

A miracle for Marina

By Lynda Hollinger-Janzen

ne day in 2004, another child was brought to Annette and Paco Castillo. This tiny person did not speak at all, despite appearing to be about 3 years old. Her name was Marina Bankole and she was warmly welcomed into the growing family at *La Casa Grande*, a children's home in Benin and a Mennonite Mission Network partner.

"Was there a problem with her vocal chords? Had she lost her voice due to unspeakable trauma? No one knew," said Melanie Hire, who was visiting *La Casa Grande* when Marina arrived. Melanie was part of a partnership delegation from Waterford Mennonite Church in Goshen, Indiana.

Marina and Melanie formed a bond

and communicated through hugs and "Hallelujah! smiles. After a period of basking in popped oper the love that is tangible as soon as one enters *La Casa Grande's* compound, the inseparable twosome were participat

twosome were participating in vibrant worship that is part of the daily fabric at the children's home. Music is lively and

home. Music is lively and accompanied by drumming and dancing. Prayer is punctuated with "Amens" and fervent *La Casa Grande* is a children's village in Benin that cherishes each child and helps them grow into their God-given potential.

declarations of "Thank you, Jesus!" In the middle of a prayer, an unfamiliar little voice shouted out, "Hallelujah!" Reverently closed eyes popped open and all heads turned

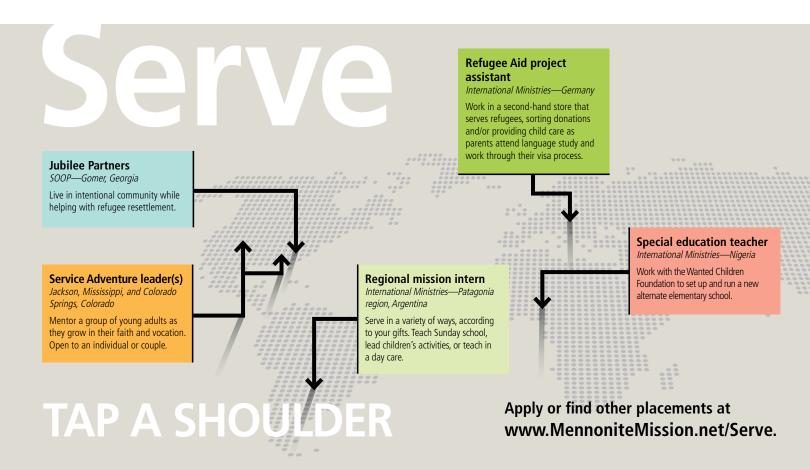
toward Marina. "We were all stunned into silence," Melanie said. "Despite the suffering little Marina had endured, the first word we heard from her was one of praise to God!"

Over the next weeks, with good nutrition and education, Marina flourished.

we heard from her was

one of praise to God!

PRAY for the staff of La Casa Grande, that they may continue to receive and love children like Marina.



Bring it or leave it quiz

If traveling to La Paz, Bolivia, you should bring:		
	1. High heels. Image: Constraint of the second	ve it
ooking for some children's Sunday school or vacation Bible school materials? Mission Network has a new Bolivia Mission Bank Teaching Tool, full of fun and creative ways for children to learn about ministries in a		

different part of the world.

Quiz answers

"Bring it or leave it." If traveling to La Paz, Bolivia, you should bring:

- 1. Leave it. Bring hiking boots instead!
- 2. Bring it. La Paz is in the Andes Mountain Range and can get very cold, especially at night.
- 3. Bring it. There are natural hot springs just outside of La Paz. It's like nature's hot tub!
- 4. Leave it. Although it rains sometimes, La Paz has pretty dry weather.
- 5. Leave it. La Paz is a modern city, where you can easily buy things like toothpaste, shampoo, and soap.
- 6. Bring it. Even though La Paz can get very cold, it's usually very sunny!
- 7. Bring it. Make sure you have a bottle to fill. Sometimes people get sick from the high elevation of La Paz. Drinking water will help make sure you stay healthy.

Cut out or fold over, post, and use this verse for contemplation and prayer over the next month.



Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me.

—Mark 9:37

Be the Gospel.



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