# Casa Hogar Ebenezer

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# ROADDAR April 2023



# **Overview of this Children's Home**

# **Background & Mission**

Casa Hogar Eben-Ezer is an institution connected to the Casa Hogar network in Tijuana, Mexico, that provides safe and stable housing for displaced, orphaned, and abandoned children. Casa Hogar Eben-Ezer is home to more than 30 children between 8 and 21 years of age. It was founded and currently led by Pastor Freddy and Eva Duarte, a couple originally from Guatemala, who started the house in 2002 when they were invited to take care of 18 children living in a nearby orphanage that had to close its doors. There was such a need for care, love, and attention for these 18 children that this is how Eva and Freddy looked for all possible alternatives to help them. So they decide, and by God's call, to leave their home in Los Angeles, California, to move to Tijuana and undertake their mission.

At home at Eben-Ezer, every child is part of a big family. Older children teach the little ones how to fold their clothes, do their chores, prepare for school, and do homework. For the past 19 years, 210 children without parents have been part of Casa Hogar Eben-Ezer. Eva and Freddy have provided the same parenting style to all their children, where love for God, honesty, and responsibility are the main values of their big family.

### A Child's Hope Foundation

Casa Hogar Eben-Ezer is an institution with moral and spiritual values whose mission is to support children and adolescents in stages of vulnerability. Its vision is to provide children and adolescents with the necessary tools so that they have a decent education to face future challenges.

Here, every child is cared for with quality and warmth in all areas of his development, and the work that is done is not to seek the pleasure of the government or visitors but is to the pleasure of God. Every child is treated with respect, and their weaknesses and talents are recognized, which helps children have the necessary care so that they can improve and heal.

# **Recent Accomplishments**

With the help of ACHF, Casa Hogar purchased a new stove to make meal preparation for children more efficient.

# The Thrive Assessment

# **Strategic Initiatives**

# TWO WASHING MACHINES FOR LAUNDRY AREA

PROJECT DESCRIPTION	Purchasin ensure the and clothe so the dire States to guarantee to helping
ESTIMATED FUNDING	<\$5,000 L

# **POWER GENERATOR**

	It is necess or blackou the safety
ESTIMATED FUNDING	<\$10,000

# PURCHASE AND INSTALL URINALS IN BATHROOMS

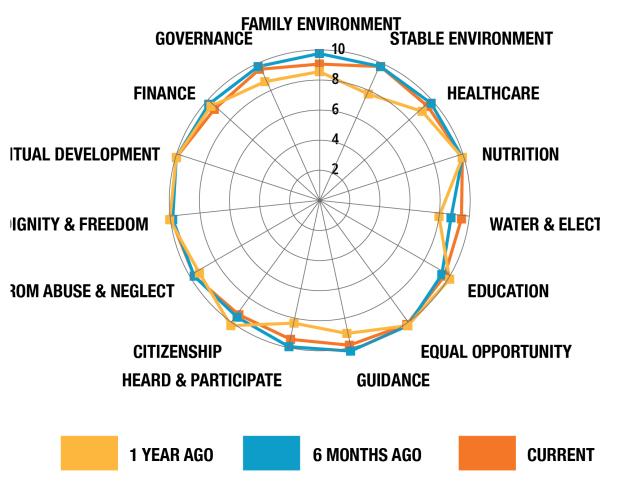
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ESTIMATED FUNDING	<\$5,000 U

# 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**





ng two heavy-duty washing machines is necessary to ne proper washing and sanitation of children's bedding nes. The current washing machine doesn't work properly, rector takes all the clothes to a laundromat in the United be washed. Having these two units directly supports in eing the right to health, dignity and freedom, in addition g them not to impact their budget.

USD

sary to have an electricity source in the event of an outage ut and thus avoid any impact on food preservation and <sup>,</sup> of the home.

USD

ssary to replace the urinals in the children's bathrooms he current ones do not work properly, and one is broken.

JSD

#### A Child's Hope Foundation

# **Right to Live with Family**

SURVIVING

**SUSTAINING** 

THRIVING

At Casa Hogar Eben-Ezer, in a 6-month period, there are a maximum of 12 children per dorm so that they can receive individualized care. Eva and Freddy have done everything possible to ensure that the entire work team in the home can live as a stable family group. Thus, caregivers have committed themselves to spending more than two years in the service of child care and home management. Eva has and executes an established plan for incorporating, training, and evaluating caregivers, however, this has yet to be written.

The home promotes family visits, whenever possible, for family members approved by DIF. However, with the director's experience, these visits aren't always healthy for children. The caregivers have been trained on a monthly basis by a specialist in trauma-informed care and have also worked on strategies for how to create a family environment within a children's home. Sibling groups are encouraged to have meals together daily or to spend other types of time together in an unstructured manner to promote the bond between them. Previously, caregivers have been evaluated by the DIF department to assess whether they are quality caregivers. However, although they have already had these previous results, a renewal of the evaluations is necessary.

□ Have 100% of the staff evaluated by a specialist in the standard of child care.



The house rules are appropriate for the age range, consistent, and clearly explained to children. Family groups eat, work, and play together. The caregivers have received guidance on creating a more stable, loving, and enriching environment in the home. The consequences of rule violations are based on positive discipline, putting into practice the training that caregivers have received. The team of caregivers and directors meet monthly with specialists to discuss behavioral ideas that help to effectively teach and discipline the children in their care. They also maintain close communication with psychologists to continue learning and implementing better care strategies. As much as possible, caregivers participate in joint activities and play daily with the children. Children are called by their preferred name and never by denigrating nicknames from caregivers, staff, or other children. Eva and Freddy have paid special attention to ensuring that their collaborators receive 1-2 days of time off per week in order to prevent work exhaustion. At home, there are traditions and activities that they all do together weekly or monthly, such as celebrating birthdays, movie nights, days of religious service, and special events.

□ Continue doing a great job with these best practices



SURVIVING

All children have received annual health checkups, routine eye exams, routine dental exams, and their general medical needs have been met. Children are generally in good health, and in special cases, such as a girl with nephrotic syndrome, the corresponding follow-up and medical visits are made every month. The home has a fund for medical emergencies and is available when needed.

All children have received their vaccines and have the corresponding documentation. Appropriate measures, training, and treatment plans have been implemented for children with special conditions. However, training is still required for staff in managing children with autism. Soap and water are hygienically available near all dining and toilet areas, and children know and implement the proper hand-washing technique daily. Children are checked weekly and monthly for lice and receive appropriate treatment if they have them. They have currently identified a couple of children who will need orthodontic treatment, however, they are not yet ready to begin this treatment and must also attend to other dental needs prior to beginning.

All children have a medical record and it is up to date. Children brush their teeth at least three times a day. The home also has a pediatric doctor and a hospital identified in case of an emergency. A fully stocked and equipped first aid kit is available in the home to care for all children in case of an emergency. Teenage girls have been taught about their menstrual cycles: what to expect, how to care for themselves, and how to use and properly dispose of products. They also have access to the necessary feminine products in sufficient quantities.

- □ Train staff in techniques and strategies for caring for children with autism.
- Follow up for boys and girls who need orthodontic and dental treatments.



SURVIVING

At Casa Hogar Eben-Ezer, children receive adequate calories per day. Their meals are also very appetizing and tasty. Children receive 2-3 servings of fruits and 2-3 servings of vegetables daily and are provided with daily protein in all their presentations. The food is prepared hygienically, and the cook is trained annually in safety and food preparation. They have received help from a nutritionist to verify that children are getting enough nutrients daily, and special menus are implemented for children with special dietary needs. The kitchen and food warehouses are free of toxic substances, and these areas are well ventilated and free of pests.

□ Continue implementing the best practices

### **SUSTAINING**

## THRIVING

### SUSTAINING

# Right to Safe & Adequate Water & Facilities

SURVIVING

**SUSTAINING** 

THRIVING

The home has been inspected for its facilities in the past year by a qualified professional. Qualified and reliable maintenance support is also available to meet the daily and preventive needs of the facilities. The home has a written annual plan to address the maintenance of the property, and most of the needs have been met. The home has safe drinking water and is free of chemicals, bacteria, or decaying pipes. Staff have been instructed on the importance of drinking water quality, its relation to health, and the need for safe drinking water in sufficient quantities for domestic use. Safety issues have been addressed, and the facilities are safe and capable of withstanding the elements. The facilities comply with the requirements and codes of local authorities, and the local standard sets all the safety certifications.

Children have easy access to water, and it's available when they would like to drink it. The electrical infrastructure is sufficient for their electrical needs; they are securely connected and there is also a safe sewer drainage method that does not contaminate the drinking water supply. The faucets on the washbasins and shower heads in the children's bedrooms are in good condition, however, some parts must be replaced because they no longer work or are broken. Currently, the home has no alternative energy source in case of a power outage. There is an emergency plan in case of a fire, flood, loss of water or electricity, and it is reviewed and approved by local authorities. The outdoor facilities are well-lit to increase the safety of children, however, constructing the perimeter fence is still needed to strengthen their safety.

Address the maintenance needs of showers and sinks.

Have an alternative source of energy in the event of power outages.

Build the perimeter fence of the property. 

#### A Child's Hope Foundation

SURVIVING **SUSTAINING** THRIVING All children are enrolled in school and attend classes 80% or more of the time; activities are implemented with children who are not of school age in such a way that they build on their skills. Every child has access to a personalized, distraction-free tutoring session at least once a week. A library-like space has more than 75 books based on age, language, and reading levels, and all children have access to them frequently. Children can identify and articulate the sound of each alphabet letter, reading and writing within their level. However, they require a literacy program that helps children who are behind in school achieve their reading, writing, and math level according to age. The home has access to the internet and computers, and children receive classes to learn how to use basic computer programs. Funding and housing are available for children to pursue additional education after their time at the home and thus achieve their full potential. School-aged children also have supplies, toys, and art supplies

Eva as the legal guardian, hand in hand with Elizabeth, analyzes grades and progress with each child every three months (minimum). Also, when report cards are available, they look for strategies to support the children in their areas of greatest need. Qualified evaluations have been used to identify children with learning disabilities, however, there are still children that have yet to be evaluated. Children are read to using age-appropriate reading techniques, and older children are given reading time at least once a week.

Find a way to evaluate 100% of children to identify possible learning disabilities.

Have a literacy plan and/or academic support to bring children up to par.



according to their developmental needs.

# Right to Equal Opportunities

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Children have a designated space for their personal items such as letters, photos, gifts, toys, anything of sentimental value, clothing, and shoes. Time has been scheduled for children to participate in extracurricular activities several times a month such as music, singing classes, baking and pastry courses. Children receive the same opportunities to develop their education. They are supported and encouraged to maintain and continue with their education or technical training or to learn a trade that, in the future, will support them to become self-sufficient. Eva and Freddy provide all the facilities for young people to build their life plans or transition to adulthood. The two accompany and advise them on important decisions, offering the same opportunities regardless of gender, disability, or family background, to help them move to independent life. However, there is no written and documented plan for each young person. Male and female adult mentors act as role models and are available to guide children and are always available to address children's questions and needs. Resources have been identified to adapt to physical disabilities, and efforts are being made to provide special accommodations such as the purchase of glasses for those who need them or adequate food for children with special dietary needs due to health conditions.

- □ Implement hope plans or similar strategies for children starting at age 13.
- Have a written plan for the transition to independent living with teens starting at age 15.

# A Child's Hope Foundation



The home has a profile or job description for when they are looking for new caregivers. Children can see a therapist weekly or monthly, individually or in a group, which helps them work through some situations of conflict and concern. Children are taught to be respectful to each other and to respect others. Caregivers are evaluated to determine if they are quality mentors for children and hold one-on-one meetings with Eva to strengthen strategies to learn how to treat the boys and girls. Adolescents over 15 have received aptitude tests and professional counseling to determine their academic abilities and long-term educational goals, as well as decide what career or profession they want to learn. In addition, there is constant communication with the young adults in training and support is provided to those enrolled in technical and/or university careers. Teenagers over 15 years old, Eva and the mentors make and talk about plans for their education or work after completing their time at the home. In almost all cases, they have it in writing and send a copy to DIF for their knowledge. Casa Hogar Eben-Ezer trains on skills for independent living, such as making grocery lists or how to service cars, however, they do not have a documented life skills program where children can participate regularly. Caregivers have received annual training on how to model, teach and reinforce skills and behaviors with children and have been trained in trauma care by ESPERE. Also, psychologist Carolina from Casa Hogar constantly advises them on strategies for dealing with difficult cases. Eva is the primary trusted adult who analyzes and talks about the changes associated with puberty and prepares the teens well in advance, mainly the girls. Eva talks a lot with them about the importance of personal hygiene and the care required during their period, and all adolescents over 13 years of age have received education related to responsible sexual behavior.

Have a documented program on skills for independent living.

#### **SUSTAINING**

# A Right to Be Heard and Participate in Decisions

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Children can decide what they would like to do in their spare time as long as it is within the home's established rules and limits, and does not affect or alter the activities of the other children. Children have the option of choosing their clothes daily. Children can participate in menu planning at least twice a month, incorporating their tastes and preferences. This menu is always visible so children can see it. On special occasions or events, the children get to decide what meal they'll be having for that day. Eva and Freddy have implemented organic actions for children and young people to learn about independent living activities and skills. However, they have not implemented child hope plans or a similar strategy that will support the young adults in planning the next steps after their life at the home. The home also provides activities for children in which they can obtain leadership roles such as organizing religious services on Thursdays, participating in activities to support the spiritual community to which they belong, and in public works to support the neighboring community. Children's committees meet regularly and organize the activities mentioned previously. Children and caregivers receive information about medical procedures and can ask questions before their administration to avoid a possible traumatic situation for children.

- □ Implement child hope plans or similar strategies.
- □ Search for strategies for the active participation of children's committees.

### A Child's Hope Foundation

# A Right to Be Prepared for Citizenship

### SURVIVING

At Casa Hogar Eben-Ezer, almost all children have their birth certificates, except for two that are still being processed; DIF is in charge of resolving this matter. Children have personal responsibilities such as age-appropriate chores, which they must perform daily: laying out their beds, helping with the cleaning and tidiness of the home, helping to serve food, and setting up tables and chairs for meals, among others. Children are taught about ethics and the democratic process, and these strategies are implemented when a decision is made regarding family activities. Children are taught to repair the damage done to develop a sense of responsibility and citizenship. National and local holidays are observed at home; their favorite festivities are Christmas and summer. Teens over 15 years old have a mentor who teaches them daily life skills such as creating a to-do list and going shopping, ordering food in a restaurant, paying for items, creating and managing a budget, along with teaching them music and singing. The home is free of garbage, and objects (bicycles, tools, etc.) are stored in their proper places. Children are involved in community service activities at least twice a year and actively participate when they have something to share with their community, such as basic pantry items, food, and other products. When DIF allows it, children have the opportunity to attend school field trips and special events outside the home every year; this is in accordance with local rules and measures.

□ Continue to take the necessary steps to obtain the missing birth certificates.

### SUSTAINING

# Right to Be Safe from Abuse & Neglect

SURVIVING

**SUSTAINING** 

THRIVING

The home's level of security is not adequate in regards to the surrounding community given that they do not have a perimeter fence that delimits the property from the rest of the community. They have had incidents where intruders entered their property without permission and have used the space behind the home as a shortcut to their homes. The home has private bathing facilities, private restrooms and dressing areas. The bedrooms are separated for boys and girls in accordance with appropriate age groups and government regulations. The directors and caregivers receive training every six months to learn to identify, prevent and avoid abuse, as well as training on positive discipline techniques and alternatives to corporal punishment. Children over five years old attend educational sessions on abuse and age-appropriate reporting methods at least every six months. Psychological evaluations have been carried out on each child upon arrival to help them work through their traumas, and they have the support of a psychologist for follow-up. To minimize any lack of protection for children inside and outside the home, the appropriate staff accompanies the children to outings. There is also a policy in which male staff who are not caregivers are not allowed to be alone with a child, as well as a policy for visitors. The home has an established process for checking references and checking the background of staff and frequent visitors, in accordance with local regulations. The home implements a child protection program that ensures children are not physically, verbally, or emotionally abused by their caregivers or visitors. In addition, the program ensures that children and teens are not hired in exchange for a wage or barter that violates local law or adversely affects their health, education or established daily schedule.

Build the perimeter wall of the home to improve the safety of children.

### A Child's Hope Foundation



Children bathe daily. Personal hygiene is one of the best developed habits by the children in this home. Eva and Freddy have established a system of clear and simple rules for living together in the home. So that children are aware, they are spoken to in advance about the consequences of violations of the home's rules. The directors keep these rules in writing in every room as a daily reminder of what is expected of them to live together as a family. Children can perform additional tasks or work around the home to earn an allowance or privileges; this opportunity is for everyone equally. The directors and collaborators encourage children to be kind to each other and to correct disdain, unkind comments, and bullying. Children have adequate bedding, such as sheets and blankets, washed every two weeks or as needed. However, this task is not an easy one since they are in need of the right washing equipment for this great task. Eva mainly does the children's laundry every two weeks in a U.S. laundromat because she does not want to overwork the washing machine at home. Children have access to their own bed, mattress, and toothbrushes. Every child also has enough clothing, undergarments, and a clean towel; their towels could be in better condition because they are very worn out and need replacing. Age-appropriate toys and art supplies are available to all children, however, they do not have a suitable play area for all ages since they only have a multipurpose area that cannot be used simultaneously. The home has registered safety protocols and proper training for children and collaborators, such as smoke detectors, fire extinguishers that are regularly checked and a meeting point in the event of a natural disaster.

- □ Change towels for 100% of children
- Have two industrial washing machines to meet children's laundry needs



One of the most important values of the home is the love for God, which is why all children are allowed to be part of a spiritual community. Children are free to participate in daily community prayer or other spiritual rituals. They are also in charge of preparing the religious service once a month. This service is conducted by them from start to finish, allowing them to practice their spiritual learning and share it with others. Every Sunday of every week, the religious service is held within the home, welcoming people from the community to be part of this celebration. There is a designated place for prayer and meditation in the home. Spiritual and religious materials and books are available and accessible to all children whenever they would like to use them.

Continue the great work and best practices

### **SUSTAINING**

### THRIVING

### SUSTAINING

# Finance Standard

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

The home records its income and expenses. Freddy keeps a very good record and file of his receipts and creates a monthly profit and loss statement. They internally carry out their audits and have a qualified accountant who keeps their accounts and validates their books every month. Both Freddy and his accountant keep their records up to date and are available for review. The home has and carries out controls to minimize opportunities to misuse funds. They have filed their tax returns in accordance with government requirements, and they reconcile their bank account every month. They have created detailed budgets and plans for their most important expenses, especially in construction and home renovation projects; they try to stick to their budgets even though they are always changing. Freddy and Eva constantly search for support for their most expensive projects, always putting the most pressing needs first and inviting their donors to support their projects. The organization has a division of functions and tasks suitable for internal control, where Eva and Freddy delegate activities to the rest of the team according to the children's and the home's needs.

Have the advice of an expert in the field to help them create their annual budget

# Governance and Human Resource Standard

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

The property and the modifications that are made to it are insured. The directors have the proving documents that the property is for exclusive use of the children's home, as well as its future constructions and modifications. Eva guides the new caretakers of the home; when they are hired, they sign documents as collaborators. Even still, these documents do not detail their functions and working conditions. All employees have a file that includes their documents, the continuous training they have received, and other documents requested at the time of hiring. They have an organizational chart that indicates the various roles and how they are distributed. Constant meetings are held with staff to discuss topics of interest, as frequently as needed. The staff has been instructed or has received various training on the characteristics and values of a family, the creation of a family in a children's home environment, and the importance and practical ways of facilitating child participation. They have also received training in CPR, first aid, and the care and treatment of a sick child. The staff has an established vacation policy and the staff receive the required days off to prevent burnout. As for licenses and permits, the home is about to complete its revalidation; they only need to carry out psychological suitability assessments by DIF.

- Have a written document detailing the staff's terms of employment and a job description
- □ Continue with the necessary procedures and processes to obtain the revalidation of their operating license.

# Current Improvement Partners

ESPERE 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.

