

Rancho La Hermosa

Mexico

IMPROVEMENT ROADMAP

February | 2023



Overview of this Children's Home

Background & Mission

Rancho La Hermosa Orphanage is now in its third year of caring for kids! The orphanage was born out of many years of prayer and an unwavering determination to provide excellence in care. The building of the Ranch was conducted over a period of four years, and they are one of the few fully licensed and accredited orphanages in Baja. Rancho La Hermosa continues to grow and expand with a focus on receiving more kids and changing more lives.

Rancho La Hermosa exists to love and care for orphaned and abandoned children. They are a child-centric home where distressed children can find peace, comfort, and stability. They aim to provide a healing environment where kids can learn to thrive. The home strives to provide excellent care and nurture our kids. They focus on spiritual and physical health as well as education, nutrition, and equipping our kids for a productive life.

Rancho La Hermosa is a beautiful blend of Mexican and American leadership, with an amazing team dedicated to the health and well-being of the kids. They intentionally raise kids in smaller dorm groups with loving dorm parents. Each dorm has parents committed to providing stability and nurturing environment necessary for formative healing and growth.

The goal is to continue expanding facilities and staff to care for 70 children. In addition, they are embarking on building discipleship houses in town to house kids aging out of traditional orphanages. This discipleship home will provide mentoring, educational support, and care designed to launch young adults into highly productive, self-sustaining lives.



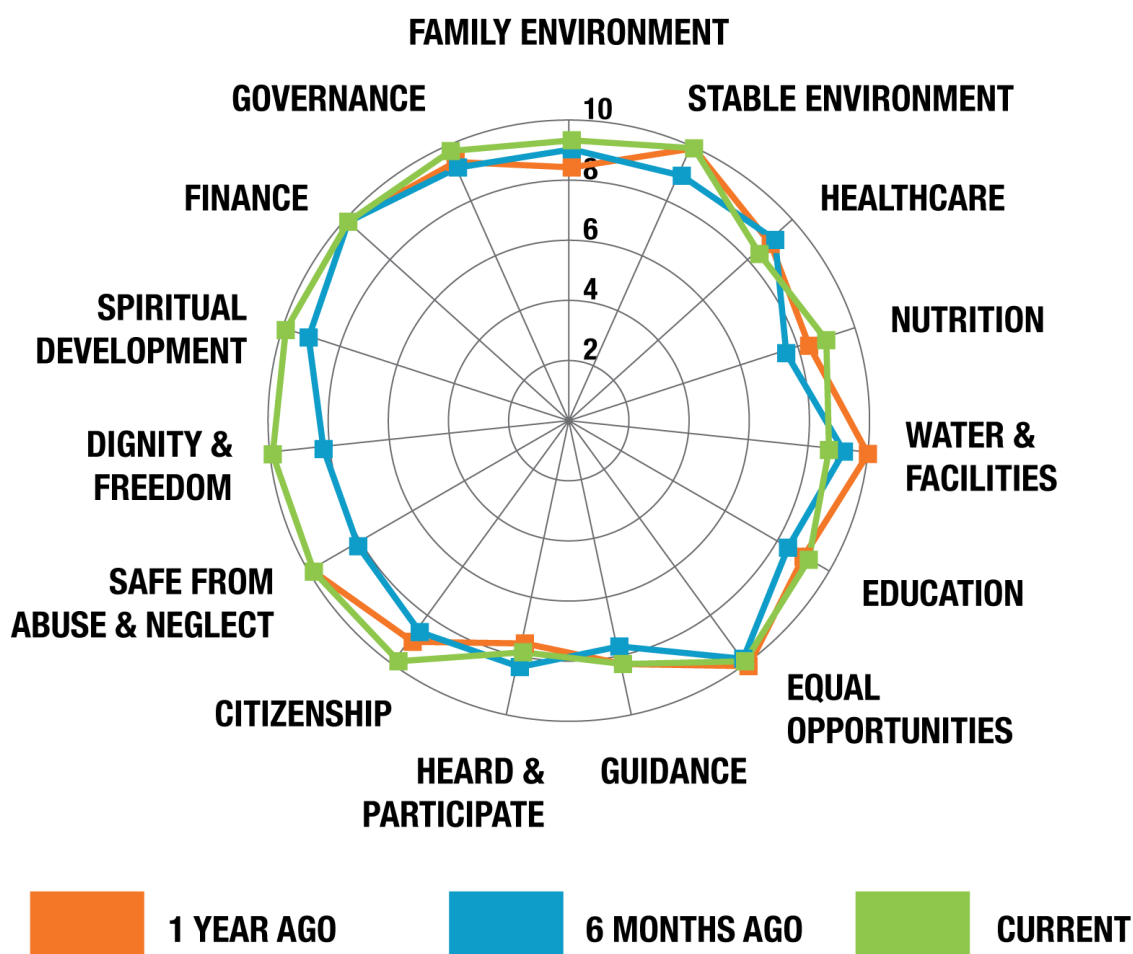
The Thrive Assessment

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 are then compiled into an Improvement Roadmap.

Current Thrive Scale



Strategic Initiatives

OPERATION LICENSE RENEWAL

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| PROJECT DESCRIPTION | The home needs to obtain recertification of its operation license. In order to receive the license, all staff must be trained again in basic first aid and emergency planning. The property must be certified for gas line safety, fire, and proper signage. This also involves emergency evacuation plans, designated areas, and passing fire safety with proper smoke detectors, carbon monoxide, and fire extinguishers. |
| ESTIMATED FUNDING | \$5,000 - \$10,000 |

MENTORING HOME

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| PROJECT DESCRIPTION | This new off-site home would house young adults who have transitioned and are pursuing a career or education. The home would also be open to young adults from other children's homes, not just those from Rancho La Hermosa. The leadership team has purchased the property where the home will be built, and architectural plans are almost complete. The first step is to hire a tractor service to dig the large holes for the septic and water containment systems. This is a very large project and will take approximately 18 months to complete. The septic and water containment will cost approximately \$4,200. |
| ESTIMATED FUNDING | <\$5,000 |

COMPLETE STAFF MEMBER HOUSING

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| PROJECT DESCRIPTION | The home has a committed staff member, Sergio Pablo, who will be dedicated to caring for the boys long-term and providing transportation and onsite supervision. The director would like to build him a small 300-square-foot studio home with solar power so he can be comfortable at Rancho. They have a group starting the construction and could use another \$8,000 to complete the project. |
| ESTIMATED FUNDING | \$5,000 - \$10,000 |



Right to Live with Family

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

The kids' dorms usually have 5 to 7 kids per room, guaranteeing individualized attention from their primary caregivers. The children's home promotes family visits, which occur in the church where they congregate. Only three kids in the home receive visits, two of whom are siblings. Sibling groups play, eat, and have unstructured time to spend together daily to reinforce their bonds. Although the home has improved in maintaining stable and committed caretakers, they still need more caregiving staff. To complete their staff team with the number of kids they currently have living in the home, they need at least 2 or 3 more caretakers with lots of energy and strength to serve the children in their care. The staff members have received training on trauma-informed care. However, not 100% of their personnel attended the training sessions with ESPERE. The home has an established caregiver plan for onboarding, training, and evaluating caregivers that is fairly stable and effective. Their onsite therapist will continue working with evaluating the staff members at least quarterly. Pastor Aleyda, co-founder of the children's home, Lady, and caregiver Maria also evaluate new incoming caregivers.

- ☐ Recruit and hire 2 or 3 more stable and committed caretakers
- ☐ Ensure that 100% of the current staff members, and newcomers, attend the trauma-informed care training sessions



Right to a Stable Environment

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Depending on the children's age is the type of consequence for an infraction that is applied, but always positive-discipline based. For example, with the younger kids, the caregivers will limit privileges like participating in activities such as a piñata or watching movies with the rest of the kids. For the older kids, the revoked privileges include snacks or outings with everyone. Children in the home are always called by their preferred name and never by degrading nicknames. Three children in the home share a name, and they have found a respectful way of calling to them in a way that isn't confusing to know which child they are referring to. On Saturdays, the staff works with the home's psychologist to receive support and discuss situations they might need help in their daily task of caring for children. Because the psychologist has very limited time to be on-site, she works with Aleyda and Maria, one of the caregivers who's worked at the home the longest, to reinforce and provide coaching tips for the rest of the caregivers. The staff turnover rate has improved, especially in the boys' dorm, and that has naturally made the dorm more stable.

- ☐ Continue with the best practices in the home



Right to Healthcare

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Children are taken to doctor's visits on a needs-based approach. Therefore, the children have not had annual medical exams. As a general rule, all children in the home have been vaccinated, except for those cases where the kids' information needs to be obtained first to ensure the status of their vaccination records. The home has identified a local doctor for medical situations that don't pose a threat to the children. They turn to a hospital in Rosarito for more major incidents or medical emergencies. Less than half of the children have received dental and vision exams during the year. The dorm parents are very good about reminding and supervising the kids when brushing their teeth. All of the kids have a medical record on file, and DIF always pays close attention to these when they come onsite to inspect the home and children. The home currently has one child in the process of receiving speech therapy and another with a pressing need for orthodontic treatment; there is a plan to treat both children. The teen girls in the home have sufficient feminine hygiene products, and they have received training from Maria on properly disposing of these products.

- ☐ Work to ensure 100% of the children receive annual wellness check-ups
- ☐ Work to ensure 100% of the children receive annual dental exams
- ☐ Work to ensure 100% of the children receive annual vision exams



Right to Nutrition

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

The children in the home receive the proper amount of caloric intake daily, and their meals are prepared hygienically and very tasty. The home relies on the support of a fumigation service and other strategies to rid its kitchens, pantries, and food storage areas free of pests. Because the home is located in the hills, it could be quite difficult to keep it free of pests 100% of the time, but that is why they are extra aware and continuously fumigating. There is a fruit basket in the kitchen where the kids can grab fruit whenever they want; this ensures they get their daily serving of fruit. The cook creates the weekly menus, and Aleyda reviews them for approval. She will also suggest changes to meals if she considers it necessary. A few years ago, Aleyda and part of her team received online training on creating healthy and nutritious meals.

- ☐ Provide training annually to the cooks on food safety and preparation



Right to Safe & Adequate Water & Facilities

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

The staff goes into town to fill 5-liter water jugs to have drinking water available for the kids in the dorms, classrooms, and kitchen. The home has a water storage system where they added four huge water containers. Three are connected to water pumps ready for fire suppression, and one is left in case they need it. They also have a truck for hauling water whenever they run out of it. They have a reliable, skilled maintenance person to address the ongoing and preventive needs of the home. Dave, the director, keeps a written maintenance list to plan for the year. This gets shared with their maintenance person and volunteer groups who visit the home and may have the opportunity to address some of the repairs/projects on the list. One of the challenges the leadership staff faces is educating and encouraging the caregivers to openly notify the director when something is broken or needs fixing. There are currently repairs needed in the showers. The home has its civil protection plan created and in place, and they receive the annual staff training. The home runs on solar energy. Therefore, they use their power generators whenever cloudy weather and the solar panels do not provide enough power. The batteries in these panels must be replaced every five years. However, not all batteries have been changed simultaneously, and they have constantly replaced them.

- ☐ Have the facility inspected by a qualified individual to evaluate safety
- ☐ Address the need for repairs in the dorm bathrooms/showers



Right to Quality Education

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Internet connectivity at the home has improved and has not given them major problems. Only older children are permitted to use the internet, and they are working on strategies so that younger children can access it. There are 5 tutors currently providing support to the children. Some children need additional support to reach the appropriate reading and writing levels. They have two children who are not of school age but have implemented activities to allow them to develop according to their age. Tutors also complete assessments to identify learning problems. Tutors lead school-aged and younger children activities according to their abilities, talents, and interest. The library's construction is almost finished; only the placement of tiles and paint on the walls is left. They have books in sufficient quantities that are age-appropriate and in their language for the children that want to read. Rancho la Hermosa has a plan to provide space to support young adults for their time after the home, which includes plans for continuing education, training for work, and life skills for independent living. The intention of this new space, the transition house, is to create a support network for the young adults of Rancho la Hermosa as well as young people from other children's homes who need a living space outside of an orphanage environment.

- ☐ Continue with the construction and implementation of the transition program for adult life.
- ☐ Provide classes or training in computer use for younger children

Right to Equal Opportunities

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Children have a dedicated space for their photos, letters, belongings, art, etc. Children with disabilities also have everything the other children have, including reasonable accommodations, access to therapy, and ongoing follow-up. Children who are overweight or underweight are constantly monitored with special dietary adaptations based on their needs. For children who need glasses or other similar needs, efforts are made to provide them with necessary items or accessories.

All children have the same opportunities regarding their education. The children have extracurricular classes like soccer, English, and guitar. The adults in the home also act as quality mentors for the children. Plans for a transition home for those preparing to live independently are under construction and will provide further opportunities.

- ☐ Create and implement a life skills program to prepare young adults for the transition to adulthood & independent living



Right to Guidance

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

This home has a job description used in the search for new caregivers. Children have a therapist who they can see individually every month. A complete team monitors the interactions between children and adults with the strategy of identifying whether or not they are trustworthy and quality people to interact with children. There is also a group that is ready to instruct boys and girls about the changes associated with puberty and adolescence. The staff has been trained to reinforce good behavior and model the same. House parents initially address education on topics of sexuality and goes hand in hand with the other adults in their support network, which help make this process very healthy for the children. Once the transition program for young people over 15 is implemented, there will be a written plan for education and work after their stay at the home. The home currently has a very organic program of opportunities for adolescents, but they know this program needs to be formal and will need to be developed further.

- ☐ Contract more psychological support by increasing the individual and group therapy sessions each week
- ☐ Create and implement a life skills plan that children can regularly participate in to support their transition to adulthood
- ☐ Implement child's hope plans or similar strategies with all children over the age of 10



Right to Be Heard and Participate in Decisions

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Children can determine what to do in their free time as long as it is allowed by the house rules. Children also have the opportunity to decide how to dress each day. They have a visible menu in the dining room so children know what they will eat. There are no written development plans for most of the children and no current follow-up in place. However, the house allows children to hold leadership roles, and there are initiatives for children's committees. That being said, these both need more structure and development.

- ☐ Develop and implement child hope plans or a similar strategy for children from the age of 10.



Right to Be Prepared for Citizenship

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Currently, there are still birth certificates pending for some children. However, obtaining them depends on DIF. Regarding the children being taught restitution, the consequences of breaking rules depend on the action. Ricardo is the mentor who implements the consequences for wrongdoing, generally additional chores or assignments at home, such as washing the dishes or cleaning. Children have daily and weekly responsibilities that they must attend to, which are assigned according to age. They are taught organically about citizenship, which is part of the culture of the house. Mentors Ricardo, Maria, and Aleyda are in charge of teaching them life skills, although these mentors are aware that they can improve. The children participate in community support activities such as distributing groceries to poor families or individuals in the community. Children also have the opportunity to attend school events in the company of their assigned caregivers or mentors.

- ☐ Continue implementing the mentoring program to develop skills for independent living.



Right to Be Safe from Abuse & Neglect

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

The facilities at this home are safe, and children have sufficient clothing. Staff have been trained on positive discipline techniques as well. There is a child protection policy in place which has been shared at least verbally with all staff and volunteers. Regarding discipline, caregivers do not spank or pull arms, and children are not scolded in public. While children do not generally work for wages, a girl is saving money to help pay for her braces, but it does not violate local laws. The home is helping match her efforts financially as a strategy to motivate her to work for what she wants. There are authorized personnel to accompany the children when they leave the home. Whenever a new child is received, the house parents meet with the psychologist to discuss their observations of behavior or challenges within a week of arrival. Caregivers also meet with the psychologist every week.

- ☐ Continue with the implementation of the therapeutic plan and training for staff
- ☐ Continue with the implementation of the training program for staff members



Right to Dignity & Freedom

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Boys and girls have access to their own beds. They have enough underwear, towels, and clean sheets for each child. The directors and caregivers encourage the children to respect themselves and live together lovingly and harmoniously. As for opportunities to work, there is a girl who has a way of earning a little money by doing extra tasks around the house, and she saves what she receives so she can spend it on whatever she decides.

No steps needed in this category.



Right to Spiritual Development

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

The home has religious materials such as books, bibles, and music available and easily accessible to children. The children belong to and are very close to their religious community. They actively participate in their community activities, and many of the girls participate in a dance group at church. This activity is one of the opportunities they practice their spiritual learning. The children have appropriate spaces to pray or meditate and always thank God for their food and blessings at home. These practices have been instilled in the children since their integration into the home.

No next steps needed in this category



Finance Standard

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

This home controls and manages finances on both sides of the border. They have a budget associated with expenses, allowing them to monitor if they are above or below their budget. As a director, Aleyda prepares a monthly report for Dave to review and analyze the movement of funds. Generally, they stick to their annual budget with only a marginal difference of 10-15% per year, thus proving the budget very useful. Once they do their expense analysis, the directors establish rules or strategies to stay within the budget. The house has a good workload distribution among the staff since they have job descriptions, and when a team member is not performing their functions, they use the job description as the basis for giving feedback to the staff member. Regarding planning their budget for projects greater than USD 25,000, they have established two separate budgets: one for the expenses of the children and one for construction expenses. This is the way they can be held accountable for the use of these funds because their donors contribute to specific expenses, and separate budgets allow them to send expense reports back accurately. If they need to take money from the general budget, they notify and ask their donors for permission to use the money for something other than the purpose of the donation. No next steps needed in this category



Governance and Human Resource Standard

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

The staff has been trained in the importance of water and safety for use. Improvements to the home and the land are in the name of their association, so they cannot be used for another purpose. The home has an organizational chart that describes the functions and roles of all staff. They hold frequent meetings with their team to discuss areas of opportunity and process improvements. Additionally, they adhere 100% to each position's job description, implement feedback spaces for collaborators if they need to comply with their assignments, and use this same document as the basis of its review and evaluation of staff performance. The home does not utilize employment contracts. However, there is a personal verbal agreement with each staff member regarding their function and benefits. The home must renew its operating license, with all its updated training and certifications.

- ☐ Renew civil protection training for staff
- ☐ Renew the necessary certifications for the civil protection file
- ☐ Renew the operating license



Current Improvement Partners



Esperere

Esperere 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.



Books
Libraries
Readings

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



A CHILD'S
NOPE
FOUNDATION