



WINTER 2014

A TALE OF UNCONDITIONAL LOVE

*H*ato Del Yaque is one of Santiago's slum areas. The streets are muddy, cluttered by motorized tricycles, and pedestrians walking on the edge of the road. After driving for around 45 minutes, we stopped in front of a green house with a large car parked at the gate. A middle age male neighbor greets us and we continue our walk through a wet clay road with no sidewalks towards a group of smaller houses.

We were walking to a single story house on the corner to meet Felix. Someone said "Saludo" and we enter, slowly. A group of women were rushing inside letting everyone know we had arrived. The first person we saw was a boy sitting in the middle of the small room, this was Felix. When our eyes met, Felix's radiated with a joy that filled the dark room. It was a moment when you realize the truth about how the eyes can be a window to the soul. It was in that moment that we realized Felix, whose body was utterly disproportioned, was sitting in a wheelchair. Felix has Progressive Muscular Dystrophy (PMD).

Elena, the FCID's Promotora working with Felix, introduces the group, and tries to encourage a very shy Felix to speak. He points to the sculptures he made as part of his activities to strengthen his arm muscles. A couple minutes passed, a tiny woman comes in from the other room and introduces herself as Felix's mother. Her name is Fé (Faith in English). She looked somewhat tired, but glad for our visit. With a very soft voice she tells us how painful Felix's condition is. She says he cannot attend school because of the severe pain in his legs and arms. Smiling, Felix becomes a little more talkative, we learn how much he likes taking photos, singing, making sculptures, and most of all telling stories.

Fé tells us she has five children. Two were born with PMD while the others have shown no symptoms. She tells us that Felix's sister died from complications of the illness. She is relieved that Felix has made it to age sixteen. Fé shows us the girl's portrait on the wall; we saw a vivacious girl sitting in a wheel chair, in the same position Felix uses now.





A TALE OF UNCONDITIONAL LOVE — *continued*

Beaming, Felix tells how much he loved spending time playing with his sister. As we listen, we are amazed by their strength. Fé concludes by saying, “They were there for each other because they had the same condition”.

Felix’s mother tells us she began seeing signs of the disease in her son when he was 3 months old. “He was a floppy baby” with no strength in his muscles. Confined to a wheelchair for most of his life, the disease will only worsen despite physical therapy and or pain medication. Fé tells us of his independence and he shows us how he manages to put his sock on by himself. She tells us of long nights when she must wake Felix several times to massage his arms and legs to help alleviate the pain. After those sleepless nights, she must rise to work in a local factory and attend to her other children.



We tried to get Felix to tell us one of his stories, but he hesitates because there are too many girls staring. He promises to tell a story if we come back and visit him again. It is impossible to explain that maybe he will not be around the next time we visit. Instead we talked about the *Promotoras* and how the exercises help Felix maintain his mobility ranges and independence. We learned he is able to do homework a teacher sends home for him, but when the pain strikes he has a hard time concentrating. As with most teenagers, Felix’s mother gives him the look that says, “You better do your homework mister” and encourages him to do his exercises so he can feel better.

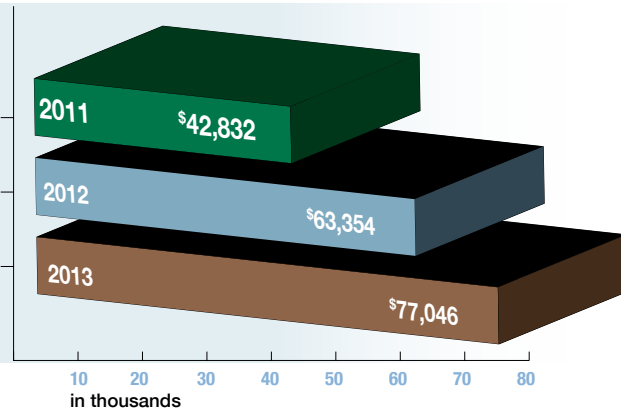
As we attempt to take a picture, Fé tries to run away saying, “I’m not pretty enough.” Felix responds with, “You’re the prettiest mom ever” and she finally relents. Elena, the FCID Promotora, tells Fé; “You should be proud of yourself. Your strength is helping your son become a smart, educated, and well behaved young man”

Taking each other’s hand, we end our visit with prayer. As Fé prays, we hear that from all the things she could have prayed for, she chose to ask for protection of her guest, us. Felix’s body looked so relaxed. Fighting back tears we tried to comprehend the size and strength of their faith, considering all they have experienced. What a wonderful lesson!

Through your support of the Community Based Rehabilitation and School Inclusion Programs in the Dominican Republic, International Child Care is able to continue its mission of offering health and hope to children and families like Felix and his family. ICC thanks you today. They will thank you forever. To help children like Felix, please designate your donation to The Advance # 410215.



Race for Grace 2013 was a great success. The team raised over \$70,000 for the work of International Child Care. The 2014 Race for Grace will be held on August 23, 2014 in Wichita Falls, Texas. For up to date information, please follow ICC’s website and Facebook page beginning in March.



“But these things I plan won’t happen right away. Slowly, steadily, surely, the time approaches when the vision will be fulfilled. If it seems slow, do not despair, for these things will surely come to pass. Just be patient! They will not be overdue a single day.”



Habakkuk 2:3 NLT

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International Child Care

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN CORNER

NEW BEGINNINGS FOR GRACE

International Child Care (ICC)’s capital campaign is under way. Keith Mumma, National Director of ICC-USA said about this effort: “This campaign matters both for the resources it secures and for what it tells stakeholders about ICC’s highest priority; the rebuilding of Grace. This will have a life-long impact on the health of some of the most vulnerable people in Haiti.”

The Quiet Phase of ICC’s capital campaign is just that: a period for completing plans and exploring potential donors’ interest in supporting ICC’s goals. Though ICC is still months away from any public announcement, plans for the rebuilding of Grace Children’s Hospital include:

- Pediatric and Adult Outpatient Clinic
- A 22 Bed Pediatric Inpatient Wing
- Pharmacy, Laboratory and Imagery Services
- TB Clinic, OB/GYN and HIV Clinic
- A 22 bed Adolescent Inpatient Wing
- A 22 bed Pediatric TB/HIV Wing

Be sure to follow the Capital Campaign in each Grace Newsletter as we highlight our progress towards the new Grace Children’s Hospital.

If you would like to learn more about the Capital Campaign or how you can help, please call Chad Scott, Fundraising and Capital Campaign Director at 704-530-9798 or email chad@internationalchildcare.org.





SOCIAL MEDIA CORNER



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