

# Merry Christmas, everyone!

My name is Olivia Young and I am a third-year volunteer here at the CMT in Quito. When Madre Miguel asked me to write this letter, I was thinking "Oh sure, no problem!" It is harder than I thought it would be, because there are so many incredible memories that I have from my two Christmases spent with these awe-inspiring people. So, I've tried to narrow all of my ideas down to just one thought of what Christmas at the Center means to me: Family.



When I was younger, I could not wait to get back to school after Christmas break to tell everyone what Santa got for me and see all the other goodies that were received. Yes, my family and I went to Mass and welcomed the Baby Jesus into the manger and we even sang "Happy Birthday!" a few times. Yet, the one thing that we never really talked about after returning to school was what we did with our families over Christmas. There may have been an occasional "We went to see a play," or "We ate Chinese food for Christmas Eve dinner," (which is a real Young family tradition), but there were never more details. The focus was not on how we spent our time with the people we loved, it was all about the presents.

Well, in the Center it is all about a different kind of "presence;" the presence of family. Starting with the Special Education class's annual Christmas play (which stars the world-famous Armando with guest appearances by volunteers and friends alike), to having the adult students sing in the choir for Christmas Mass



and let's not forget how the third graders in each Center make their First Communion! All of the events that are part of the Christmas celebration here at the CMT are focused on family. It's not about what material goods are given or received. The true message of



Christmas at the CMT is all about who you surround yourself with during the joyful time of Christ's birth.

I will tell you that the Center's motto is more than just a catch phrase, it is the principle we live by. We truly are the largest "Family of Families" - having 360 current families and ever growing. But, this number does not include all of those people that have been touched by the beautiful love that is the CMT over the past 51 years. Be it volunteers, visitors, or former Center members, we all are and always will be a part of this wonderful family! And with that being said, from my family to yours, Merry Christmas! May you be surrounded by those you love - because that is what Christmas is all about!

Best wishes for a Blessed Christmas, *Olivia*

## Mail contributions to:

C4WF at 12605 W. North Ave, Box 130  
Brookfield, WI 53005-4629

## Contact stateside representatives:

Caitlin McGuire: [caitlinmariemcguire@gmail.com](mailto:caitlinmariemcguire@gmail.com)  
Facebook: Working Boys' Center Twitter: @workingboysctr  
Instagram: @workingboysctr  
Pat Parks: [jparks@wi.rr.com](mailto:jparks@wi.rr.com), 262-797-8988

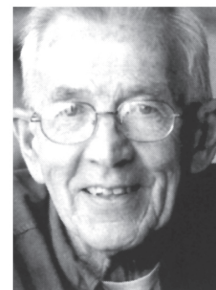
# THE SHOESHINE SPECIAL



NEWS FROM THE WORKING BOYS' CENTER • QUITO, ECUADOR • WINTER 2015



## Padre's Message



Dear Folks,

The Bible gives us a clear enough account of how salvation started at the first Christmas. Jesus was enjoying being with his mother and father and the animals, experiencing all the stable's sights, sounds, smells, feelings and

wonders he had created and come to rescue. Outside the stable all was quiet except for the angels' song of joy.

Of course Jesus was just a baby and not a grown-up. But he was still God, too and very much in contact with the Father who sent him and the Holy Spirit who came with him. So it's not wild imagination to see Jesus in the crib thinking and giggling about this great start to his world-wide mission already on a small scale underway as planned. His own new parents, the innkeeper and the shepherds all could sense in this special event the beginning of a new kind of love on

earth. It was a new presence of Christ in them that would come alive in everyone they contacted until the end of time as a living plan of salvation.

The Working Boys' Center - A Family Of Families, with your constant help, is deep into that plan. We've stayed at the scene fifty years burdening the consciences of more than 6,000 families of working kids with obligations to helping each other learn and practice the values that'll make them all agents of their own prosperity and other Christs to each other as God intends. No offense meant to the Magi; but we think our collective gift of taking care of each other as a family of families is a lot better gift to Jesus than the gold, frankincense and myrrh which we couldn't get for him at the supermarket anyway.

Make Christmas 2015 your best ever!

*John J. Halligan, S.J.*  
John Halligan, S.J.

## MERRY CHRISTMAS!



"Thanks, McKinney folks, for the soccer balls and the shoes!"

In October we had the fun of hosting another spiritual journey group. Father Don Zeiler, pastor of Saint Gabriel's in McKinney, Texas, came with fifteen parishioners who helped carry the assortment of gifts they brought to make our Christmas merrier and our WBC better equipped. In the huge pile of gifts we received footballs along with the uniforms and pairs of cleats. There were all kinds of new school supplies and stuff used for teaching art. Especially valuable were the dental and medical supplies. Among the edibles we received a vast quantity of peanut butter to help keep our bodies and souls together. Like everybody in the world blessed with good things we have profound feelings of gratitude but we're especially happy to share that gratitude and cheer with the poor folks as they work their way out of poverty.

Our parents and the little girls know that the gifts will appear for use in the Christmas programs. The little boys spied the football stuff right away and they're keeping close tabs on where it's being stored until it becomes theirs. They know there's a string attached. They'll get ownership only if they're doing what Jesus wants like not missing classes and keeping up to date on savings accounts. That's the string that helps keep our act together.

*Out of silence, Music.  
Out of the darkness, Light.  
Out of uncertainty, Promise.  
Hope was born that night.  
Feliz Navidad  
from Pat Parks*



# SANTA'S NEW WORKSHOP WITH "WBC ELVES"



Our working kids hardly ever get into stupid fights. They show their courage and toughness in their work to earn money for their families. They have always been able to grin and bear the bad treatments of their right to work. But they have also really needed to make money for their families' survival. A short while ago we got a bad new surprise. The cops were ordered to threaten to jail parents whose kids work on the streets. That stymied all of us in the WBC. So we asked asked around for support and prayed for light in the darkness. Since God didn't immediately shed the light we had humbly asked for, we came up with our own brilliant plan. Embarassingly enough, that brilliant plan we took credit for turns out to be only a tiny part of what God was inspiring. Suddenly all of us, WBC, the cops, the ministry of government and the citizens of Quito found ourselves pulling together, changing attitudes and actions in order to create a new way for the kids to earn. We moved fast to be in time to make some big money off the Christmas shopping season. Another reason to thank Jesus!

First big change was to move our WBC #1 grammar school back to big WBC #1 building in order to leave free all the spaces in that nifty four story building donated to us years ago by Maruja and Peter Maynard. Into those spaces we moved all the equipment, raw materials and instructors the kids would need to start a massive production and sales combine. The shoeshine boy members and their sisters in our girls' manual arts program became the new work force, indoors and off the streets, in our new enterprise. Our instructors got to work teaching the kids to organize assembly line types of production. They also started teaching the kids to cost out each item's raw materials, direct labor and other related expenses. Over two hundred girls and boys are



*Great toys for sale for the kids.*



*Our bread tastes better!*



*Look how talented we are.*



*We have candles of every type, but the favorite is the Christmas tree.*



*The girls are professional. They've been in business for a long time.*



*Be careful with that stamp. Don't damage the card.*

involved in six separate production areas and plenty of space is available for more and different production shop areas. This initial season, all the the production has been of our irresistible Christmas items.

Professors Norma Narvaez and Lilian Suarez are teaching the kids to make scented wax candles in all colors and featuring shapes from a tall tree trunk with a saint's nook indented in its side to a diaphanous squat aquarium containing fish eyeballing the world. Instructor Jose Chicaiza's wood items aren't carvings. The kids assemble and glue or nail carefully cut pieces and then paint or varnish the finished products that could grace the most snobbishly furnished of areas. Buyers are thrilled to see that Magdalena Miranda teaches the kids to

make chocolate in all colors besides chocolate. The variously colored chocolates are used for the edible candy statues of animals or famous people somebody might want to eat. Elizabeth Camacho and Mayra Garcia supervise the production of bars of soaps made in fancy shapes, scents, and flavors, including chocolate. No big hazard since people don't eat in the shower.

Our most acclaimed product has been Doris Moran's assortment of elegant greeting cards made by the kids. We're selling at about sixty percent of Hallmark's price. Even so, our very best selling items are the cookies and cup cakes by Eduardo Ponce's gang of young bakers. Of course, these last morsels have the marketing advantage that the

customer just buys and eats with no agonizing over whether it's the exactly right Christmas gift to buy. After only a month and a half's time from inspiration through implementation to building up a big stock of products, we were ready for and had an open house sale. Dozens of friends and relatives and other customers came. The kids in each trade had prepared speeches about the raw materials used, the manufacturing procedures and the superior qualities of our merchandise. All the instructors were on hand to back up any kids who might become nervous and jumbly.

The day turned into a huge sales operation with folks not only buying items but also making quantity orders for re-sale. This is a massive competitive encroachment on the global commercial business community and right at Christmas time when they were expecting to make all the money. But we had no choice, We have to make the money our families need to become prosperous. Anyway, we know Jesus is on our side. 