

A high-angle photograph of four young boys sitting on a light-colored concrete floor, engaged in playing with LEGO bricks. They are all wearing matching blue tracksuits with white stripes on the sleeves and pants. One boy is holding a red LEGO Technic plate, another is holding a small red LEGO piece, and a third is reaching into a clear plastic bin filled with various LEGO bricks. A fourth boy is also visible, partially obscured, also playing with the bricks. The scene is brightly lit, and the overall atmosphere is one of focused play and teamwork.

Casa Del Jardín

Baja, Mexico

HOME IMPROVEMENT ROADMAP

January | 2023



Overview of this Children's Home

Background & Mission

Casa del Jardin, also known as Red Binacional de Corazones A.C., was formed in 2010 as an initiative to address and prevent human trafficking in the state of Baja California. They aim to provide training on this subject within sectors of education, health, and judicial systems as well as the community in general. Ultimately, the goal is to prevent individuals from becoming victims of human trafficking and teach others how to identify, safely report and properly treat victims.

Currently, the organization has two specialized shelters and an interdisciplinary team that provides care to children and adolescents who have survived abuse and/or exploitation. The care they offer includes addressing all needs for victims' healthy reintegration into society. In addition, the organization provides support to migrant shelters with food and education sessions on various topics to prevent shelter occupants from falling into the networks of human trafficking.

This home is founded upon an inexhaustible belief that it is possible to restore the life of a child who has been violated. Through the comprehensive program they have developed, the love and faith shown demonstrates a home that is not only concerned about basic welfare, but truly seeks to ensure children, adolescents, and young adults have a chance at a dignified life, once they are reintegrated into society.

As a group home, their mission is to restore victims of human trafficking, advocate for their rights and prevent trafficking. Additionally, the home trains civil organizations, government

A Child's Hope Foundation

institutions, and the community in general about trafficking in Mexico and the United States.

Within the next 2-3 years, Casa del Jardin has goals to reduce the percentage of human trafficking victims in the State of Baja California in children, adolescents, and young adults. The strategy includes a focus on prevention within schools in the private and public sectors, advocacy for human-trafficking laws to be enacted, and raising awareness to expose the issue using social networks and other platforms.

Recent Accomplishments

Not applicable (new partner home)



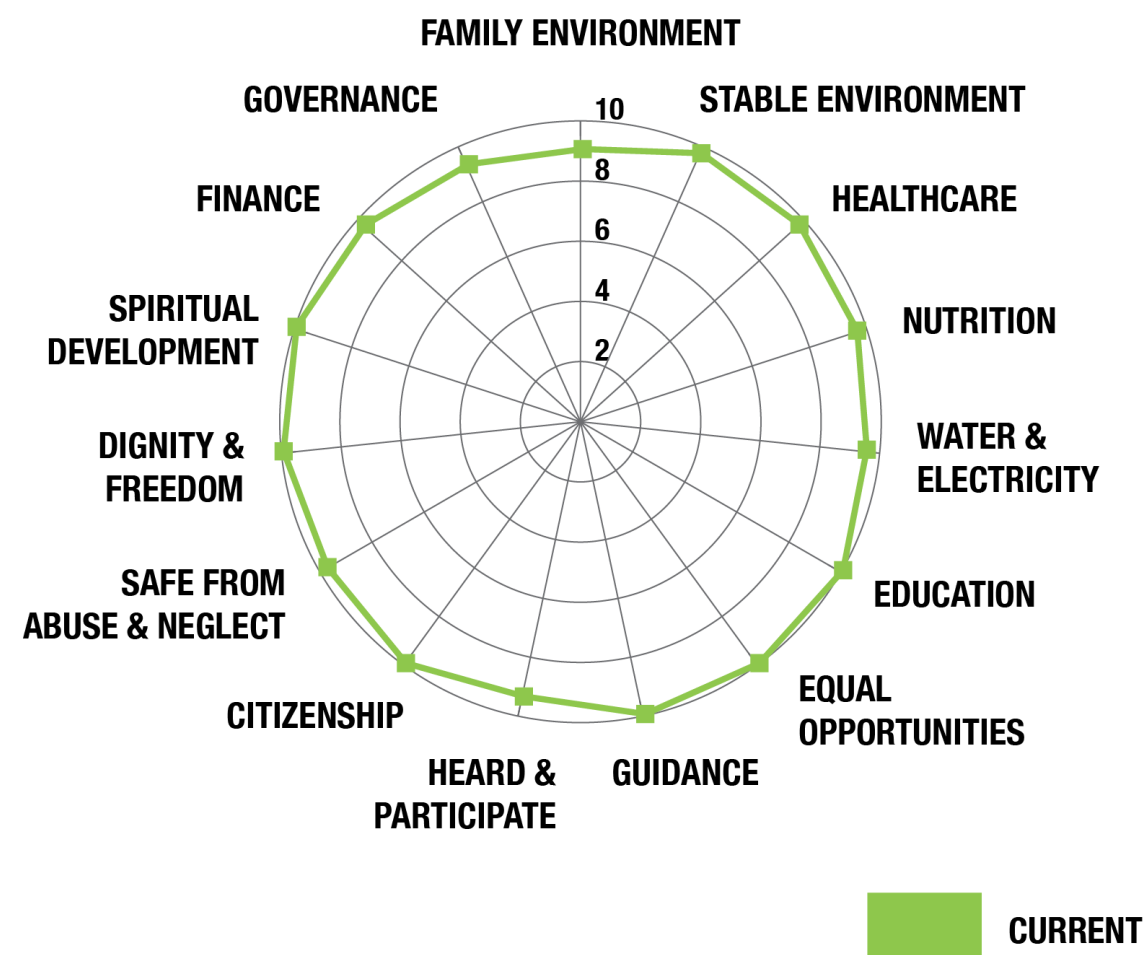
The Thrive Assessment

What is the Thrive Assessment?

In 1959, the United Nations (UN) adopted the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, which defines children's rights to protection, education, healthcare, shelter, nutrition and more. We have codified all 13 Rights, as well as a Finance Standard and a Governance and Human Resource Standard, resulting in a total of 15 standards. These standards ensure that children receive care that truly helps them to thrive, now and in the future.

The Thrive Assessment will be administered every 6 months with each partner home to chart the progress of each standard. Our team works with caregivers to outline next steps which and compiled into an Improvement Roadmap.

Current Thrive Scale



Strategic Initiatives

PSYCHOLOGICAL CARE FOR CHILDREN

PROJECT DESCRIPTION	One of the priorities of Casa del Jardín is to provide individual and group psychological care, as well as art therapy to work on post-traumatic stress on a frequent basis with the children who live here since the population requires continuous support to overcome the traumatic situations they have come from. To achieve this support, hiring the professional services of two psychologists and a psychopedagogue is needed.
ESTIMATED FUNDING	\$5K



Right to Live with Family

SURVIVING	SUSTAINING	THRIVING
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Casa del Jardín at the Thriving level in this category. Currently, 16 children live in this home, which has very well-equipped rooms and is separated by age and gender. There is also a caretaker at night who makes continuous rounds during her shift. Family visits are encouraged by the home and when applicable, children are taken to the DIF shelter to receive visits or calls from relatives. The children have five main caregivers, two during the day, two on the swing shift, and one on the night shift. At Casa del Jardín, groups of siblings attend group therapy together and have a day to themselves where they are allowed to be alone, eat, socialize, and play together.

Caregivers are evaluated annually by DIF on the standard of care they provide to the children in their care. Together, the director Rosario provides the facilities for the caregivers to be good people and set a good example for the children. In addition, support is provided to caregivers so that they can perform their best. Caregivers therefore have the opportunity to receive psychological care, participate in workshops, and attend meetings with the director and psychologist. All of this is done with the aim to promote a family environment for all those who live at the home. The caregivers have received bimonthly training on children’s rights, family traits and values, and creating a family in an orphanage environment. It is worth mentioning that in 2022, staff received training in trauma-informed care and psychological first aid, which was certified by the United Nations (UN). Additionally, to strengthen the training of caregivers, Casa del Jardín has innovatively developed videos, informative sessions, and infographics so that caregivers have information and content on-hand to review whenever they need it. The home has a written plan in place to incorporate, train and evaluate caregivers and will launch a caregiver satisfaction survey in February 2023.

- ☐ Hire an additional caregiver for the night shift.
- ☐ Evaluate caregivers on a quarterly basis on the child care standard by a certified specialist.



Right to a Stable Environment

SURVIVING	SUSTAINING	THRIVING
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At the present time, Casa del Jardín is at the level of Thriving. Rules of the home are made known to children in a clear, coherent manner and according to each child’s level of understanding. In addition, rules are reinforced daily through dialogue, and monthly creative activities are carried out so that rules are clear and the children continue to assimilate and learn. Immediate discussion is held with the children regarding consequences of infractions to the rules. In a loving manner, positive discipline and the time-out technique are used not only to correct an action in the moment, but also to help children visualize consequences in the short-term and long-term, thereby reducing the number of infractions committed. Children are called by their preferred names and never by nicknames.

Caregivers receive monthly training with specialists to learn how to model behavior, teach and discipline children, and how to create a more stable, loving, and enriching environment. Every two weeks, the director meets with the caregivers to discuss various topics to help them share their feelings and be heard. At the same time, the director provides them with tools and alternatives for improvement. Daytime and swing shift caregivers work six days and have one day off, while night shift caregivers work three days and have four days off, in accordance with Mexican regulations. It is worth mentioning that the caregiver turnover rate is less than 20%. Caregivers participate, have joint activities, and play regularly on weekends with the children in their care. On Friday each week, they join in different activities to have fun with the children. The motivating aspect of these activities comes from the fact that the home considers the preferences and opinions of each child. Therefore, a different activity is carried out each week according to the preference of a different child.

- ☐ Increase caregiver play days with children.



Right to Healthcare

SURVIVING	SUSTAINING	THRIVING
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Casa del Jardín is currently at the Thriving level in this category. On an annual basis, the children have medical exams as well as dental and ophthalmological check-ups. Currently, there are about eight children who wear glasses. Director Rosario is always looking for partners to perform these check-ups, such as the Instituto Galardones Sin Fronteras and Pro-Salud, who recently held a health fair. Each child has a complete vaccination card, vaccination schedule, and their own file which includes an identification card, initial interview, rules of coexistence, personal documentation, and information regarding legal, educational, medical, and psychological areas. At Casa del Jardín, soap and water are hygienically available everywhere where there is space to wash hands. The teacher, caregivers, and director remind the children of hygiene and personal cleanliness habits on a regular basis, and the children brush their teeth three times a day.

All children are checked daily for head lice and, if found, are treated appropriately. Each of the children has a pediatrician and specialist according to their needs at the Children’s Hospital of the Californias. In case of emergencies, the home is supported by a professional nurse, local doctors, and the General Hospital of Playas Rosarito. They have five first aid kits, one of which is fully stocked, and the other four small ones are distributed throughout the home. Appropriate measures have been implemented, such as training for caregivers of children with special conditions and treatment plans. Adolescent girls have access to feminine hygiene products in sufficient quantities with appropriate disposal methods and are informed about their menstrual cycles, what to expect, and how to take care of themselves.

- ☐ Establish a medical fund for medical emergencies.



Right to Nutrition

- SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Casa del Jardín is at the Thriving level. This home has been supported by institutions such as the Children’s Hospital of the Californias, Universidad Iberoamericana, and Create Purpose. The home also has the support of a nurse who comes once a week to identify the nutritional needs of each child with the objective of establishing nutritional plans so that children receive an adequate amount of calories through balanced meals according to the food available at the home. The staff that prepares the food considers all hygiene measures and ensures the children receive delicious and appetizing meals that include protein. In addition, they see that the children receive one to two servings of vegetables and fruit available in the home.

By law, the kitchen, dining room, and food storage areas are fumigated monthly and are free of toxic substances and pests. Food preparation personnel have received annual training in food safety and preparation. They intend to resume this training at the beginning of this year to continue strengthening knowledge in this area

☐ Continue the ongoing work of having kitchen staff prepare and serve appetizing meals.

☐ Secure funds for the purchase of sufficient fruit and vegetables for each day of the week.



Right to Clean Water and Electricity

- SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

At the present time, Casa del Jardin is at the Thriving level. In the last year, the Fire Department personnel inspected the property’s facilities to evaluate safety. They are currently awaiting review by other governmental entities because they have just been certified, which indicates that they have an Internal Civil Protection Program folder that meets all regulatory requirements. The folder also includes emergency plans, volunteer brigade information, updated plans and reports, thus complying with the requirements and codes of the local authorities. The home has safe drinking water that is available and accessible in jugs in the kitchen area for when the children wish to drink it.

Currently, Director Armando is in charge of maintenance issues and attends to the preventive and corrective needs of the facilities. Additionally, there is a volunteer who is a certified electrician and helps with everything related to electrical installations. Each bathroom and living room has working light bulbs and is in good condition. The home has a safe drainage method that does not contaminate the drinking water and the faucets of sinks and shower heads are in good condition. The home’s exterior is well-lit and they have two light generators in case of power outages. Although maintenance reports are made, there is a lack of a plan that allows them to visualize the preventive and corrective actions needed. Currently, the home cannot withstand heavy rains because the house is very old and water seeps through the roof despite corrective work that’s already been done to prevent water seepage.

- ☐ Carry out the pertinent repairs to reinforce the home’s roof.
- ☐ Obtain a water purification tank to reduce the cost of purchasing water bottles.
- ☐ Establish a written annual plan to address property maintenance.



Right to Quality Education

- SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Casa del Jardín is at the Thriving level in this area. Within this home is a self-contained school that all the children attend from 8:00 am to 2:00 pm. Only one teacher teaches primary and secondary school and has been certified by the United Nations for multi-grade groups. In addition, the teacher provides each of the children with personalized counseling to support them in achieving goals and objectives according to their grade level. The girls who attend high school take online classes. Currently, two young ladies are studying for professional careers, one in nursing and the other in physiotherapy. In order for the children’s studies to be validated, Casa del Jardín has an agreement with Highland School, which issues the corresponding report cards and certificates according to the children’s grade level. The children’s grades are reviewed every two months. If the teacher detects children with low grades, she notifies the director in order to provide them with specialized support as soon as possible.

When the children enter Casa del Jardín, they are evaluated by the teacher to measure their level of education. If they are severely behind, the children are taken to the Children’s Hospital of the Californias to visit a psychopedagogue and receive specialized attention. The home also has the support of volunteers from the National Pedagogical University who help with follow-up plans to reduce educational gaps and increase the children’s knowledge and skills.

The children are encouraged to read. They have library shelves with more than 75 books that include varied themes for different ages and tastes. Additionally, they assemble puzzles and perform activities through games to speed up their mental capacity. At Casa del Jardín, young people are given the opportunity to study for a university degree and the home covers the cost of uniforms, materials, and computer equipment through the support of donors. The children have toys and materials according to their developmental needs. Thanks to the United Nations (UN), the home has just received a number of new materials that will allow them to teach and explain different aspects of development and life to the children.

☐ Hire a tutor to support young women studying high school online.



Right to Equal Opportunities

- SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Casa del Jardín is at the level of Thriving currently. In each room, the children have a designated space in the closet to store their personal items. All children living in this home are

given the right to equal opportunities for education through opportunities to study in workshops of their interest such as photography and painting, among others. Currently, the children participate in extracurricular activities such as guitar, dance, ballet, dance, tae kwon do, singing, computer classes, and soon theater.

The home has a written life plan for young people, which begins at the age of 17. When they turn 18, this document is submitted to DIF. From that moment on, the youth can receive support from the home until the age of 25 through transferring to another home where they receive financial support for their expenses as well as the necessary tools to obtain work, financial management skills, and self-care. Both the caregivers and staff working in this home act as role models and are available to guide the children at any time. Furthermore, all the staff attend workshops so that they are trained for treating a child in crisis

- ☐ Continue the excellent work they have been doing in this category.



Right to Guidance

SURVIVING	SUSTAINING	THRIVING
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In this area, Casa del Jardín is at the Thriving level. Through group dynamics and discussions that focus on respect and self-care, children are taught to be respectful. This approach helps to create in them a high level of awareness that allows them to choose to have a healthy lifestyle both inside and outside the home. Casa del Jardín has a psychologist who provides support and guidance to both the children and the staff through psychological therapy on a weekly or biweekly basis, depending on the needs of each child. The psychologist performs psychological evaluations, reports on caregivers, and talks with the adolescents about puberty-related changes. The directors (Rosario and Armando) are also involved in maturation discussions and reinforce this information with adolescents. Rosario orients the girls and Armando the boys. In addition, the teacher in her classes teaches the children all the physical and emotional changes that they will undergo during their development. Recently, adolescents over the age of 13 have received education related to responsible sexual behavior from a group of volunteers.

Adolescents over 15 years of age receive aptitude tests and professional counseling to determine their academic abilities and vocational interests by a psychologist who works at the home. Experts have also come to the home to apply vocational tests or share their experience as professionals. Within the life plan for 17-year-olds, they are encouraged to carry out activities such as errands, shopping, traveling by cab, learning important locations, as well as choosing the schools where they wish to continue their studies. All of this is done with the aim of encouraging and enhancing their skills, knowledge, and abilities to have a more prosperous independent life when they leave the home. In addition, the adolescents are guided through their self-discovery and self-expression by the teacher, psychologist, directors, and even caregivers.

- ☐ Continue the excellent work they have been doing in this category.



Right to Be Heard and Participate in Decisions

SURVIVING	SUSTAINING	THRIVING
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Casa del Jardín is currently at the Thriving level in this category. Children are given the opportunity to have a say in the activities they wish to do during their free time, as long as they are within the rules of the home. In addition, they are allowed to participate in the planning of the menu incorporating their tastes and preferences. They also have the option to choose their clothing and are guided so that the clothes they choose are appropriate for the occasion. The weekly menu is available for the children to see and is posted outside the refrigerator.

Both the children and caregivers are informed about upcoming medical care procedures including what services they will be taken to, how the procedure will be administered, who from the home will accompany them, and any other pertinent details in order to avoid any traumatic situation. Individual development plans have been implemented in a comprehensive manner for children with special conditions. Similarly, in the educational area, the multigrade teacher has a plan for each child according to their needs. In the home, children have assigned roles that contribute to performing specific tasks as well. Currently, they are working on restructuring roles for adolescent girls. These role-assignments have contributed to improved discipline, obedience, and leadership among the children.

- ☐ Implement a development plan for each child and update it on a monthly basis.
- ☐ Continue with the work of assigning roles to later guide the children in the formation of committees.



Right to Be Prepared for Citizenship

SURVIVING	SUSTAINING	THRIVING
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In this category, Casa del Jardín is at the Thriving level. Each of the children has a birth certificate that legally certifies their identity. Children are taught how to repair damages they have caused and personal responsibility through chores appropriate for their age. They also receive quarterly workshops from a lawyer who guides them on ethics and the democratic process in addition to the guidance and homework they receive on these topics from school. On an annual basis the home holds workshops related to ethics and their responsibilities in contributing to their city. The children can attend school trips or special events outside the home, as was the case of the girls who play soccer and competed in Puerto Vallarta where they won the championship. In this home, group outings are encouraged with prior authorization from DIF. Last October, they went out to the Parque del Niño in Ensenada. They also consistently go on outings to the park near their home as well as a swimming camp they attend annually and internal camps at the home where they spend time as a family.

At Casa del Jardin, they always respect and celebrate national and local holidays such as Christmas, the Day of the Dead, and Mexican Independence Day. The home is free of garbage, and large tools or materials are stored safely. The teenagers over the age of 15 have mentors who teach them life skills such as how to create an errand list, how to order food, pay for items, and other tasks. The teenagers in this home participate in community service activities including some of the girls who have been visiting migrant shelters with prior authorization from DIF. To keep children informed, leadership always notifies them of main events such as when a person leaves, when a child arrives, when there are visitors, or when a child gets sick.

- ☐ Continue with the excellent work they have been doing in this category.



Right to Be Safe from Abuse & Neglect

SURVIVING	SUSTAINING	THRIVING
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Casa del Jardín is at the Thriving level in this category. The home has a high level of security in terms of the surrounding community. They have cameras that help them constantly monitor surroundings and keep doors locked at all times for the safety of the children. Inside the home, there are private bathrooms segregated by gender. Director Rosario takes great care to ensure that the care staff is trained and follows positive discipline guidelines and continually reminds them of these guidelines. This home has very clear written rules and regulations for staff and volunteers which includes a policy that states male staff who are not caregivers are not allowed to be alone with a child. Also, to further reinforce the safety and care of the children, they have a file for each volunteer that includes a letter of no criminal record and if volunteers are foreigners, they also run their records. Within their guidelines, they keep records about the care, attention to minors, protection, and security policies to ensure the children are not abused physically, verbally, psychologically, or emotionally by caregivers. The home also guarantees that the children are not hired in exchange for a salary.

On a bimonthly basis, caregivers are trained on how to identify, prevent and avoid abuse. In addition, this information is constantly reinforced by the psychologist and Rosario, who have completed many certifications on this subject. Likewise, children over five years of age are provided with educational sessions on abuse and methods of reporting by a lawyer. The lawyer informs them how this reporting process is carried out and the staff of the home reinforce this information as well. For the children’s outings outside the home, they are always accompanied by the staff. Each child receives a psychological evaluation upon arrival at the home to help them work through trauma. While these evaluations are initially done by DIF, later the psychologist of the children’s home completes a second evaluation.

- ☐ Review child protection programs or policies to ensure that caregivers will not physically, verbally, emotionally, or psychologically abuse children and verify if adjustments are needed.



Right to Dignity & Freedom

SURVIVING	SUSTAINING	THRIVING
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Casa del Jardín is at the Thriving level in this category. The children are bathed daily and have access to their own beds, sheets, blankets, and bedspreads, which are washed continuously, and used pillows are replaced with new ones every six months. Each child has sufficient underwear and clothing, as well as his or her own toothbrush and clean towel. The home has an outdoor play area that is safe and suitable for children of all ages, as well as age-appropriate toys and materials that are available when the children are no longer involved in scheduled activities.

Casa del Jardín has a behavior modification program in which the children are invited to comply with the assigned tasks. This program is posted on the outside of the refrigerator and has the names of all the children. Every Monday the children have 350 points, and depending on their behavior and fulfillment of the tasks during the week, they can keep the points or decrease them. At the end of the week, all the children have the opportunity to go to the “little shop” (on site in the home) where they can exchange their points for toys, candy or other supplies. This program has greatly benefited the children of the home. The teenagers have also had the opportunity to work in the community and keep their earnings, such is the case of the teenagers participating in a work program where they were paid \$60.00 USD.

- ☐ Purchase new towels to have in reserve when towels need replaced.



Right to Spiritual Development

SURVIVING	SUSTAINING	THRIVING
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Currently, Casa del Jardín is currently at the Thriving level. Undoubtedly the cornerstone for the spiritual development in this home has been the directors, Rosario and Armando. With their love, continuous work, honesty, and congruence in what they say and do, they have been a great example to the children and staff of the home. The directors teach them that a relationship with God brings peace to daily life. Therefore, they have given the children the opportunity to be part of a spiritual community by attending a Christian church. Each child has the opportunity to choose whether or not to participate in church services. The children learn and participate in religious celebrations, devotionals, Bible school, and help with decorating activities for church celebrations.

One of the extraordinary situations that the children have experienced in their local church is the association with congregation members who know the work of Casa del Jardin as well as the unique situation of the children. Consequently, it is remarkable how the children of the home have been included and made to feel worthy or welcome like any other child. At home the children have their own personalized bible in addition to religious books and spiritual materials that are accessible and available whenever they want to read. The children also

have the opportunity to put their spiritual learning into practice through prayer. Before eating, everyone holds hands and shares a prayer of thanksgiving. Currently, the children coordinate among themselves to designate whose turn it is to pray.

- ☐ Continue with the excellent work they have been doing in this category.



Finance Standard

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Casa del Jardín is currently at the level of Thriving. In this home, income and expenses are recorded on a monthly basis through an Excel spreadsheet prepared by Rosario. In addition, the income that arrives at the home, both from the bank and in cash, is sent to the external accountant of the Moreno Ibarra firm, who performs the reconciliations and prepares the transparency reports and annual declarations in accordance with the regulations of the Treasury and Public Credit. All this information is available for review when needed. All receipts generated during the month are kept, and a profit and loss statement is created on a monthly basis. They have a monthly budget that they receive from the United States, which is used for the payment of salaries and some other expenses.

In order to keep finances healthy and transparent, the director keeps the administrative and accounting records and then shares the information with the external accounting firm Moreno Ibarra, which conducts monthly audits. Through the existing established guidelines, controls are followed to minimize opportunities for misuse of funds. Casa del Jardín is currently an authorized grantee, and its validity was recently confirmed through the Official Gazette of the Federation 2023 (DOF). They are also registered with SEDESOL Nacional and have all their procedures in place and in order. While the director does prepare an annual budget, the organization’s income is vulnerable because monitoring is limited to the operation and she herself prepares a detailed budget for materials and labor for large projects as they become necessary.

- ☐ Establish a budget plan for projects over \$25,000.00 that allows for growth and/or construction needs.



Governance and Human Resource Standard

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

In this category, Casa del Jardin is at the Thriving level. This home has all current licensing and governance requirements. According to the articles of incorporation, the property and modifications ensure that they cannot be sold for their private benefit, however, they are currently in litigation over this previously donated property. The home has two boards of directors, one in the United States and the other in Tijuana, which meet more than twice a year. They have an organizational chart that serves as a tool for delegating responsibilities.

Meetings are held on a regular basis to discuss issues of concern and improve processes, and employees are given a document detailing their terms of employment and job description. Vacation and leave policies are followed for all personnel. Employee files are kept, including their employment contract, updated criminal record letter, proof of address, reports for psychological care, incidents, certifications, and courses completed. Weekly meetings are held with staff to offer opportunities for support and guidance in relation to their positions, in addition to opportunities for improvement.

The care staff has had training on attachment, child development, characteristics and values of a family, the creation of a family in a group home environment, medical and hygiene training on caring for a sick child such, first aid and CPR, all of which have been certified by the UN. All these pieces of training have been facilitated by both the director and external personnel specialized in these topics. It is worth mentioning that the staff was also trained last year on the importance of drinking water, its care, and its uses.

- ☐ Train staff on the importance of water in 2023.
- ☐ Structure training on the importance of practical ways to facilitate child participation.
- ☐ Continue to follow up on obtaining the operating license.

Current Improvement Partners



Espere

Espere partners with ACHF to provide caregiver support through trainings, workshops, and roundtables on ways to support the well-being of the children. Additionally, they offer support to therapists working in our partner orphanages.



corazón de vida

Corazón de Vida

These partners work with 10+ orphanages in Baja California. Their focus is food, education, staff salaries & some small construction projects. They also help kids from orphanages get an apartment and go to college.



Oak Life

Oak Life

Oak Life's mission is to educate and empower an international collective of orphanage caregivers, directors and advocates, who are prepared to sustainably and holistically care for abandoned children.

Loving children's homes often struggle, unable to grow and care for children to capacity. With insufficient staff who are trained and willing to dedicate their lives to orphan care, children stay on the streets. We intend to change this worldwide issue, and bring more children home. We are doing this in three simple ways: Train, Care, and Grow.



Books
Libraries
Reading

Books, Library, Reading

BLR helps kids love to read. They do this through getting them books that match their interests, expand their interests and spark their curiosity. They also develop reading goals, activities and training for the kids and orphanage staff.

For a list of projects and opportunities to coordinate on go to
www.ACHF.org/Projects

