in handy — to fill these odd shaped spaces. To the right we finish off with as many bikes as we can squeeze in. This shipment had 120 bikes. It was almost a four month journey for the container. It traveled from Oakland, California to Karachi, Pakistan then into Afghanistan where it arrived in Kabul on October 20, 2003 (See photos on the next pages).



Volunteers from St. Vincent DePaul worked hard to load the container. It is such a pleasure to work with these dedicated people.



Linda Levitsky of the East Bay Depot for Creative Reuse puts the finishing touch on our first shipment to Afghanistan.



## Kabul, Afghanistan (October 20, 2003)



*After a four month journey the container arrived in Kabul and is unloaded at a house that was rented to provide additional classroom space for the occupational school (ARISE). Despite the arduous trip by sea and then by truck through Pakistan and Southern Afghanistan, everything arrived in good condition. The contents filled three rooms and a courtyard. They were quickly put to use.*



*The Container traveled by ship to the seaport of Karachi, Pakistan. After clearing customs it traveled by truck across Pakistan, into Afghanistan, through customs again and on to Kabul.*



## Afghanistan

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the schools. The girls won't ride the bikes in public. Over time this will change.

While this container provided just a small amount of assistance to an area that has been devastated by war and years of stifling oppression, you can't help but see hope in these photos. The high school building in the background was severely damaged and is need of renovation, but you can see the future in these faces. Just a few years ago these young ladies wouldn't be allowed outside with their faces showing and without an escort from their family. They weren't allowed to go to school (*now the majority of the students in the ARISE school are women*). They had a strict dress code and would never have been allowed to have a bicycle. It is great to see that in just a few short years there is such progress for women.

There is still much to be done. The Afghan Center, which has offices in Fremont, California and in Kabul, Afghanistan, reports that much of the infrastructure in Kabul needs to be rebuilt. During the war, the power lines were removed from the streets and houses and sold as scrap for their copper content. (Editors note: *this is the same thing that happened in Bosnia during the war there. All of the lines had to be restrung to get electricity flowing within the cities and into the rural areas.*)

The Afghan Center, which runs the ARISE school among its many projects, must rely on a generator to have electricity. The capacity of the generator is limited, so computers and other electrical devices are only turned on when they are needed and immediately turned off so electricity is available for other uses.

Afghanistan isn't in the news now like it used to be. Like Bosnia, news from Afghanistan has taken a back-seat to current events. Yet the effort to rebuild continues in both of these countries. Many organizations like the Afghan Center are busy every day trying to improve the lives of the people in these countries. It is slow methodical unglamorous work performed by dedicated and caring individuals. You can help them through *One Family*. Our "Wish List" is on the back page.



**A New Source...**

*(Continued from page 1)*

reuse. Our primary interest is in getting the bicycles that they pickup. While their business is recycling and reusing the metal, wood and paper they collect. Bicycles are not valuable as scrap metal. Being made of such lightweight metal, it costs more to turn them into the crude material than the material is worth. So bicycles are far more valuable being put back into use as bicycles. You won't hear any complaints from the recipients in the countries One Family serves.

While this arrangement provides us with a good source of bicycles, we still need the items that are listed on this page in our "Wish List". Please take a moment to read the list and see if you have any of the items. Call us at the number below and we will be happy to make arrangements to pick up your donation.

*One Family is registered as a non-profit charitable organization. Your donations are tax deductible.*

**Our Wish List!**

One Family continues to serve as a link between families in Northern California and the most needy families we can find in in the "third world" countries. We are continually planning shipments to help the orphanages in Latin America, and the needy in Afghanistan, Bosnia and Croatia. We hope to send more of the same items because this combination has worked out very well. The following are some of the things we are looking for:

**Family Food Boxes** (Flour, oil, pasta, pasta sauce, canned fruits & vegetables, peanut butter, jelly, sugar, salt, rice, powdered milk, coffee, tea, vitamins, cookies, candy, tooth brushes & tooth paste, etc.) *Avoid glass containers.*

**Baby items** (food, chairs, strollers, beds)

**Disposable and cloth Diapers** (all sizes)

**Powdered Soap** for washing clothes

**Items for Personal Hygiene** (like soaps, shampoos, tooth brushes, tooth paste)

**New Underwear** (all sizes)

**Sewing Machines** - good working order

**Knitting Supplies** - Yarn & needles

**Houseware** pots & pans, silverware, glassware in good condition

**Tools** for home (metric) and garden

**School classroom supplies** (blackboards, chalk & erasers, paper, scissors, pencils)

**Coloring Books & Crayons**

**Musical Instruments** (all kinds including large items like pianos, organs etc.)

**Bicycles** in good working order (all sizes)

**Sports Equipment** (soccer equipment, basketball equipment, ball gloves etc.)

**Toys** (Frisbees, balls, Barbie dolls, stuffed animals, tricycles, wagons, cars)

**Vitamins** (children & adult - Must not be past or even close to expiration date)

**Medical Equipment** (blood pressure, stethoscopes, wheel chairs, crutches, lab equip., hospital beds, dental equip., etc.)

**Medical Supplies** (Bandages, soaps, etc.)

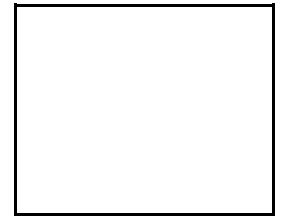
**Medications** (Antibiotics, Asthma, Blood Pressure, Heart, First Aid & snake bite kits, etc.) (Medicines must not be past or even close to expiration date)

**Financial Assistance** for shipping and to purchase needed items.



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