



OCIMA

Overseas and Continental Independent Mercy Association

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November 2020

Dear Friends of O.C.I.M.A.,

Our hearts reach out to each of you as we continue to face the challenges that 2020 has bestowed upon us. The one challenge we are facing together is COVID-19. If nothing else, this Pandemic has reinforced the importance of family and friends and our reliance on one another. A BIG THANK YOU from all of us for your past and future support!

Because of COVID-19, we were not able to travel this year to Guatemala or Ecuador, but we are staying in touch through e-mail. You won't be surprised to hear of the increased domestic violence, mental health issues, malnutrition, and other health concerns, or that the lockdowns are preventing children from attending school where they can have healthy interactions with peers and access to nutritious foods.

OCIMA has also had to put certain fundraising events on hold due to restrictions caused by the Pandemic. This includes the 2020 raffle, which is OCIMA's biggest fundraising event. Historically, the raffle raises about \$30,000 each year. Please consider an increased donation to help us mitigate this loss in revenue.

Given the myriad challenges this year, we take heart in the following:

Start by doing what's necessary; then do what's possible; and suddenly you are doing the impossible.

—*Francis of Assisi*

Please help us do the impossible.

Year In Review

In Santa Rosa, government requirements unexpectedly prevented the Sisters from following through on plans to assist 20 girls in "vulnerable" situations (see OCIMA's 2019 newsletter). Also, fewer girls participated in the scholarship program due to the COVID-19 lockdown; they were caught at home when the lockdown became effective. What to do with the extra time? Community outreach! Home visits have identified problems of illness, lack of food, and child abandonment. With your help, it has been possible to provide the needed medical attention for the sick, the necessary shelter and/or food for isolated individuals, and the wherewithal to care for five abandoned children. Next year is expected to be more normal and OCIMA will continue to support the school and the Santa Rosa community.

In Santa Elena at the Orphanage, even in a lockdown environment, the Sisters continue to accept children who are in need of a home and some tender loving



care. They provide a safe environment where the children can grow in both mind and spirit. This apparently includes some fun with a homemade version of Twister (left)!



The Clinic, also in Santa Elena, continues to support the medical needs of the community – far and wide – from birth until death. The health needs of the community have increased with challenges of the Pandemic.

Even as we write this message to you, Guatemala is being hit by Hurricane Iota – not two weeks after they were hit by Hurricane Eta. The flooding and damage by the hurricane-force winds have forced people to evacuate their homes. Our farthest outreach area of Morales, where the Nutritional Center is located, needs food and supplies. With your help we would like to complete a food packing and have the food shipped to Morales. Our last food packing (in 2016) cost \$27,000 to pack 500 boxes yielding 108,000 (adult) to 216,000 (children) meals, with most of the meals going to children.

In Ecuador, the focus in 2020 is to:

- Supply the “People’s hospitals” with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE);
- Educate communities in an effort to minimize the spread of the virus; and
- Distribute food to those who are in extreme poverty.

Today, more than 10 million Ecuadorians are living day-to-day, in extreme poverty; if they don’t work today, their children won’t have food tomorrow. Due to the economic impact of the lockdowns, many of these people have no work and are now starving. To put this in perspective, that’s more than the entire population of Michigan!

For these Ecuadorians, the “People’s hospitals” are the only healthcare facilities available to them. By and large, these hospitals are run by religious organizations and do not receive government subsidies. Their budgets are insufficient to purchase needed supplies of PPE to protect their employees and patients. To the extent possible, your 2020 donations will support these projects, as well as any post-COVID emergency projects.

The need is growing faster than we can support, and the gap is especially big this year. Please help us do the impossible. We are relying on you.

God bless you and your families and thank you for choosing to support OCIMA!

Larry Gatt
OCIMA Board of Directors &
& President

Marie C. Curreri
OCIMA Board of Directors &
Treasurer

Susan M. Hug
OCIMA Board of Directors

FINANCIAL REPORT — 2019

FUNDS AVAILABLE:

Donations:	\$ 83,328	¹
Raffle Proceeds:	27,551	²
2019 Endowment Fund Distribution:	7,437	
Carryover from 2018:	156	³
TOTAL FUNDS AVAILABLE:	\$ 118,472	

PROJECT DISBURSEMENTS:

1. GSFEP (Ecuador)	\$ 17,000
2. School in Chapas, Santa Rosa	33,500
3. Nutritional Center in Morales	22,000
4. Clinic and Orphanage Santa Elena	39,000
5. Day Care Center in San Benito	5,000
TOTAL PROJECT DISBURSEMENTS:	\$ 116,500

EXPENSES:

1. Annual audit, P.O. box, postage & printing, bank/license fees	\$ 1,917	
TOTAL EXPENSES:	\$ 1,917	⁴
TOTAL EXPENSES & DISBURSEMENTS:	\$ 118,417	

CARRYFORWARD TO 2020:

\$ 55

¹ Excludes \$14,751 in donations made during 2019 raffle (i.e., no ticket purchases). Also excludes value of donated raffle prize.

² Includes \$14,751 in donations made during 2019 raffle, ticket sales of \$14,800, reduced by \$2,000 cash prize.

³ In the November 2019 newsletter, an expense of \$320 (bank wire fees) was incorrectly omitted from the 2018 financial report. Last year's newsletter (November 2019) should have reported total expenses of \$2,115 and a carryforward of \$156.

⁴ Total expenses were 1.62% of total funds available for 2019. In 2018, total expenses were 1.63% of total funds available (after \$320 adjustment noted in footnote 3).