



BEYOND TOWARD FAITH IN ACTION

“Whoever embraces one of these children as I do, embraces me.” —Mark 9:36-37

A miracle for Marina

By Lynda Hollinger-Janzen

One 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 part-

nership delegation from Waterford Mennonite Church in Goshen, Indiana.

Marina and Melanie formed a bond and communicated through hugs and smiles. After a period of basking in the love that is tangible as soon as one enters *La Casa Grande’s* compound, the inseparable twosome were participating in vibrant worship that is part of the daily fabric at the children’s 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.

Despite the suffering little Marina had endured, the first word we heard from her was one of praise to God!

“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. ■

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

Serve

Jubilee Partners

SOOP—Gomer, Georgia
Live in intentional community while helping with refugee resettlement.

Service Adventure leader(s)

Jackson, Mississippi, and Colorado Springs, Colorado
Mentor a group of young adults as they grow in their faith and vocation. Open to an individual or couple.

Regional mission intern

International Ministries—Patagonia region, Argentina
Serve in a variety of ways, according to your gifts. Teach Sunday school, lead children’s activities, or teach in a day care.

Refugee Aid project assistant

International Ministries—Germany
Work in a second-hand store that serves refugees, sorting donations and/or providing child care as parents attend language study and work through their visa process.

Special education teacher

International Ministries—Nigeria
Work with the Wanted Children Foundation to set up and run a new alternate elementary school.

TAP A SHOULDER

Apply or find other placements at www.MennoniteMission.net/Serve.

Bring it or leave it quiz

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.

If traveling to La Paz, Bolivia, you should bring:

- | | Bring it | Leave it |
|-------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. High heels. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. A winter coat. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. A swimsuit. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. An umbrella. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Toothpaste. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Sunglasses. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. Water bottle. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Looking 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.



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



Children from the Patagonia region in Argentina.

Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me.

—Mark 9:37

Be the Gospel.



www.MennoniteMission.net
Toll-free: 1-866-866-2872