



Friends of the Orphans.
Raising children. Transforming lives.



Media Guide

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Friends of the Orphans

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Friends of the Orphans

MISSION

Friends of the Orphans is dedicated to improving the lives of orphaned, abandoned and disadvantaged children through our support of the Nuestros Pequeños Hermanos (NPH, Spanish for “Our Little Brothers and Sisters”) network of orphanages in Latin America and the Caribbean.

VISION

We aim to increase donor support as effective fundraisers and trustworthy stewards by sharing NPH’s compelling story of hope with a national audience.

VALUES

Open communication

Respect for one another

Passion for our cause

Honesty and integrity in everything we do.

Accountability and transparency to regulatory standards

Nurture and cultivate donor relationships

Stewards and responsible fiscal managers of our donor contributions

History

In 1954, a hungry, homeless boy was arrested for stealing from the poor box of a small church in Cuernavaca, Mexico. The church’s priest, Father William B. Wasson of Phoenix, Arizona, refused to press charges and asked for custody of the boy. Within a few days, eight more boys found a home with Father Bill, and Nuestros Pequeños Hermanos (NPH) was born. He gave them a safe home and a chance to turn their lives around. By year’s end, 32 boys were in his care.

With unwavering faith and deep compassion, Father Bill set up beds in an abandoned warehouse and continued accepting more children even though financial resources were meager and uncertain. Girls joined the NPH family in 1959, and by 1963 nearly 400 children called NPH home. As the NPH model demonstrated success and gained respect, social service agencies and advocates for children referred more and more orphans to the homes. With NPH graduates and volunteers helping to manage their many needs, NPH was caring for 1,000 children by 1970.

Father Bill’s devotion to the care of orphans inspired an outpouring of financial support and volunteer helpers for his humanitarian cause. Friends of the Orphans (Friends) traces its roots to Father Bill’s family and friends in Arizona, who showed their generosity and kindness by sending clothes, food and money. Word spread in the United States and Europe through direct mail, celebrity spokespersons, and special events. A nucleus of supporters rallied to his aid, and

in 1965, Friends of Our Little Brothers was incorporated in Arizona as a nonprofit organization. Affiliated but separate nonprofit support groups called Friends of the Orphans were created in Minnesota (1986), Washington state (1988) and Illinois (1999). An organization in Virginia, called Our Little Brothers and Sisters (OLB&S), helped start successful fundraising offices in Europe as well as Canada. On July 1, 2005, the offices in Arizona, Illinois, Minnesota, and Washington state became regional offices of the national organization – Friends of the Orphans. In addition, new regional offices were formed in Miami, Florida, and Washington, D.C. The new offices were made possible by the fundraising support of Our Little Brothers and Sisters. The national office is located in Arlington Heights, Illinois, just outside of Chicago.

M. Virginia “Ginger” Perry serves as the Chair of the National Board.

Friends of the Orphans/NPH Relationship

Together, Friends of the Orphans and NPH raise children and transform their lives by creating families for life through values of unconditional love, shared responsibility and education. This enables children to grow into caring and productive members of their communities. By making a difference in the lives of the children, our supporters’ lives are enhanced as well.

There is close collaboration and cooperation between Friends of the Orphans and NPH. Friends of the Orphans is a fundraising organization whose primary function is to provide financial support to raise, nurture and educate *pequeños*, or children living in NPH homes. In the process, Friends of the Orphans staff meet on a regular basis with NPH leadership to review programs, approve budgets, plan tours to homes, arrange fundraising events, and support other NPH activities. Friends of the Orphans representatives visit the homes in order to experience NPH programs first-hand. *Pequeños* also make annual visits to the United States to perform at Friends of the Orphans-sponsored events, or *fiestas*, where they bring the message of hope to a wider audience.

Friends of the Orphans offers a sponsorship program which allows sponsors to communicate with a child of any age, living at an NPH home. In 2008, there were 5,705 sponsorships in the U.S. with more than \$2.5 Million in sponsorship pledges. Sponsors receive letters from their *pequeño* each time they write, progress reports detailing the child’s academic progress, and a special note on “Sponsor Day.” Twice a year, supporters and child sponsors from around the world are invited to visit the homes to get personally acquainted with their sponsored children. This kind of personal contact is mutually beneficial, and is a unique feature of the Friends organization.

It is not uncommon for donors and other volunteers to share their expertise by setting up or participating in special projects, such as a dental clinic, construction projects, etc. In the United States, Friends of the Orphans provides approximately \$3 million per year to NPH to cover operating expenses such as food, clothing, medicine, teacher and staff salaries, etc

Nuestros Pequeños Hermanos

Mission Statement

Nuestros Pequeños Hermanos International is a Christian mission that strives to provide a permanent family and home for orphaned, abandoned and other at-risk children who live in conditions of extreme poverty. Our programs provide quality education, health care and spiritual formation with the goal of raising good Christians and productive members of their respective societies.

A worldwide community of donors, staff and volunteers enables NPH to help the children become caring and productive citizens in their countries.

NPH Philosophy and Program Components

From the beginning, Father Bill accepted all orphaned and abandoned children unconditionally. It is a core principle of NPH to keep children from the same family together; children are available for sponsorship, but not for adoption.

Early on, Father Bill set the tone and guiding principles for NPH for the next 50 years– he provided a loving home and taught each child the importance of sharing, working hard, and accepting personal responsibility for their actions.

During the formative years, Father Bill implemented the principle of self-sufficiency. The “family” members learned how to cultivate crops in order to produce food for the table, a practice that is continued in many NPH homes today. In addition, every child has a daily chore, such as cooking and cleaning. These activities instill a work ethic and the concept of sharing. Religious festivals, recreation and excursions, creative arts classes, celebrations of birthdays and holidays, and other social and educational experiences, round out their lives and contribute to the family atmosphere.

Another key aspect of the program philosophy is the “*Año Familiar*.” The older *pequeños* are asked to “give back” to their family by helping care of their younger brothers and sisters by providing one year of service to an NPH home. They serve in such posts as child care, medical assistants, craft apprentices, office staff and other important roles. Following their year of service, *pequeños* are offered the chance to continue with their education under the guidance and with the help of NPH. Upon reaching adulthood, it is not uncommon for former *pequeños* to return to NPH as staff and volunteers. For example, Rafael Bermudez, a former *pequeño* from Mexico, worked at NPH Honduras for ten years as Director of Sponsorship before being named the NPH National Director for Mexico in 2004. Seven of the eight other National Directors are former *pequeños*.

Many of the children who come to reside at NPH homes have lived in horrific conditions, had traumatic life experiences, or have a severe physical or mental disability. Hence, they require special education to address a variety of learning and physical disabilities and other special needs. While some specialized education and therapists are in place, many more are needed, in order to address the emotional damage and educational/learning deficiencies of many of the *pequeños*.

As the *pequeños* mature, integration with the larger community is important. For this reason, education, both academic and vocational, is emphasized. Currently, 145 *pequeños* are attending universities in Guatemala (1), El Salvador (6) Haiti (14), Honduras (22), Nicaragua (12) and Mexico (90). This is not only a remarkable accomplishment in light of the dire straits from which they have come, but also a testament to the profound influence and effectiveness of NPH. If they are not suited for high school and/or college, the *pequeños* can learn a useful trade. This can be beneficial to NPH in that the youths may learn to produce items such as furniture for the homes and clothing for the other *pequeños*. Because of the high unemployment in third world countries, NPH plans to improve its vocational and technical training programs (carpentry, plumbing, welding, etc.) and to assist *pequeños* to find employment, so they may become self-sufficient.

The NPH model program is based on sound research and basic principles in regard to caring for children – a safe and nurturing home, proper nutrition, and an education, which benefit both the individual personally and prepare him or her for a productive role in society. Taken together, these principles and programs can lift the children out of the poverty into which they were born and permanently change their lives for the better.

General Facts

- The first NPH home opened in 1954 by Father William B. Wasson.
- NPH has raised, educated and nurtured nearly 16,000 children.
- There NPH homes in nine countries: Bolivia, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua and Peru.
- Each year, the NPH homes serve more than 30,000 people in their surrounding communities through various outreach programs. For example:
 - All Homes collect and distribute supplies to people in need after emergencies and natural disasters, such as floods and earthquakes.
 - NPH Dominican builds latrines in nearby villages.
 - NPH Haiti's St. Damien Hospital is the only free pediatric facility of its kind in the entire country. It provides long-term care for critically ill children as well as outpatient services.
 - NPH Mexico provides meals, health care and an education to more than 100 children who live with their families at a nearby garbage dump.
- Every child at NPH has a daily chore, such as mopping, cooking or farming, to help the family.
- NPH asks their children to give back a year of service to the family, called *Año Familiar*. This is one of the core ideas behind the philosophy of NPH. The type of service depends on the interests of the individual and on the needs of NPH. *Año Familiar* positions include child care, medical assistants, craft apprentices, office staff and other important roles.
- Each home has an annual Visitors' Day. Family members (mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts, cousins, and sometimes grandparents) spend the day on NPH grounds and usually bring food and treats. The older youths have every other Sunday free to visit their biological family.
- In 2007, Friends provided over \$3.4 million in support of NPH's budget, an additional \$1.2 million for projects approved by our Board, plus \$100,000 toward parity wages in NPH's 2008 budget. In addition, we sent another \$1.8 million to NPH Homes in in-kind donations such as medicines and clothing.
- Based solely on the rate of growth of NPH over the past 10 years, the number of children in NPH homes has risen by 189%. If this continues through the next 10 years, by 2013, NPH will need to provide homes for 5,500 children, almost double the amount NPH serves now.

NPH Biography: Father William B. Wasson

Founder, Nuestros Pequeños Hermanos

For Father William B. Wasson, the solution to homeless and abandoned children worldwide was to help them – one child at a time.

Born on Dec. 21, 1923, in Phoenix, Arizona, Father Wasson was always concerned with the needs of the poor. He received his MA in law and social sciences at San Luis Rey University, Santa Barbara, California. He then traveled to Mexico, where he was ordained a priest in 1953 by the VII Bishop of Cuernavaca. Father Wasson was assigned to the chapel in the Tepetates market district of Cuernavaca, and almost immediately instituted a daycare center for poor children. A year later he rescued a boy from a harsh prison sentence for stealing from the church poor box “because he was hungry.” Father won custody of the boy and eight others in the cell with him. Thus began Nuestros Pequeños Hermanos (NPH), Spanish for “Our Little Brothers and Sisters.”

Father Wasson dedicated over 51 years of his life serving as father, provider and teacher to more than 15,000 orphaned, abandoned and poor children. NPH now operates homes in nine countries: Bolivia, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua and Peru. Throughout his lifetime, he received international recognition for his work on behalf of children. These include:

- 1977** The Luis Elizondo Humanitarian Award, the Mexican National Prize, for his contribution to the children of Mexico. He was, at the time, the only U.S. citizen to have received this award.
- 1979** Good Samaritan Award from the National Catholic Development Conference (NCDC)
- 1981** Franciscan International Award
- 1990** Order of the Aztec Eagle, Mexico’s highest award, recognizing services performed for Mexico or humanity by persons of foreign nationality. This was the first time a priest had been honored.
- 1997** National Caring Award by The Caring Institute of Washington, D.C.
- 1998** KFC’s Colonel’s Way Award honoring amazing seniors
- 2000** Kellogg’s Hannah Neil World of Children Award, a \$100,000 prize given to individuals who make a world of difference in the world of children
- 2004** International Erich Fromm Society annual award “in recognition of his work as founder of NPH, as spiritual father of the orphanages in Latin America and for his permanently lived example of his ‘Love of Life’ in the spirit of Erich Fromm.”
- 2005** \$10,000 Ivy Humanitarian Prize from the Ivy Inter-American Foundation to "recognize individuals who have made extraordinary humanitarian contributions toward improving the lives of children and their communities in the Americas." He received the award in Washington D.C. on September 22, 2005.

\$100,000 prize from The Opus Prize Foundation for making a significant difference in the lives of people who need help the most. Given at a ceremony at Marquette University on November 7, 2005.

As a scripture scholar, Father Wasson is the author of three books: *Luke XV, Gospel in the Dust*, and *The Sermon on the Mount*.

On August 16, 2006, Father Wasson passed away at the age of 83. At the time of his death, NPH was home to over 3,100 children in nine countries. His vision and legacy continues through the work of Nuestros Pequeños Hermanos and support of Friends of the Orphans.

NPH Biography: Father Philip C. Cleary

Executive Director, Nuestros Pequeños Hermanos International

The second of seven children, Father Phil Cleary was raised in Chicago and received numerous educational awards. As a young seminarian, he worked as a counselor for a Chicago orphanage and as a dorm director at a home for delinquent and troubled youth. He graduated from Loyola University and the Archdiocesan seminary with a bachelor's degree in psychology and a master's degree in theology.

Following his ordination in 1979, Father Phil served in two Chicago parishes. He was elected to serve as President of the Association of Priests, and later was on the Board of Directors of the National Federation of Priests' Councils. It was while serving in this capacity that Father Phil learned of Nuestros Pequeños Hermanos (NPH), Spanish for "Our Little Brothers and Sisters," and the mission of Father William B. Wasson. He volunteered to work at the orphanage for one summer. However, upon completing his three month term, he solicited and received permission to continue serving NPH. That decision has grown into a lifetime commitment to serve the children of the NPH orphanages.

In recognition of his service to the children of NPH, he has been honored with the Mercy Mission Award given annually by Chicago priests for outstanding work with troubled youth, the Community Service Award from the mayor of the city of Cuernavaca, and the *Corazón* Award from Friends of the Orphans, Illinois Region.

After having served for many years as National Director of NPH Mexico, as of January 1, 2004, Father Phil was named Executive Director of NPH-International.

Father Phil resides at the main home of NPH Mexico in Miacatlán, Morelos

World Facts

- According to UNICEF's *The State of the World's Children 2005*²:
 - Half the world's children are devastated by poverty, conflict and AIDS
 - More than half the children in the developing world are severely deprived of one or more of the necessities essential to childhood:
 - 640 million children do not have adequate shelter
 - 500 million children have no access to sanitation
 - 400 million children do not have access to safe water
 - 300 million children lack access to information
 - 270 million children have no access to health care services
 - 140 million children have never been to school
 - 90 million children are severely food-deprived
 - The number of AIDS orphans* has grown to 15 million worldwide. (*Defined as having lost one or both parents.)
- In 2003, there were 12.4 million orphans in Latin America and the Caribbean. In Haiti, which had an adult prevalence level of 5.6 percent in 2003, over 15 percent of all children are estimated to be orphans, more than double the regional average.³ An estimated 200,000 children are AIDS orphans in Haiti.⁴
- Human trafficking is on the rise across the world with more than one million children forced into prostitution, begging or forced labor every year according to the United Nations.⁵
- About 246 million children are engaged in exploitative child labor worldwide. Many of them are in hazardous environments.⁶

Sources

¹ CIA – *The World Fact Book 2005*, <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/>

² UNICEF's *The State of the World's Children 2005: "Childhood Under Threat"*, <http://www.unicefusa.org/site/pp.asp?c=duLRI8O0H&b=262152>, December 9, 2004

³ UNICEF's *Children on the brink 2004 -- Key Messages and Facts*, <http://www.unicef.org/turkey/ir/ah17.html>

⁴ World Health Organization's *Report on the global HIV/AIDS epidemic 2002*, http://whqlibdoc.who.int/publications/2002/9219731854_focus_orphans.pdf

⁵ UNICEF *In the News*, Agence France-Presse, August 30, 2005, <http://www.unicefusa.org>

⁶ UNICEF's *End Child Exploitation: Child labour today*, April 2, 2005, http://www.unicef.fr/images/unicef/ECECHILD_A4.pdf

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