



Casita Linda a.c.

**POR UNA VIDA MAS DIGNA
FOR A MORE DIGNIFIED LIFE**



June 2007 Volume 1, Issue 2 Casita Linda www.casitalinda.org

Casita Linda Gets Ready for Benefit Concert

All of us at Casita Linda are thrilled about the two upcoming concerts being put on by Doug and Glenda Robinson to raise funds for our charitable work. They were the creative force behind last year's "Jazz Tribute to Ray Charles," and earlier this year (in partnership with Tim and Louise Hazell) they brought us the amazing "A Forest of Americas." So they've managed to set the bar really high for musical performance in San Miguel, and these concerts promise to be every bit as wonderful.

Doug and Glenda have embraced Casita Linda and told us "we are proud of the fact that every centavo raised by these concerts will go directly to Casita Linda. And we've been able to make this commitment only because all of these musicians are very generously giving of their time and talents. They get asked to do benefits all the time, but have to decline because this is the way they make their living. So I am very grateful that they have jumped on board."

We at Casita Linda are so fortunate to have Doug living here in San Miguel and enriching our lives with his music, warmhearted personality, and generosity. Thanks to you and Glenda, and the other exceptionally talented musicians who will be performing, we are assured of an evening of fabulous entertainment and *ojalá* some money to continue building casitas for our less fortunate neighbors. *Muchas gracias.*

Come To The "Plays Well With Others" AFTER-PARTY!

You are invited to keep the fun going by joining the principals of Select Real Estate for a post-opening night party at their new offices on Jesus 5.

There will be more live music, a chance to meet some of the performers, and drinks and *botanas*. The party will begin immediately after the concert and run until around 10:30. They only have room for fifty people, so drop by the office (near the corner of Umaran) or call 152-2322 to reserve your space with a \$100 peso donation.

All the proceeds from this party will go to Casita Linda, which Select sponsors year-round by donating the money raised by their biweekly Trolley Tours of San Miguel to the organization.

Save These Dates

Doug Robinson: *Plays Well With Others*
Monday, July 2nd & Tuesday July 3rd
7:00 p.m.

The Santa Ana Theater/Biblioteca
\$200 Peso Donation
Tickets at La Conexión & The Santa Ana
[Tickets On Sale Now](#)

"*Stop the World I want to Get Off*"
Thursday, August 9
Opening night proceeds go to
Casita Linda.
Special thanks go to Michael Sudhir
and Michael Whaley.



Thanks, Doug!

DONOR THANKS

- Global Giving
- Betty Davis
- Robert Paul Barker
- Jane McCarthy
- Amy Driscoll
- Janice McKeivitt
- Guadalupe Alvarez

Criteria For Selecting The Recipients



The Ramirez House

People often ask us how we select the recipients for a casita. We have a list of about 20 communities surrounding San Miguel de Allende that the government has compiled of families living in extreme poverty. Representatives of Casita Linda then meet with the community leaders and they tell us which families in particular are most in need of shelter. We visit these families and make sure they meet our criteria, which is that the families must be deserving, often they are single mothers with several children, or couples who are barely subsisting on what they can earn. The families then agree to help us to the best of their

ability with "sweat" equity. They do not have to buy any materials or pay anything at all. They also understand that they must keep their new home and surrounding area clean.

Thanks to the generosity of our donors, Casita Linda is now in a better position to be able to provide the homes with some bunk beds which are currently being designed and priced out. The people for whom we build these little houses truly have nothing. Any clothing, towels, sheets, mattresses and so on are received with gratitude.

Construction Update

A day was spent moving our equipment and forms from Los Galvanes to Guerrero. A temporary water pump was installed and plans are being made to install a permanent solar powered water system which will supply the entire village. The slab for the first of three houses in Guerrero has been laid and last week the forms were put in place in preparation for the cement pour. On Saturday, June 16th, we'll get a full crew of volunteers and several young men from Guerrero to pour the cement into the forms. The construction is moving along swiftly and smoothly, thanks to our dedicated construction volunteer group.

Jeffrey Brown reported that before leaving Los Galvanes, he and other volunteers did some renovations on a small, adobe house for a family. The team installed a new roof and a solar light system, donated by Solar San Miguel, for this family who had been living without any electricity. They also did some plumbing to hook up a toilet that had been there, but was not connected to the sewer system. They certainly enriched the lives of this family!



Those who are less fortunate
Often don't want to ask for help.

Hard times hit us all at some point
Enjoy your good fortune
Let your fortune help others
People helping people makes this
world a better place!"

- Catherine Pulsifer



Family

By Jean Gerber and Mauricio Magaña

The mother, Martina, hustles the first two of four children who are school age at 7:00 in the morning. The school for the younger children is about 1 km away, for the older children it's 5 km's. A few of her 10 children help her with the chores: cooking - usually *frijoles* and *papas* and *quelites con salsa* or *nopales* from the nearby cactus and, of course, tortillas. Other will be herding the family's goats, which is their mainstay. The older children who are not in school work in the fields to earn a little money. The father leaves early to work at a ranch nearby, when there is work to be had.

In the afternoon, the first shift of children return from school and the next shift leaves. The women and children from this family and several others that live in this rancho will sit under a large mesquite tree, the only shade on the entire premises where they will work on the food preparation, sewing, nursing the babies, and talking. The dogs are a rather mangy looking bunch, but somehow fit in with the

whole scene. There are pigs tied to the scrub trees and there are a few chickens running in erratic circles. The families generally have to buy their eggs because the chickens are quite adept at laying their eggs where nobody can find them. In the background are beautiful green agricultural fields, a surprising number of trees in the distance and gorgeous reflections off the Presa de Allende. The rancho is about 20 minutes off the main dirt road from Cienegita.

The kids bring buckets of water from a well a few hundred meters away from their existing little shacks, for cooking, bathing and watering the animals that are in the pen. The well water must be boiled before they drink it because it contains lead and other toxic substances.

The parents are members of *progresas*, so their families can have medical treatment at the clinic in Cienegita as often as needed. In exchange, once a month they will go to a town meeting and one other day they need to work together with others of the community to clean up garbage from the streets and fields.

When we got the women aside they asked us questions about birth control. They have no education in these matters, and a lot of major misconceptions. We were so surprised and delighted that they were comfortable enough to bring up this sensitive subject and we are working on bringing a counselor to talk with about 20 or 30 of the women in the village.

Sra. Martina was telling us how when their neighbors walk by the casita and see what is currently under construction, they shake their heads and cannot figure out for the life of them what kind of construction it is! No bricks? No adobe? At this moment we have the wooden forms on four sides and a curved roof with trusses holding it up in preparation for pouring the cement. Sra. Martina said "we think the casita is beautiful just the way it is." She told us that nobody in Guerrero can figure out how it is going to look when it is finished. The whole group of people sitting under the tree with us that day began to smile and laugh in telling us this story. We at Casita Linda are so eager to finish this house, paint it bright, happy colors and have all the people passing by in Guerrero saying "Ah, so THAT'S how it work!

Featured Volunteer – Saul Whynman

Saul Whynman was one of the original volunteers who worked on the first casitas in La Huerta. He continues to be part of the core group and one of the most experienced workers. He can always be counted on to be there if he is in San Miguel (except if he has a conflicting meeting as a Board Member of Audubon).

Second, Saul is also responsible for purchasing all of the materials and supplies used in our construction. This means that he works in the construction on Wednesdays and Saturdays, then he needs to figure out what we will or might need in the next construction phases, buy the items, arrange for the delivery, if necessary, work with the Casita Linda treasurer to pay for everything and finally see to it that all of the tools and materials get to the site on time.



Last, but not least, he is a member of the Advisory Board that guides the decisions of Casita Linda.

And best of all, he does it with a great smile and sense of humor.

We at Casita Linda caught up with Saul last week and being that he is so modest in talking about himself, we put together a few questions for him.

CL: There are so many organizations here in San Miguel, why did you choose to volunteer for Casita?

SW: It's a good thing to do, building these houses for those who have virtually nothing, and I enjoy working outdoors. I also like working with the other volunteers who are dedicated and hardworking. Being able to see the results of our work is especially rewarding.

CL: How long have you been a volunteer with Casita Linda?

SW: I saw an ad for the first fundraiser with Maria Muldaur in January, 2005 and I have been involved ever since.

CL: How do you see the organization in the future? What would you like to see happen?

SW: Just keep going! Many of the rural communities are just as needy as the one we just left.

CL: What experience do you have in construction, if any?

SW: I really don't have any experience. My wife, Linda, and I had a farmhouse dating back to 1863 in Vermont, which needed a lot of repairs, so I got on-the-job training. We started with having some horses and then planted four acres of Christmas trees for people to come and cut for themselves. I just like working with my hands

CL: If you were trying to recruit volunteers for Casita Linda, what would you tell them?

SW: All I need to tell them is what we do! I met some people last year, handed them a brochure, never saw them again, and I just got an e-mail that they are donating \$2,700 (which will just about build two casitas) AND they are coming down to help build them!

CL: What has been the most rewarding experience you've had to date?

SW: When I showed the señora of the second house we built in Los Galvanes how to use a shower which she had never seen before, and she started crying. And so did I.