

Nuestra Familia

Mexico

IMPROVEMENT ROADMAP

June | 2023



Overview of this Children's Home

Background & Mission

The beginnings of Nuestra Familia, officially known as Casa Hogar Maria Inmaculada A.C., date back to 1985 when it was established by Father Jose de Jesus Quezada Martinez. He opened the home as a shelter and protection for single mothers with children who had no place to live. Over the years, the home passed from Father Jose to Mother Virginia Alejandra Oropeza Baez until 2011 when Mother Virginia met with Noel Diaz, president and founder of Ministerios El Sembrador, to take over the administration and legal representation of the home. Shortly thereafter, Juan and Emma Villagran were invited by Noel Diaz to oversee the day-to-day management in 2013. Although Emma passed away in June 2022, Juan has continued to oversee Nuestra Familia under the direction of El Sembrador and the other members of his team.

Nuestra Familia's mission is to raise happy children through a Christ-centered foundation, providing them with everything they need to prepare them for a life of meaning and service. The leadership believes that all children deserve and should have the opportunity to succeed. They work hard to provide a safe environment and give these children respect, affection and great love. Our Family provides each child with a unique personal development plan that identifies areas of strength and opportunity in the academic, extracurricular, personal and spiritual spheres. Our Family hopes to eventually house about 100 children, including housing for those who have become adults but would like a place to stay temporarily while they are in school or looking for their own place.

As a charitable aid organization, its vision is guided by the hope that one day, every child who comes to Our Family will be able to live independently and contribute to society in a meaningful way. "Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." -Matthew 25:40

Recent Accomplishments

- All of their children are enrolled in a school or educational modality that caters to their general and special educational needs.
- They were able to obtain their structural, electrical, gas and fire safety certifications as part of the requirements for their operating license.



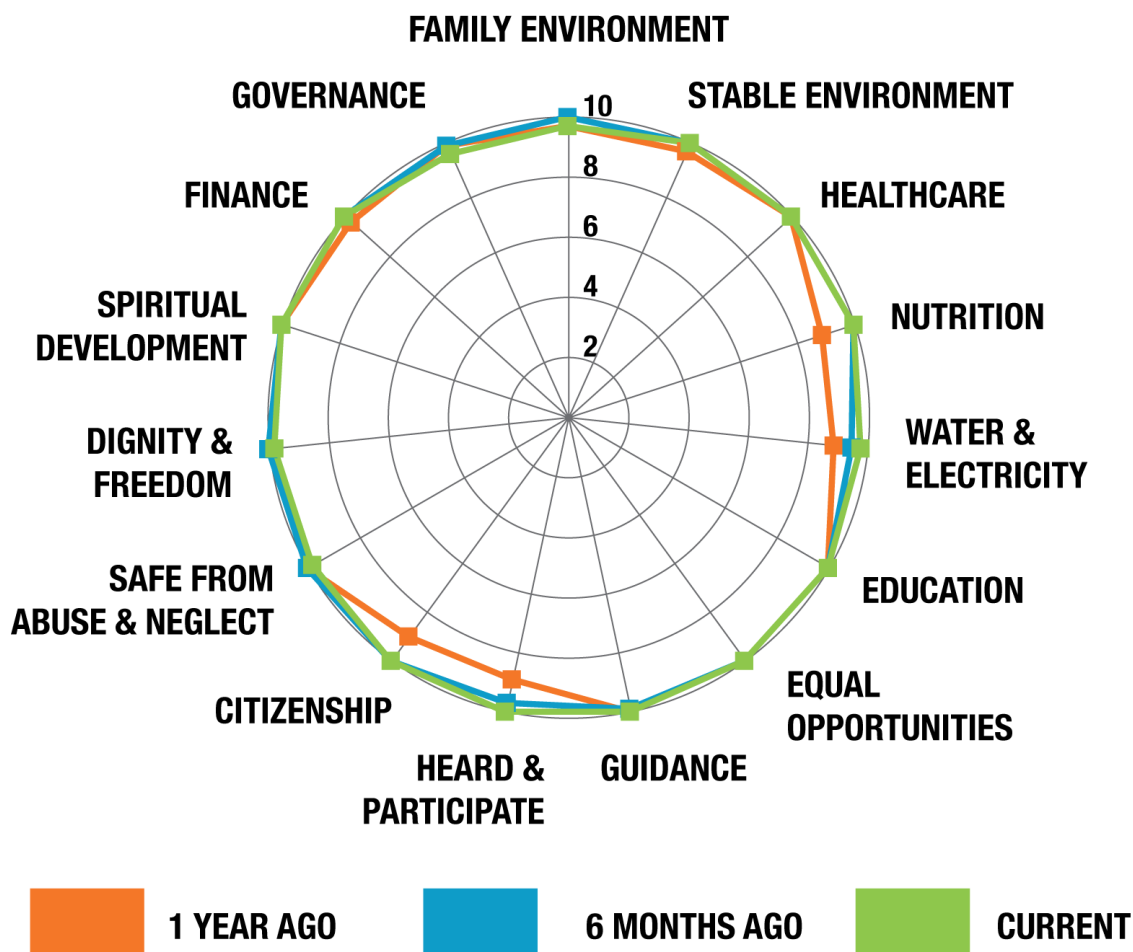
The Thrive Assessment

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

HOUSING FOR TEEN GIRLS

PROJECT DESCRIPTION	To provide a decent living space for a group of 10 girls between 11 and 16 years of age, where they will have enough space for their belongings and healthy development. This space will have its own drinking water supply to avoid collapsing the current system. ACHF can support part of the project, but Juan will need to find more sponsors for the rest of the project.
ESTIMATED FUNDING	\$15,000+ USD

ROOF OVER THE DRINKING WATER TANK AND GAS TANK

PROJECT DESCRIPTION	The construction of a roof to protect the drinking water tank is necessary because, due to the high weather conditions, the drinking water is not cool. The temperature can also cause certain bacteria to grow more easily. In addition, this roof will help keep both the drinking water tank and the propane gas tank from direct exposure to the sun.
ESTIMATED FUNDING	\$55,223 pesos

RETAINING POSTS ON THE SIDEWALK IN THE SCHOOL AREA

PROJECT DESCRIPTION	At least 8 retaining posts need to be placed in the area of the entrance to the school parking lot (volunteer area) because on more than one occasion, cars have crashed into the property wall because of speeding, putting the wall and the entrance gate at risk. It also puts any person who is closing or opening the gate in that area at risk , where visitors and volunteers also park.
ESTIMATED FUNDING	\$6,880 pesos



Right to Live with Family

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

The children's home encourages visits from the children's relatives and provides them with all possible facilities to do so. Currently, only a couple of children receive visits, the rest of the children do not have a family member who has officially requested visits from DIF. The children have primary caregivers; there are two house parent areas, the rest are permanent caregivers. Currently, only four dorm areas out of five are functioning due to the fact that they do not have preschool children. The idea is to have permanent staff and to have the same person in the same area throughout the week so that the children have that stability. The caregivers have quarterly trainings on topics such as trauma or crisis and more topics of interest, on a weekly basis. These weekly trainings have a duration of two hours and in addition to this they take training promoted by DIF. The home has documentation of integration plans for new caregivers. On weekends, at play times and on special dates, siblings are encouraged to spend time together. The caregivers are being evaluated every three months by a certified specialist on the standard of care they are providing to the children in their care. The caregivers have received ongoing training on family traits and values as well as family building in an orphanage setting. While they do not have a dedicated person to follow up on the legal status of the children, they will continue to maintain their good practices for the time being.

☐ Maintaining good practices in this area



Right to a Stable Environment

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

House rules are age appropriate and consistent for children and youth. Consequences for breaking rules are based on positive parenting. Consequences are age-appropriate and reason-based, such as limiting television viewing, not being allowed to go on regular walks, or not participating in any special time in the home. With the older kids it is also about them fixing or repairing what they have caused or being asked to pay for the damage. In this home, the children are not called by nicknames, only by their name or their own name in diminutive. The siblings eat, play and work together. The psychologist meets weekly with the caregivers to address situations of concern with the children or to address any emotional or behavioral situation that the children are presenting. If necessary, these meetings are more frequent. Caregivers have 1 to 2 days off once a week and there is an experienced caregiver who knows

the children to cover the breaks. Turnover among caregivers is less than 20%. At the moment they are looking for a cook and when they eventually have children in the preschool area, it will be necessary to have an additional couple for that dorm section. The caregivers participate in joint activities and play with the children every day and adapt their outdoor games to the weather conditions. The family groups have traditions such as baking birthday cakes, decorating the cakes and decorating their space to celebrate the children's birthdays. Everyone celebrates differently according to their decisions in each of the casitas; one of the kids' favorite celebrations are graduations and Christmas celebrations.

- ☐ Hiring and training the new cook
- ☐ Maintain the best practices already in place in this area



Right to Healthcare

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Children are taken to the Children's Hospital of the Californias or another physician for medical examinations. They have identified a pediatrician and a hospital in case of an emergency. Children have the opportunity to see a doctor in case of an emergency. Children brush their teeth three times a day. Children have annual vision, hearing, and dental exams and those requiring orthodontic treatment are seen on an ongoing basis. The children's heads are checked weekly for lice; currently there are no cases requiring treatment. Each child has a medical file with all the necessary information, and the nurse updates the file constantly. All the children have their immunization records and vaccinations. Hygiene supplies are available in various areas for hand washing and personal hygiene. Adolescent girls have access to hygiene products and have enough of them. The adolescents are taught what to expect, how to dispose of the products, and the psychologist supports them in this case. In Nuestra Familia, the caregivers warn the children to wash their hands before eating and they also have materials that support this activity in visible places for everyone. The children's home has a stocked first aid kit ready in the infirmary and another in the entrance area. The home currently has a medical emergency fund with ACHF. There have been trainings for children with special conditions such as mental health treatment. The nurse follows up on the cases that require mental health treatment, as well as the house parents to provide their observations and to know how to follow the routine according to the specialist's indications.

- ☐ Maintaining good practices implemented in this area



Right to Nutrition

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

All children receive the right amount of calories in their meals and the food is prepared in a hygienic manner. The kitchen, dining room and storage area are free of toxic substances and pests. A monthly fumigation service is provided. In addition, the maintenance manager maintains a weekly fumigation routine in important areas such as the linen storage areas, and the cold room and food storage areas are monitored closely to prevent the spread of bugs in the food such as beans, rice, etc. Therefore, the home has not had any pests. The kitchen and cooking areas are well ventilated. The children receive tasty, appetizing, balanced meals every day with their daily protein in any of its presentations. In addition, the children receive 2 to 3 fruits and vegetables. The most important challenge they have worked on in this area is to make the food attractive to them, since each one has their own ideas and deep desires, so they have to find creative ways to get them to eat the vegetables. Some children have to be motivated to eat more protein and they look for ways to make their food tastier. The nurse takes the children every month, on the day they do not have school, for a check-up with the nutritionist, and these visits are more frequent when a child in need is detected. The nutritionist service is provided by the Hospital Infantil de las Californias. The cooks attend training at least twice a year. In the near future it will be necessary to hire a new cook.

- ☐ Hiring and training the new cook
- ☐ Maintaining good practices implemented in this area



Right to Safe & Adequate Water & Facilities

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Its facilities have been inspected in the last year by a qualified person, firefighters and civil protection personnel, to evaluate safety. In addition, all the staff has been trained in prevention and care measures in case of emergencies or natural disasters. Staff have been trained on the importance of drinking water quality, its relationship to health, and the need for safe drinking water in sufficient quantities for domestic use, such as drinking, cooking, and hygiene. Regarding water quality, the children's home has a reliable supplier that is responsible for carrying out the necessary actions to guarantee water quality. These actions include routine maintenance, cleaning and disinfection, and changing the container when it serves its purpose. However, it is necessary to build a roof over the container to ensure its freshness and prevent the deterioration of the container from direct exposure to the sun. There is a safe method of drainage that does not contaminate the drinking water. Each bathroom and room has a working light bulb. An emergency plan is in place in case of fire, flooding, water loss, etc. The home has a maintenance

person who takes care of most of the property's needs and emergencies, and for major construction issues, the home has a reliable provider that is called upon when necessary. The home is able to withstand the elements such as wind, rain, etc. Children have easy access to water and can drink as much as they want. The faucets in the sinks and showers are working at 100%. The outdoor facilities are well lit to increase the safety of the children. The home has a preventive maintenance plan and immediate needs are attended to promptly. The electrical infrastructure is in good condition and there are no exposed wires. In the summer there are always power outages and although the home has solar panels, there is no other source of energy. The directors are looking for a generator that can provide extra electricity in such cases.

- ☐ Build a roof to protect the gas mine and the drinking water tank.
- ☐ Place retaining poles in the school parking lot area.
- ☐ To have a generator in case of emergency.



Right to Quality Education

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

All children are enrolled in private schools, have internet and computers for their use. The children have 1-on-1 sessions with a tutor to help them improve in their areas of opportunity. The school is supporting them with counseling and follow-up for the children who need it most. Children 7 years and older can articulate each letter of the alphabet. Usually the school supports them with this part of literacy and if specialized attention is needed, the children's home seeks help from a specialist at the Children's Hospital of the Californias. Children 11 years and older are able to read at least at a third grade level, and all children 9 years and older can perform simple mathematical operations. The children read one hour daily and have reading comprehension activities. Karl and Marsha support the reading process hand-in-hand with the BLR program. They have more than 75 books in their library in their language and interest; all children read according to their interest. Funds and housing are available so that the young adults can continue with their studies even after their time at the home is over. The children have toys and art supplies. This is in the homework room and if they need craft materials, it is requested and given to them. The children have had classes on how to use a computer, and they also have computer classes at school. Each child's progress is reviewed by the new person who is supporting them in the homework area, analyzed and evaluated on an ongoing basis. The children are provided with art materials and stationery is also available for homework.

- ☐ Maintaining good practices in this area

Right to Equal Opportunities

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

The children have their own space on drawers to store their belongings and special gifts; they all have their own personal space for this purpose. Children are given equal opportunities to receive education and have everything they need for it. There is also scheduled time for the children to participate in extracurricular activities. Karl and Marsha are supporting with boys who are on basketball and volleyball teams. In addition to sports activities, they have piano lessons on the weekends, dance lessons, Zumba, acting classes and are putting on a play related to the holidays. The children with disabilities have access routes to the playground, ramps, and their glasses have been adapted. The nurse is very supportive of follow-up in these areas and communicates information to caregivers and/or appropriate staff. There is a need for a dormitory for the girls that is designed according to their needs and can accommodate at least a group of 8.

- ☐ Seek support from more organizations and donors for the construction of the dormitory for teen girls



Right to Guidance

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

The home has a profile or job description for when they are looking for new caregivers. The children are taught to be respectful and to get along with each other. Children and youth are given the opportunity to see a therapist on a weekly or bi-weekly basis. On a weekly basis, the staff holds meetings with the therapists to discuss and assess behaviors that have been seen amongst the children during the week, and from there, help is offered so that they can receive psychological help. On the other hand, the caregivers are evaluated by Orlenda to know if they are quality mentors for the children. Psychologists support the process of explaining puberty changes to the kids. Caregivers have trainings on how to model positive behaviors in children. Caregivers take trainings with DIF, as long as DIF offers them. Adolescents aged 13 have received training regarding sexuality from psychologists. Adolescents receive aptitude tests to determine their long term academic goals as part of their life plan and at school, they also receive this opportunity. Work is currently underway to ground the idea of what adolescents want to study as their ideas are still up in the air. There is a documented program in which the children can participate, which is the Plan de Vida y Esperanza (Life and Hope Plan). It has a system of constant communication and support is provided to students in technical or university careers. They have access to a specialist to address common and difficult issues in the children's lives.

- ☐ Maintaining good practices in this area



Right to Be Heard and Participate in Decisions

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

The children decide what they can do in their free time. Each week the children are allowed to participate in menu planning for meals. The menu is available for all children to see in the kitchen and in the office with Juan. They are also able to choose their clothing on a daily basis and in some cases are given suggestions about their attire or grooming. Children and caregivers receive information about health care procedures and are given the opportunity to ask questions prior to their administration or visit to the doctor. Child Hope Plans have been implemented by the director and are updated on a monthly basis. The home provides the children with leadership roles and activities where they can practice their leadership skills. They have groups of children who are the representative letter of all the others and have established strategies for democracy.

☐ Maintaining good practices in this area



Right to Be Prepared for Citizenship

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Each child has his or her birth certificate and it is included into his or her file. The children are taught to repair the damages or faults committed, depending on the seriousness of each one. The children have chores appropriate to their age on a daily basis; each one in his or her area has a schedule and specific and individual activities to perform. In this home they celebrate special and local holidays and they always have parties. The children's favorite holiday is Christmas, although it is also an emotional time. Before these dates they get a little sad, however, they also get excited when they receive visitors and with the gifts they are given. The home is very clean, tidy and free of objects that may obstruct passages; all objects are stored in the corresponding space. The children participate in discussions about democracy and are also taught to participate in making decisions for the well-being and agreement of all or almost all. Juan is one of the main mentors for the children. There is also very important support from Marsha and Karl, organizing and accompanying the children to participate in activities in support of the community twice a year. Major events are shared with the children, and the children have the opportunity to attend school field trips and special events that are organized for them. The children have the opportunity to be accompanied by someone from the home as part of DIF's requirement and per home policy.

☐ Maintaining good practices in this area



Right to Be Safe from Abuse & Neglect

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

The level of security is adequate in relation to the surrounding community. Children are separated by gender and age in the dormitories. All staff have received training in positive discipline and alternatives to corporal punishment. There is a policy that male staff are not to be alone with children under any circumstances and this policy is shared and applied with visitors too. A policy is in place to ensure that children are not physically, verbally, or emotionally abused. The home ensures that the children are not hired for any work activity that harms or threatens their physical or emotional health. Caregivers receive training every 6 months on how to avoid and prevent abuse, however, they have not been trained in the last year. Children over 5 years of age have attended training on abuse, in addition to play therapy with the psychologist. The home has a system for checking employee references to meet local standards. Employees have a criminal record clearance letter as part of their job requirements. Each child is evaluated upon entry to identify individual psychological care needs and treatment of traumatic situations. In cases of specialized care needs, the psychologist refers them to the mental health hospital.

- ☐ Train staff in strategies for detecting abuse, neglect or mistreatment



Right to Dignity & Freedom

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Children bathe daily. They are always encouraged to be kind to each other and are corrected for misbehavior or bullying. The children have their own individual beds, however, some of them need to be changed due to wearout. They also have enough clothes and underwear, although it is necessary to change some clothes and have more undergarments for boys and girls. The children have enough sheets, towels and blankets that are washed continuously. The home has safety protocols in place and conducts a training registry for the children and staff. The children have their own toothbrush and sufficient personal hygiene items. They have art supplies and toys available by age for all the children. They also have the opportunity to do activities in the kitchen, in the playgrounds, in cleaning and thus earn a little money that they can keep to spend or save to buy something of their interest.

- ☐ Sufficient clothing and undergarments for boys and girls
- ☐ Change beds that are in poor condition (8 beds)



Right to Spiritual Development

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Children are given the opportunity to be part of a spiritual community with Catholic practice. Even so, if any child arrives with another religious inclination, they are oriented for the blessing of food, are not pressured to perform any religious activity and are given a talk where they participate and show respect for their spiritual inclinations. The children are free to participate daily in community prayer or other spiritual rituals. Among the materials available and easily accessible to the children, Nuestra Familia has a rosary, a chaplet of mercy, among others. Every week there is a talk on spiritual growth, they attend mass on Sundays and on special dates or celebrations, they have catechism classes, and they participate by serving mass every month. They have a designated place for meditation and prayer. They have started with the construction of the memorial for Mrs. Emma and the children have participated in the preparation of the place, giving their ideas of what they would like to have in that space. This memorial will be inaugurated before the end of 2023.

☐ Maintaining good practices in this area



Finance Standard

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

On a monthly basis they have financial records of their income and expenses and these are available for review. They also keep receipts and create a profit and loss statement for each month. Tax returns have been filed in accordance with government requirements. They have an annual budget for their general expenses and their bank income is reconciled monthly. The home has an appropriate division of duties for internal control and conducts internal and external audits of its monthly finances. They have a plan for expenses over \$25,000 dollars. They have their books or accounting records validated by a certified accountant. This home is extremely committed to the transparent use of the resources it receives and is always available to send its reports. It is very important to highlight the great teamwork that they do in this home in financial matters.

☐ Maintaining good practices in this area



Governance and Human Resource Standard

SURVIVING**SUSTAINING****THRIVING**

Caregivers follow an experienced caregiver for at least one week to mentor them in their adaptation and integration process, however, this strategy has not been used with 100% of the staff. They have an organizational chart that defines team positions and activities, and ongoing meetings are held to discuss issues of concern and process improvements. As for their documentation and operating license, they are only waiting for approval of the Internal Civil Protection Plan before it is issued. The staff has attended annual training sessions on attachment and child development, topics that are addressed by the psychologist. The board of directors meets more than twice a year. There is a vacation policy for all staff and each team member has a complete and updated file. They hold team meetings and supervisors schedule 1-on-1 meetings on a regular basis.

☐ Continue with the necessary steps to obtain its operating license.



Current Improvement Partners



corazón de vida

Corazón de Vida

Corazón de Vida works with 10 plus orphanages in Baja California. Their focus is food, education, staff salaries and some small construction projects. They have a program that supports kids from orphanages get an apartment and go to a university. They host a big gala and do day trips to try and raise funds.



Books
Libraries
Reading

Books, Library, Reading

BLR's aim is to help kids love to read and read often. We do this through getting them books that match their interests and books that may expand their interests and spark their curiosity. With these books and others, we create a well-organized, fun, and functional library. We 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
HOPE
FOUNDATION