

# What's New and Ongoing at FANA -- March 2010

*A Letter to Friends of FANA, MN,  
from Johanna Hjerthén, Administrative Director,  
Fundación para la Asistencia de la Niñez Abandonada (FANA), Bogotá,  
Colombia*

Dear Friends of FANA, Minnesota:

I am glad to provide a summary regarding FANA's latest programs and needs. These are some of the most important items on FANA's list, for now. As you all prepare for your July fundraising events, I take this opportunity to thank you for all you do for FANA and our little ones.

**1. What's new:** Since February 2009, FANA has operated a preschool. This is a public-private partnership, in which we work with the government of the city of Bogotá to address some of the most pressing needs of young children and families of our community. The program is focused on securing adequate nutrition and initial education to 196 boys and girls, ages 3 months to 5 years old. These children belong to the most vulnerable families of the neighborhood of Suba (home to FANA, Bogotá's second largest locality and one of the most insecure). We work closely with the families to ensure respect and knowledge of the children's rights. Also, 25 children that live in FANA attend the preschool, benefiting from the opportunity to interact and socialize with other little ones that are not institutionalized and making part of a formal education program. After 10 months of operation, on December 30, 2009, we were able to sign a long-term contract (2010-2011) to continue operating the preschool.

**2. What work is continuing:** We continue to work hard on our four programs: protection, adoptions, attention to pregnant women, and preschool. Elena has practically had to move to Bienestar (the Colombian social welfare agency), in order to help process some of our children's files and really get a decision taken on their legal status. Fortunately, her hard work has begun to show some progress and these children seem to finally be getting the attention they need. We hope that at least some of the 20 or so little ones that have been with us almost since they were born, will soon be able to join their families. Regarding Hogar Margarita, Maria Lucía has undertaken a new advertising campaign on the radio, to see if we can reach the women who might be in need of the Hogar's assistance services. The results will be analyzed in June.

### **3. Greatest needs and challenges:**

(i) Our greatest needs continue to be those related with the children's direct care: diapers, baby formula, clothing, and personnel. The team of nurses, pediatricians, and nutritionists make most of our costs. We try to ensure that the children receive the best possible care and these costs are always the most important for us to bear.

(ii) We have projected that clothing will also make for a big part of our budget this year, because many of the donations we had received in terms of clothes and shoes, have now been consumed and, for the first time in years, we are going to have to purchase these items. Also, because many

of the children now attend public schools nearby, we must purchase uniforms (this is a requirement established by law).

(iii) Also, as we move on with the preschool and address all the children's school needs, we must purchase toys and school supplies. There are never enough of these for the number of children we currently care for (260, counting all programs).

**4. Special Needs Children at FANA:** In spring of 2010, Gabriela -- a little girl at FANA who has a heart defect -- will be brought to Minnesota by Elizabeth (head nurse at FANA) and one other helper, Monica, to be evaluated. Our hope is to find out a great deal more about her heart defect and how it is affecting her neurologically. Gabriela turned two in February and has been quite stable off all medications. She has responded well to therapy and FANA sees great improvement in her developmentally. She will have a second major heart surgery in the future, and we hope she will not have to endure that surgery without the love and care of a forever-family. During this visit many doctors who will see her will give us a better idea of what she has going on and what her prognosis is. So many of you in the past have been extremely generous with special needs children, and FANA is asking for your help once again. Please contact Friends of FANA, MN, to find out how you can help.

Thank you again.

Johanna Hjerthén  
Administrative Director