

# Shoeshine Special

News from the  
Working Boys' Center  
Quito, Ecuador

Spring 2009

**DEAR FOLKS,**

*The Lord's peace be with you.*

I know you wonder how the Working Boys' Center survives while our benefactors are losing their power to help us with that. But you are all miraculously generous and God is the power behind all good; so, not to worry.

The first item of news is that we received a request from the Department of Education in Guayaquil, down on the coast of Ecuador, asking for an opportunity to visit us and learn how technical education for jobs is done successfully. There is no need to tell the whole history of how our fame as the best has spread so far. There is only the strongly felt need to brag about it, which I just did. It is very important that you know you are backing the winners among the very poor who do not want a hand-out but do want the help they need to help themselves.

In the city of Manta, also down on the coast, our very first woman to follow a vocation into religious life celebrated her final vows. We all went to the Mass, profession of vows and party afterwards. Nidia Abad is the name of the star of that show. She has two classmates from our Center who are also members of her congregation.

Back home, up here in Quito, we completed our sixth gringa minga. "Minga" means work gang in Indian palaver. "Up" in Quito is 9,300 feet above Manta, a beautiful city "down" on the ocean shore. And for full measure in this vocabulary information: "macho macho macho" is what the local workmen call the U.S.A. benefactors who came to build houses with their own labor for our Center members. "Macho, macho, macho" means our folks who do a lot of heavy construction work are astounded at the speed, volume and quality of the heavy work gringos can do.

*Very humbly,*

**John Halligan, S.J**

## BUSINESS SECTION



*SISTER CINDY AND HER PROFESSIONAL BAKERS  
(with the donut machine)*

Our technical training courses are all geared to attaining paid employments for our folks. In order to keep that goal clear and prominent, we have a business activity operating next to each of the trades we teach. For many years, our bakery was a slow growth operation, selling bread and pastry to folks who wanted just that, nothing special. But benefactors pushed us to make changes. Some donated help to improve our bakery as a loving memorial to Matthew Lynch, an excellent chef who died much too young. Then, Millie Shoos' brother Tom donated a donut making machine. There loomed the challenge to make our bakery more worthy. But, how? Who? When?

Enter Sister Cindy Sullivan, a BVM who bakes cookies for our volunteers every Sunday and puts out fabulous meals for our team on all important occasions. Her Honorary Ph.D. is in Banana Chiffon Cake. Its delicate ethereal texture has no equal. Her other products from previously unpublished recipes have been macho macho macho, as everybody says nowadays. Our teenage students have purchased notebooks to copy it all down for their dream businesses. The parents in the baking course are all putting on weight. We will soon face the next challenging decision of forming our own trucking company for cross country deliveries or subcontracting that unskilled stuff to those who work only for money. But first we have to meet the donut, brownie and crunchy chocolate-covered elephant ears demand right on the property.

Tax deductible donations can be sent to:

**Family Unity International, Inc.**

Mrs. Patricia Parks, President

12750 Stephen Place

Elm Grove, WI 53122

Visit us on the Web @

<http://www.workingboyscenter.org>

## CELEBRATION OF THE CANONIZATION OF THE CHALPARIZANS

The Chalparizan family are into their first year of membership in the Working Boys' Center. Father Gerardo, mother Clara and their six kids (Wilson 14, Jonny 13, Carlos 11, Anita 10, María 7 and Paola 5) are well matched with the Center. They wear with honor the scars of the combat so far.

By the grace of God, the street smarts and wiles of the Chalparizan gang are going down and out of existence. We suggested right from their earliest days in the Center that they attend Mass each day with us. We have since been watching them take the Kingdom of Heaven by violence against some bad habits they picked up in their scramble for survival before they came to the Center. They all sit up front in the first or second row of benches and they enjoy the priest's frequent benign glances at them from the altar. But they do not hear him saying to God, "That is the Chalparizan family sitting right there; send the Holy Spirit on them now!"

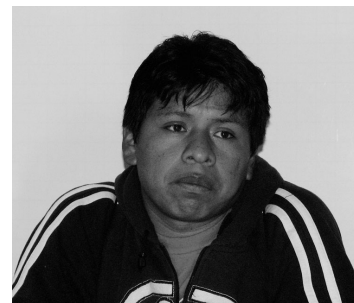
Clara and Gerardo were blessed with the miraculous gift of undying love, wanting the best for each other ever since they were kids. But they were poor, without any formal education at all and totally unprepared when they started their family. Whatever Gerardo made as a construction worker plus whatever Clara made cleaning houses was as mismanaged as could be expected. Their kids were born one by one into too much misery, even for all of them pulling together, to transform into prosperity. The poverty caused and promoted the process of becoming tough and rough with others. The bad situation became worse after Gerardo seriously injured his foot in a fall down from two floors up at a construction site. He lost that steady work and had to look for odd jobs.

Each successive day for the family became a monotonous mix of hard work for little pay, constant hunger among the kids, some stealing, some intimidation of other poor folks, challenges, threats and habitual confrontations. But as we all know, there is always somebody even tougher that comes along in that world of confrontations. A neighbor of theirs, Marianita Huera, mother of one of our other families and our chief cook in Center Number

Two, cut through their defenses and took them on. Somehow she achieved getting them to become members of the Center. After a year of membership, the family story changes radically, person by person.



Five year old Paola, sitting on Clara's lap to this side of Carlos and Jonny, tells the straight out basic truth about what has changed their lives in the Center. The others mention special treasures they have found in the Center. They talk about daily Mass as their inspiration. Education at all the levels for each of them is recognized as their hope for the future. They have made a commitment to making and keeping a family budget as a basis of their prosperity. Living Gospel values and friendship with the other families are the sources of their power to persevere. But Paola smiles at all their empty words and says that the important thing in the Center is the soup at lunch and supper. A simple reminder of why Christ changed the water into wine.



*GERARDO THE DOORMAN*

The Center happens to need a weekend watchman or doorman. Gerardo, the Dad of the Chalparizan family wants the job, not only for the salary but also for the place itself. Here is where he rediscovered that we are all friends without need to war with enemies.\

Biggest brother, 14 year old Wilson, standing tall between Gerardo and Clara in the whole family picture, had to quit grammar school a few years back when family funds were too scarce. He did not mind since



*THE FAMILY IS ALL SMILES OVER LIFE IN THE WBC.*

he has always wanted to take care of the other kids as much as possible. In that period, he picked up some bad habits blurring the lines between right and wrong, pretending his earnings for the family were on the up and up. After the family joined the Center, there continued a whole lot of pretending but not really living Christ's values as the Center teaches. For instance, other kids were threatened that certain customers were Wilson's and only Wilson's under pain of violence by Wilson. He also skipped school, homework assignments, housework sharing, savings quotas in the bank and daily bath. Even as a Center member along with the rest of his family, he was finding a way to stay poor under cover. When he is a successful old man, he will remember that his moment of conversion to clean, orderly and good moral living was in a conversation one day with Rodolfo Chin, a Director of the Center. That day, while everyone else was at Mass, Rodolfo ran into Wilson roaming around looking for things not locked up and for other treasures in the Center's big garbage cans. The facts of the crime opened up a general examination and a new process of change in Wilson's conduct. Today, Wilson is without a doubt the kind of working boy Christ wants of all of them to be. He is not afraid to say it like it is to anybody who prefers to mess up the chances God gives us. Another very special thing about him is that the other kids in the family are crazy about him.



*CARLOS WONDERS IF THE GIRLS HEARD HIM.*

We are hoping that Carlos, the youngest boy, pictured here within full earshot of Maria and Anita, is gradually abandoning his considerable fame as a top of the field con artist. Obviously we go in his door and hope to come out our door. We do not simply say, "You're not kidding us!" because he is and he will as long as he wants to. Needless to say, he is into political campaign managing on the back page.

God made Clara the mother and therefore the guiding star of this family's trip to Heaven. It is heavy duty; but she has Jonny in charge of laughter every day, with Anita and Maria to help him. Jonny makes more than the average shoeshine boy each day and the three



*CLARA SMILES AT HER BROOD.*

of them are convinced the family knows nothing about their daily sneaks off to buy ice cream. As a comedy team, they have no high class and verge on the slapstick. During the family interview, they could have died happily laughing at Jonny's straightfaced idea of being so grateful to be able to go to school and to have hot water showers and a place to save their money. They are a great consolation and reality check for their mother.

Paola says we should believe her about whatever bit of conversion to Christ's values we are accomplishing in the Center, that it is the soup that is making all the difference. Good, tasty soup. That is all you need.



## **PRESENTING CAMPAIGN MANAGER CARLOS CHALPARIZAN**

Carlos is managing classmate Joel Naranjo's campaign for president of next year's grammar school student council. Working on the streets and plazas has taught them that the only substitute for wiping each other off the map is a periodic naming of new leaders by election over issues that do not matter. So, they have devised a solid, three point platform of: 1) more savings in the bank, 2) a good school soccer team and 3) a cleaner Center. In fact, the kids hardly know what is garbage and if it belongs where it is. Also, they are not going to get up any earlier than they do in the dead of night to come and practice for a soccer team. As for saving more money, the Center already has a law about how much they are required to put in our bank.



The corridors and the play areas are scenes of spirited campaigning. Carlos is not backing a loser. Joel with his beautiful singing voice has been a high profile soloist in the choir since third grade. Carlos knows just when to take the campaign off the corridors and playground into the dining room or theater for a professionally managed political rally. Joel and Carlos do tandem introductions of each other for a song or a short speech or lollypop distribution and blowing up lots of balloons. It is all good for a million laughs. But there are fleeting moments of free floating cold fear in the hearts of the Center's directors. Is there more to this fun than Carlos is showing? Maybe we are alarmed over nothing, but you can judge from the following.

At the offertory of the Mass each day, any and all are invited to offer petitions to God. Carlos approached the microphone. The priest readied himself to spring at any devilment. Carlos prayed that God would inspire all the working boys in the Center to be more serious about saving in the bank all the extra money they earn beyond what they give to their mothers. The people prayed, "Lord, hear our Prayer." The priest, frozen and outclassed, simply went on with the Mass. So, can anyone accuse Carlos of electioneering in Church? He is committed to our value of saving for the future because God wants us to create the happiness of prosperity on earth that will give us all a foretaste for wanting more in Heaven. (He is looking the priest right in the eye while he quotes that one.)

For all we know, maybe Carlos and Joel are laughing hysterically all day at something else.

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