

Our Accomplishments in 2009

This past year Casita Linda has developed in many areas. In construction we are continuing to build with volunteers and our four Mexican hired workers, and we have completed seven houses. A thorough review of our building materials and construction process occurred last June, with the collaboration of Jeff Rottler of Tierra y Cal (the suppliers of the compressed earth block used in construction), Silvia Acosta, a member of the Rhode Island School of Design faculty, and our construction committee. Slight design modifications were made, and as a result the current houses are stronger and 'greener', using less cement and a building technique which eliminates much of the use of metal. A back door was added to improve air circulation and to provide a second entry/exit point.

Casita Linda has also made great strides in the Social Services area. Zumar Contigo, a Guanajuato state government social services program, is providing a social worker to assist us with the selection of the recipients of the casitas. Their support will be a tremendous help to us in obtaining the necessary documentation and completing socio-economic studies that we require before beginning construction. Additionally, the social worker will follow up with each of our families for a period of two years after the completion of the house. They will make sure that the families understand all the services that are available to them, and if documentation (such as a birth certificate) is needed, they will assist the family in obtaining the needed information. Topics such as nutrition, health and schooling will also be covered. It gives us and our volunteers great comfort to know that once we finish building a house, that family will have an on-going support system to help them continue their journey toward alleviating the cycle of poverty.

Irma Rosado, President of Casita Linda, has been appointed by the new mayor, Lucy Nunez, to be a liaison between the non-profit organizations in San Miguel de Allende and the municipality. In this capacity, Irma has succeeded in getting land donated by the government to enable the graduate students of the Rhode Island School of Design to return to San Miguel early in 2010 to design and construct a Community Center. Casita Linda has a donor for this specific project, and Zumar Contigo is working with the community that will be maintaining the Center. Tierra y Cal is part of this alliance, and the Biblioteca is studying the possibility of creating a satellite library for the Center. This is a true collaboration among non-profits and with the municipality. Such collaboration is a real coup for all involved, and will result in a dream come true for the community this new Center will serve.

Our fund raising, public relations, social services, volunteer recruitment and construction committees have new, talented members who are dedicating their time to work with Casita Linda, bringing fresh ideas in all areas. Elections were held this past October, and we have a healthy mix of nationalities – Mexicans, Canadians and Americans -- on our Board of Directors.

Casita Linda has submitted an application to become eligible to receive tax deductible contributions as a Mexican non-profit, charitable organization. The Casita Linda web site has been updated, new brochures have been printed in Spanish and English, and there are

now DVD's available to help potential volunteers and donors understand our work to provide housing for Mexicans living in extreme poverty with inadequate shelter.

This past year Casita Linda is pleased to report that it has received donations from many individuals, and as well from several foundations, including the Te Foundation, San Miguel Community Foundation, Microsoft's Matching Gifts Program, Golden Rule Foundation, the Wilkinson Family Foundation, and the Parker Street Foundation. We have had volunteers from Fargo, New York City, and Los Angeles, and elsewhere building houses with us and donating money as well as their time and effort. The *Broadway Loves Casita Linda* fund-raising event was well-received and brought us many new volunteers and donors as well. We will begin a new initiative in 2010, called *Generous Helpings*, where-by individuals in San Miguel, and in Canada and the U.S., will invite friends to join them by participating in a hosted dinner, barbeque, cocktail party or other venue, and donating a host-suggested amount to benefit Casita Linda and its ability to continue to build houses for families living in extreme poverty and with inadequate shelter.

Most importantly, the recipients of the homes we build are the lifeblood of Casita Linda, and our volunteers' very direct impact on these families is what keeps them working as hard as they do. We see the smiles on the faces of parents and children alike when they move into their new adobe casitas. We feel the love that they give back to us. We sleep better knowing that they are sheltered from the elements, and can lock their doors at night. Because of the generosity of the many individuals who want to help, Casita Linda will continue building hope for families, one house at a time. We wish to thank all of you who so generously have helped Casita Linda accomplish its work this past year.