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Orphanos helps the little ones -- Cordova foundation reaches to make a difference

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Memo: My Life

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Alfredo Mora was speaking of the "children of darkness" in Bogota, Colombia. Homeless children who hide in the sewers. His story was unnerving:

"These children leave their homes because they are abused and sexually exploited," said Mora. "They are safer in the sewers underground than in their own homes. Their own children are born in the darkness under the city, and often learn to walk before they ever see the light of day."

Mora, director general of the Latin American arm of Viva Network, an organization serving children worldwide, spoke at the Cordova-based Orphanos Foundation Banquet at Clark Opera Memphis Center to an audience of corporate sponsors, individual donors, and volunteers who support the Cordova foundation in its mission to mobilize area residents to pray, provide funding and visit children at risk.

Orphanos' supporters at the banquet understood something else about numbers - that it only takes one to make a difference.

The first one was Wayne Sneed, president of Orphanos, who gathered four other Christian men together, and founded the organization in 1997, because "I just couldn't stand it anymore." From the founding five, Orphanos has grown to involve hundreds of volunteers, dozens of missions-minded churches, and many "prayer warriors."

Many at the banquet had traveled with Orphanos mission teams to work in children's homes. Others had helped fund capital improvements to assist the homes in becoming self-sufficient. Residents from communities such as Cordova, Bartlett, Germantown and East Memphis have made a big difference in Lar Batista Biblico, a children's home in Parana, Brazil.

Orphanos provided Lar Batista with funds to purchase a farm, dig a well, construct and remodel buildings and remodel others. The home is now able to produce 70 percent of its food supply, washed down with fresh, clean water. Through Orphanos, sponsors from America (many from the Memphis area) help provide education to children at the home.

Through a new partnership with the Latin American arm of Viva Network, Orphanos seeks to become a training ground for college students who desire to work professionally with orphaned children worldwide.

"We're never going to be a World Vision or a Compassion International, but I've seen God do incredible things with the desire we have to help children at risk," Sneed said.

Banquet sponsors included Dixon Hughes, Morgan Keegan, Jason's Deli and anonymous individuals.

For more information, visit Orphanos.org.

Deborah Wade is a volunteer for the Orphanos Foundation.

Beth Pepperman of Midtown described the home she visited as a place where God takes children whose lives have been torn apart and "rebuilds the ancient ruins, restoring places long devastated."



LEFT: Carrie Woods of Collierville participated on several teams and enjoyed the service so much she worked in the Orphanos office for a year and a half. BELOW: Fayette Countian David Mann works professionally with computers at FedEx and with children in his spare time. He took his 10-year-old daughter Anna (not pictured) with him on an Orphanos-sponsored trip last summer.



Collin Houseal of Bartlett plans to take his wife and daughter with him next spring on his third trip with Orphanos. He is pictured with Reynata, one of the children of Lar Batista.

Banquet keynote speaker Alfredo Mora poses with translator Grace Frago and children's home directors Soccoro and Joaquim Frago.

Jason Borden of East Memphis traveled last summer to an Orphanos partnership home. He works for Dixon Hughes, an Orphanos banquet sponsor.



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