

RANCHO SANTA MARTA

EST. 1980

Bethesda Teaching Ministry ♦ P.O. Box 20028 ♦ El Cajon, California ♦ 92021-0900 ♦ 619.258.1358 ♦ January 2021 ♦ Volume 49 #1



Rod & Tina's Corner

February of this year will mark the 40th year since the ranch's inauguration on February 15, 1981. Bill and Kaye were living in San Vicente with their children and several kids in 1980 and were travelling back and forth making the necessary maintenance jobs to make the ranch their home. There were few structures on the property; a house, a garage and of course, the famous line of hog pens that had been converted into dormitories and a kitchen

for visiting groups and eventually the first classrooms of the special education school. The picture below gives an idea of how barren the ranch looked in those early years. The group picture you will notice Bill and Kaye (can you find them??) at the inauguration ceremony.



We know that there are many who have contributed to the success of these kids over the last four decades and there are many who are new to the Ranch. For some these pictures will be reminiscent and for others they will be a conversation topic when you come down to visit! We are truly grateful to everyone who supports us with their time, gifts, energy and prayers. Beginning February, we will post pictures and stories of the history of RSM on our Facebook and Instagram pages. Be sure to follow us so that you can hear and see how God has blessed us over the last 40 years. Blessings, Rod & Tina

Ensenada House

We were thrilled to receive a notice from Byron Nelson Secretary-Trustee Chairman in an email stating the following: The Members and Board of Trustees of Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church of Walnut Creek, California are pleased to inform you the Voters Assembly reviewed your recent grant questionnaire response and have awarded Rancho Santa Marta a Legacy of Trinity Grant in the amount of \$75,000. It is the intention of the Board that the grant be used toward the building of student residencies at Rancho Santa Marta's Ensenada property.

Wow! We believe the Lord is moving us to start building the Ensenada house especially since we will have two graduating from high school this coming year and four more behind them. We appreciate the Legacy Trinity Grant of Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church kicking off our funding for this project. We already have a wonderful floor plan designed for this house and would be very willing to share these plans if you are interested (please contact the office).



The amount for this house will probably surpass the grant amount so if you would like to participate in this project please note your donation for "Ensenada House". Praise the Lord because He IS Faithful.

Monica Chavez



We are sad to convey that we will be losing a dear friend and loving mother to our girls here at the ranch for the last 17 years. Monica Chavez has had a tremendous spiritual and emotional journey with us here at Rancho Santa Marta. She gave her all and opened her heart to everyone under her care. We pray the Lord blesses you, Monica as you set out on your next journey with the Lord. Here is a letter she wrote explaining her reasons for leaving:

December, 2020

I consider myself a blessed woman because I had the pleasure of working at Rancho Santa Marta. He has taken me from being homeless to becoming rich in His presence, from learning His love for me, to others and giving me an opportunity to learn what it means to Serve. Over the years I have been in prayer to be more sensitive to the ways of the Lord, learning what His love, trust, faith means to me. I have Hope today, I have security and I am in Love with the Lord.

This place (RSM) has given me a great opportunity to learn, feel, and identify who I want to become. Even though I had made lots of errors during my years, the Directors have always shown their kindness. The Holy Spirit has been tugging at my heart for a new change; a new challenge; to take a new step of Faith. I would like to: not depend on others; travel & explore other parts of Mexico; look for a new job; leave my comfort zone and find a small place to call my own home.

It does mean leaving this awesome ranch and to do something my heart is wanting to experience. It's a mixture of emotions, excitement and a part sadness within my heart, for I bonded with children for over 17 years here at the ranch. I shared tearful, along with joyful moments. I will always be so grateful for this opportunity because in taking care of children my own heart healing began. I know now it's time to make another move.



I want to thank you for your support as well as for your prayers for me during my stay here. I would like to continue asking for your prayers especially that my faith in the Lord will grow. Thank you for everything! You have supported me thru it all.

*May the Lord keep guiding us,
Monica Chavez*

Carmen Escamilla's Wonderful Testimony

Our school is a crucial part of the ministry of Rancho Santa Marta. We are not only able to minister to the 300 + students that attend Colegio Santa Marta but the school also provides a platform to evangelize to the non-Christian teachers on our staff. We know you pray along with us for our teachers so we would like to share excerpts of a letter from one of our junior high teachers sent to us.

Around 7 years ago I began to collaborate as a teacher in this ministry bringing with me a health condition that not one doctor could remedy. My ear became disfigured and my self-esteem was terrible. The children at the home, always the most difficult ones and with very defiant characters would pray for me and with no apparent reason my ear began to heal.

During those 7 years my husband and I prayed day and night for the opportunity to become pregnant, but there was no answer. Doctors told me that because of health reasons I would not be able to have children. I continued to pray and when I completed 35 years of age I asked the Lord that maybe He had other plans for us. A few months passed and I felt pain when I walked and I thought I should start exercising but something inside told me to take a pregnancy test. I reluctantly took one and to our surprise after having an ultrasound I was already 32 weeks and 4 days pregnant!!!

There were complications in my pregnancy and I had to have a caesarean but after one week in the incubation nursery Gibran was given to us and ever since I marvel at how God answered our prayers and has completed his promise, giving to us more than what we deserve.

I know that I am a loved daughter and I want to share a verse, Matthew 17:20 "And He said to them, "Because of your meager faith; for truly I say to you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you." There is nothing impossible for our Lord. God bless you and may He continue to bless this ministry because he not only changes the lives of these children but also all of those who are involved as workers too.



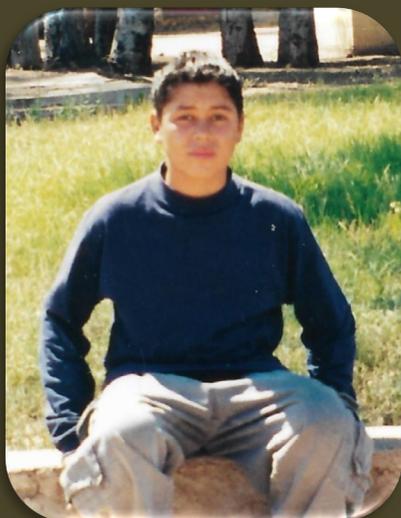
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Juan Alberto Arellano



At 7-years old, Juan Alberto was brought to us through DIF (social services in Ensenada, Mexico). His biological mother set him on fire, and he suffered severe burns on over 50% of his body. He nearly died but after several weeks of treatment he was released from the hospital.

Juan became a Christian at a young age at the ranch. We had the privilege of raising him in RSM until he turned 18 years old, then he went to Ensenada, where he reunited with his mother and stepfather. Unfortunately, this reunion did not last, so Juan Alberto decided to move to our Ensenada house for college students to pursue his education at UABC university. Four years later, he graduated as a psychologist and obtained a full-time job with DIF. He was able to renew his relationship with his half-brothers and his biological father.

Juan Alberto would come back to the ranch to visit, and for several years, he purchased Christmas trees for all the children's homes. He always appreciated what RSM had done for him. We recently, received a phone call that Juan Alberto was diagnosed with pneumonia and hospitalized. They tested him twice for COVID but said the tests were negative. He steadily became worse and was put on a ventilator. A few days later, he began to have organ failure and succumbed to the disease.

Although, we are saddened by how Juan Alberto's story ends, we know that he received tender, loving care during his years living with us at RSM. The care he received helped him to overcome a very difficult past. Many of you, knew him so it is our desire to inform you of his passing and thank you for the years of prayers, friendship, and dedication extended to this wonderful young man that has walked into the arms of Jesus.

Bill and Kaye Lawrence
Founders of RSM