



CASITA KIDS

The kids of Yorkminster Park invite you to help a special 'casita' or clubhouse for kids in Bolivia living with their families in prison.

PROJECT STARTS MAY 14 AND GOES TO JUNE 11, 2017

CBM Kids Care Mission Project: Casa de la Amistad- Friendship House, Bolivia

Bolivia is known as one of the poorest countries in South America. Nearly a quarter of its population lives in extreme poverty. Canadian Baptists have had a presence and relationship with Bolivia for more than a century. CBM partners with the Bolivian Baptist Union, one of whose projects is ministry among prison kids.

In the past, Bolivian penitentiaries had thousands of children living with their incarcerated parents. It was not because the children had committed crimes, but that no one else would care for them while their parent(s) were serving their sentence. The only option was for children to live in the prison system with their parents. As of January 2015, the government acted on an existing law that prohibits children over the age of 6 to live in prison. As a result, the children were sent to live with extended family members or a group home. Contact with their parents occurs through scheduled visits.

Casa de la Amistad (Friendship House) exists to help these children deal with the challenges they face. Caring staff work to provide a nurturing environment where children receive educational support, nutritious meals, training in day-to-day tasks such as personal and dental hygiene, and spiritual counselling for both them and their families.

For many of these kids, home can be an unstable environment. Casa de la Amistad provides a special home-away-from-home where they are given an opportunity to thrive and grow. With proper education, care and spiritual guidance, they have chance at a better future. The impact of this program on the lives of these children has had lasting effects, and some have even returned as volunteers.

WHAT IS A CASITA?

Casita means clubhouse in Spanish





The Story of Luis

CASITA FOR KIDS CHILDREN'S MISSION PROJECT

How can you help?

1. GIVE MONEY - Mark your offering envelope with "Casita for Kids Mission Project" or pick up a specially marked envelope in the Centre Hall

Children's weekly offerings given in Sunday School will all go towards this project. Children are also encouraged to collect change in an envelope handed out in their classrooms.

RETURN THE GIFTS TO THE CHURCH BY JUNE 11TH.

2. Draw a picture or write a letter of encouragement to the children and families of Casa de la Amistad. Put your message in the manila envelopes provided and hand them to Kelly or Shara or put them in our mailbox in the main office.

3. PRAY: Thank God for always being with us no matter where we are. That He is our home-away-from-home and we know that we can always trust in Him to take care of us. Ask God to take care of children who have to live in prison or away from their mom and dad. Bless all the children at the Casita (Casa de la Amistad), the children in Bolivia and the children here in Canada.

Hola (Hi)! My name is Luis* and I am 8 years old. I live with my mom and dad and younger brother in prison. We have been here for six years already. Mom said that dad made a big mistake and had to go to prison, and so we had to go live there also. Mom worries about my brother and I growing up in prison, but she wants us to stay together as a family. During the day, we are free to come and go from the prison. It is just my dad who has to stay inside. Life is hard for mom and dad. They fight a lot. I want them to be happy. Dad is worried that mom wants to leave him and go live outside the prison. Mom is worried because soon I have to leave. A new law does not allow kids over 6 years old to stay in prison with their family. I will be going to live with my uncle.

I will miss my dad's food. He is a good chef. He cooks and sells food to other people in prison because we need money to pay rent for our two small rooms here in prison**. I go to school for part of the day. I am in Grade Two and like math. But I was sad that I had nowhere to play until mom heard about Casa. Now I have a nice, big place where I can play and I also get help with my homework. I also like playing football (soccer) and basketball. I am happy that people at Casa also visit mom and dad. They are trying to help them not to fight so much. We learn many things at Casa, like how to be healthy by washing our hands and eating vegetables. We also learn about how much God loves us. Every morning I pray and ask God to help us.

**name has been changed*

***Note: In Bolivia, prisoners have to pay rent for a small space, if they want some privacy. Sometimes a cell is 1 x 2 metres. They also have to pay for their own food and other personal hygiene and family needs.*