

# Hail to our 50th!

Working Boys' Center is determined to ring all the changes possible on our victorious completion of 50 years coming alive each day to meet the sun coming up for us. This means we can't just be here. We have to use our imaginations and be into something special every day to show gratitude for this Family of Families God has kept going.



Some of the princesses.

December 5th, 2014 was the date on which our 50th started with our big birthday party that took months of preparation and then some recovery time. Later in December, Jesus's birthday celebration had some things old and some things new in our annual re-creation of the scene and reenactment of performances of the Bethlehem event as Jesus re-lives it in the Center. Then, all during January we had scheduled planning meetings about anniversary events to come. Now, during February and March and maybe into April, the first of those big events is screamingly underway. It's the 50th Anniversary WBC Grammar School Soccer Championship. Soccer



See why we couldn't pick just one winner.

championships here are not simply kicking the ball back and forth and getting mad at the guy with the whistle. That's the least of the excitement.

The inaugural ceremonies are the highlights, one to solemnize the whole tournament and one each to preface the elimination games to establish which of the four teams in each group stays in for the finals.

Those ceremonies are not simply parades with music, carrying huge signs with the names of the teams, speeches about sportsmanship and a final solemn declaration: "We declare the games inaugurated and we ask God to help our opponents accept crushing defeats with appropriate humility and no hard feelings."



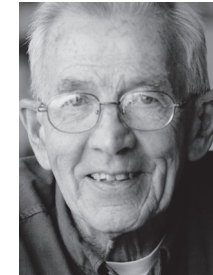
We know that God is in charge and we're grateful.

Much more important than all that are the election of the "Princesses." There's one princess of the whole championship elected when it starts and there are princesses elected for the elimination games at the various stages of the championship. As in all free elections since the beginning of time, the voting is done on the basis of no clear criteria of any kind. The purpose of our election of the princesses is to provide exciting opportunities for the girls to compete too while the boys just watch and wait. An election can take as long as a whole game. It's a scandal how much the families of the candidates splurge on the dresses and bows and lipstick and you won't believe it. But just look in the pictures at the young beauty, Joselyn, competing not only with a bunch of flowers in hand but also flashing a pair of false eyelashes. Just when will poor people learn that prosperity is not consumerism? Maybe never. But they know how to have a good time!

# THE SHOESHINE SPECIAL

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

## Padre's Message



DEAR FOLKS,

Pax Christi.

Since this New Year started, we have been following a new plan to get to know each other even in our big family of families. All of us directors along with the twenty-five adult leaders have taken responsibility for keeping a schedule of individual interviews with each of the fifteen to twenty families in each leader's group. We're all having a delightful experience in the give and take about our daily routines and about our helping or not helping each other to a better lifestyle through our Center programs.

It's our huge happiness to find out in those sessions with the families that our adult leaders have been accomplishing miracles of development in their groups. One after another family will mention that

before they became Center members, they had no idea how vitally important their families have been to each of them. Kids mention that all the stuff they have to or want to do in the Center gives them a lot to talk about with their parents and parents themselves say they're appreciating more how much they need each other.

In the centerfold of this issue of the Shoeshine Special, we talk about the family bond between two sisters that has saved them and their own new families from what the Devil hoped to do with their poverty – It's just one typical miracle YOUR help has made possible.

Cheers and God bless.

*John J. Halligan, S.J.*

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## Family Matters

One of the ways in which word about the Working Boys' Center travels is through the migration of desperately poor families impelled by lack of job opportunities in the places where they live to take courage and set out for a new beginning in the capital city of Quito. Often enough they already have or soon find a friend or relative already in Quito who shares with them what the WBC is all about. We can't thank God enough for this ongoing process of families inviting each other into membership. WBC especially enjoys accompanying brave people; and these



Some of the Paulisin, Paolisin Families.

migrants are among the bravest in their determination to change things from bad to good with the Center's help.

Most of them, like Maria Paulasin, have an enviable style of sharing and bonding and looking out for each other. About a year ago, Maria Paulasin with husband Angel Paulasin and six very young kids became members in the way described above. Maria knows that the benefits of membership don't mean she has died and gone to Heaven already. She's still here on earth to help others join her on the way to Heaven. So she has travelled back to her old town of Pintag many hours away from Quito to spread the word. So far she has inspired seven of her married and desperately poor relatives with their own families to leave poverty behind and come join the Center. We got a picture of some of them after mass one day so you can see the family unity despite the different ways they spell the name. - Mrs. Maria Pilahusin, Mrs. Maria Pilaguisin, Mrs. Maria Palausin, Mrs. Maria Pilahuicin, Mrs. Maria Pilahuisin, Mrs. Maria Paolusin, Mrs. Maria Pualicin. More families will probably come from Pintag with different spellings but the same concern for each other. They'll make the Center even more attractive to folks who need it.



# A Miracle of Family Loyalty

It's more than ten years ago that the two sisters Martha and Norma Jacome rejoined the Working Boys' Center but this time along with their own families. We had first known Martha and Norma back in 1981 when they were five and eight years old and members of the Center with their father and three not much older brothers. Their mother had died when the two girls were still too tiny to remember her. Their father was a life long alcoholic and more of a burden than a help to the kids. After only a couple of years of membership, he took them out of the Center to avoid the commitments for participation in the programs. So the Center lost contact with them all through the rest of their childhood and early teens.



Martha was into sports in the 80s. She's the little one on the right.

We learned years later that the lifestyle for the kids after leaving the Center became a challenge to survive without any grammar school or normal kid stuff but with a lot of begging on the streets, so as not to starve, and a constant series of frightening events with not much fun. The boys worked on the streets and made their separate ways out of the family's destitution into independent lives out of contact with Martha, Norma and the father. In the course of time, as teenagers, Martha and Norma married young fellows with the same kind of broken family backgrounds and started their own families. They were doing with their lives what comes naturally, but they didn't have clear ideas about the happiness life offers. Martha says she had never forgotten the two happy years they spent

as kids in the Center. She still likes to entertain memories like having her hair combed by one of our mothers who works in our nursery, eating good meals with the other kids and, mostly, being surrounded by all the security and friendship. She says she always wanted to come back to the Center family of families but imagined that that was impossible.



She loved to sing with Sr. Judy Callahan. She's third from the left.

Through all the growing up and getting their own families started, Martha always maintained a deep affection and very loving care both for her sister Norma who sometimes has trouble understanding things and for her father with his special incapacity to straighten out and make their lives good. During their early teens, Martha concentrated on creating a decent life style for Norma and herself despite the father's conduct. But she didn't have an adult's authority to insist. She suffered a special couple of years of sadness and fright when Norma separated from her to live the total disorder of a homeless street kid. No permanent damage resulted because Martha kept in touch affectionately and finally was able and glad to welcome Norma back into her company. Meantime their father's drinking had him sleeping in flop houses and almost never at "home" such as it was. Martha had tried to be close to each of her older brothers but they had a resistance to family ties. We learned these and a whole lot of other details from Martha who was the first of the two sisters to rejoin the Center more than a decade ago. Her return was a result of another family tragedy.



Norma, left, and friends (1981).

It happened that her father, in a drunken state, set himself on fire trying to light a cigarette and was dying in a hospital. Martha took courage to come and ask Fr. Halligan to visit and bless her father so he could go to Heaven. Contacts got renewed and a short while later Martha and her family became members again and, a while after that, Norma and her family rejoined, also encouraged by Martha. You can see in the pictures that they are a fun loving gang that doesn't engage in self-pity or campaign for human rights. They prefer laughs.



She made friends with everyone. Here she is with young Jim Parks.



Martha and her children today.

There's a high probability Martha Jacome will not be nominated for canonization. She herself is convinced that she is no great shakes as a Christian soldier marching onward. In fact, she considers herself a failure lacking in the wonderful qualities good people develop by being members of good families. But we know (and we are sure you'd agree) she is one of God's miracles of grace living her life for others, starting with her immediate family; and the Center is proud of her example of family loyalty. Martha truly understands that family matters!



Norma, Ivan and some of their children. Others were off at work.