

A photograph of three people working on a road improvement project. In the foreground, a woman with long brown hair tied in a ponytail, wearing a maroon long-sleeved shirt and black leggings, is using a wooden-handled tool to clear weeds. To her left, a man in a blue and black long-sleeved shirt and blue jeans is also working with a shovel. In the background, another person in a green shirt is visible. They are all wearing face masks. The ground is covered with dry grass and weeds. A light blue wall is in the background.

Casa del Jardin

Mexico

IMPROVEMENT ROADMAP

July | 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 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

- The home paid psychologist's fees so that all children and collaborators received psychological care.
- One girl graduated from elementary school and two from high school.
- The children demonstrated their artistic skills with paint and recycled material, inventions, crochet figures and bracelets.

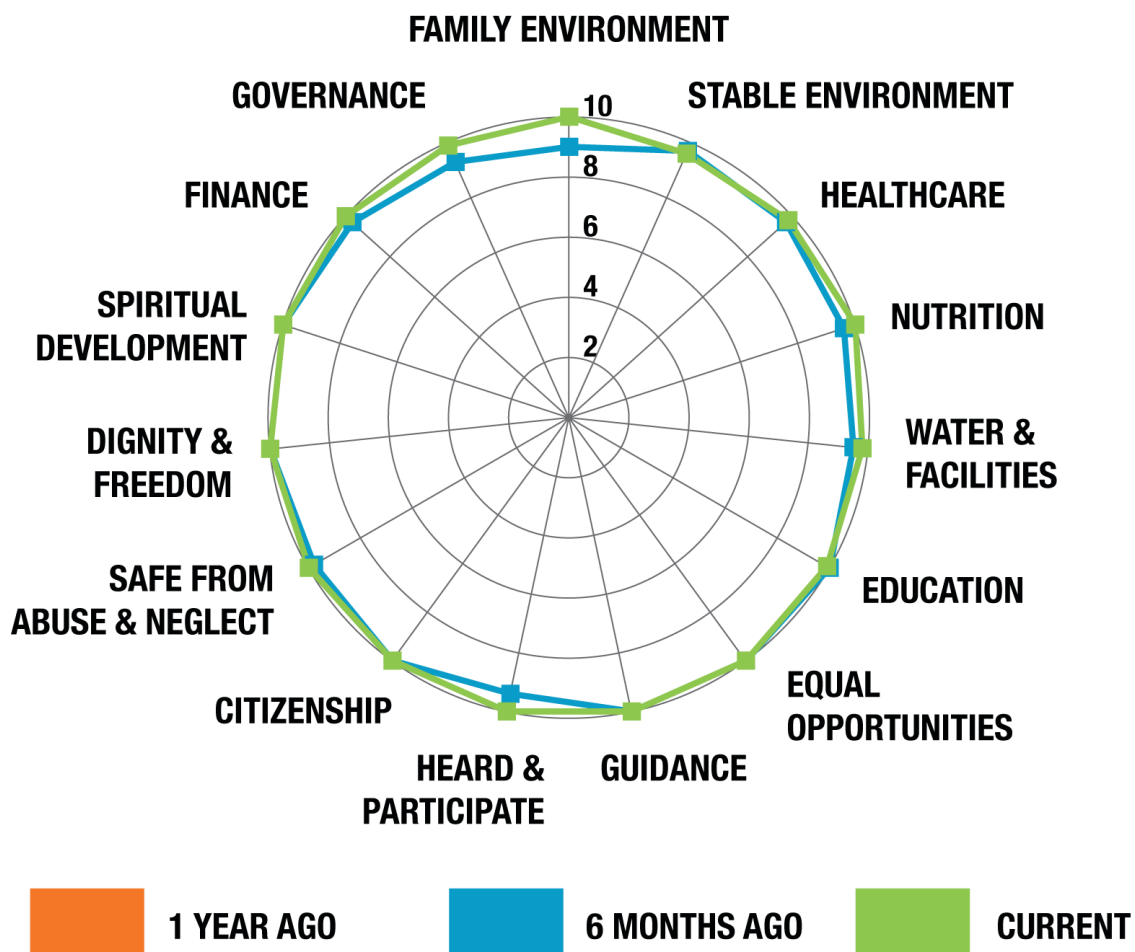


The Thrive Assessment

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 compiled into an Improvement Roadmap.

Current Thrive Scale



Strategic Initiatives

PSYCHOLOGICAL THERAPY SUPPORT

| | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| PROJECT SUMMARY | Casa del Jardín is a home that houses children who have been victims of abuse and exploitation. Therefore, from the moment children arrive, they must be evaluated, diagnosed, and submitted to psychological care treatment to reduce their trauma. The objective of this request is to continue with psychological care and support for each of the children who live in Casa del Jardín by paying for professional consultations of the psychologist weekly. |
| INITIAL ANTICIPATED COST | \$2,740.50 USD |



Right to Live with Family

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Within Casa del Jardín, they carry out various activities that encourage the right to live with the family. They do everything possible to create an environment in which the children who live here feel that they are in a stable and loving place. There are currently 12 children living in the home who are being cared for with the highest level of warmth and quality. The home has bedrooms separated by age and gender in which a maximum of 12 children can be accommodated. In addition, they have six consistent caregivers who work day and night and are responsible for the care and support of all the children. Each time a new child arrives to the home, he/she is accompanied by an identification form from DIF that describes their origin and background. This information allows the leadership of the home to know the general information of the children. In the event that the DIF does not provide this form, the home works with DIF to try and obtain the form.

Casa del Jardín has a manual of established procedures and guidelines for the onboarding, training and evaluation of caregivers. They are evaluated by the home psychologist to better understand their abilities, mental health and feasibility as quality mentors. Starting in the month of June 2023, a new partner called ESPERE started providing services to this home that includes evaluations for children and staff. ESPERE also trains staff and strengthens their skills and knowledge in various topics such as trauma. With regard to family visits, they have recently managed to make four phone calls with family members of children, which has made the children happy. In this home, they are consistently looking for ways to make children feel supported and protected.

☐ Continue with the current practices.



Right to a Stable Environment

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

In order to enrich children's lives and to ensure a healthy family environment, Casa del Jardín has very clear rules in place. When a new child joins the home, they are given the rules to read. In addition, the caregivers or coordinator re-read the rules with them to confirm they have been understood. Throughout various activities, the rules are also continuously reinforced. They use positive discipline each time a child breaks the rules by having them repeatedly copy positive phrases that instill a good message. Each group of children, according to their age and gender, has different activities that motivate them, allow them to develop their skills and generate a beautiful coexistence.

Regarding the staff at Casa del Jardín, leadership tries to provide maximum support while respecting their legal benefits. This is done by providing continuous training through various partners and implementing a wide variety of dynamics to motivate caregivers. Furthermore, caregivers have continuous meetings with the director and coordinator, as well as specialists who visit on a monthly basis to discuss various current issues with them. When new caregivers are hired, they are granted a trial month and one-year contract in order to promote a stable and loving environment for children. Staff turnover is minimal since the staff who work there have been consistent. There is no shortage of coverage and they rely on each other for taking leave and breaks. The caregivers participate in various activities with the children such as playing jump rope, teaching them to sew, and painting ceramic figures. Additionally, the older caregiver has sought other healthy and fun activities to live and play with the children. At Casa del Jardín, they ensure that children have recreational activities such as going to the movies once a month, visiting El Trompo Interactive Museum, hiking, going out to the nearby park, and gardening in a small garden that they have in the back of the house. All these activities are carried out for the purpose of strengthening their bonds as a family and cultivating relationships between one another.

☐ Continue to encourage play activities between caregivers and children.



Right to Healthcare

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

To better understand the current health of children, the home recently had clinical laboratory tests done as well as made sure that all children have their full vaccination schedule. In addition, children are taken to the pediatrician, dentist, and ophthalmologist when needed. Glasses are also purchased for them, if prescribed by a doctor. Regarding mental health issues, there are several children at Casa del Jardín who are psychiatric patients. In these cases, DIF supports paid psychiatric specialists, including appointments and medication. If DIF is unable to finance medication, an attempt is made by the home to finance it, in order to avoid a crisis for the child. In case of emergencies, children are treated at the Playas de Rosarito General Hospital or the Red Cross. For minor illnesses, children are taken to a nearby doctor's office. When children are newly admitted, they are taken to undergo clinical tests to determine if there are areas of their health that need attention. In addition, during the first fifteen days of the child's stay, efforts are made to complete their personal file. For the rest of the children at the home, files are securely kept and constantly updated.

Casa del Jardín currently has the support of a pediatrician and specialists who are used in case of a special situation. All children have their medical follow-up at California Children's Hospital. To maintain the hygiene of the children, their nails, hair and feet are checked weekly. Children are reminded to brush their teeth at least twice a day as well as wash their hands before eating or going to the bathroom. They also have soap and water readily available in the areas near the dining room and toilets. Additionally, the home has a fully equipped first aid kit. Teenage girls have feminine hygiene products and the psychologist helps to provide information to adolescent girls about their menstrual periods.

☐ Have a labeled medical fund to deal with medical emergencies.



Right to Nutrition

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

At Casa del Jardín, all children receive evaluations, nutritional counseling, and follow up for any nutritional disorder/condition from nutritionists at the California Children's Hospital. They recommend the foods and dishes allowed for the preparation of the weekly menu, which makes it possible to verify and ensure that children are receiving the amount of calories necessary for their optimal development. The dishes prepared here are balanced and are rich in protein, such as lentils and liver. They also include vegetables and fruit. The children have two snacks and three strong meals, both of which are delicious and appetizing. It is worth mentioning that the kitchen staff receive annual training from the Create Purpose Civil Association.

They currently have a donor who brings them high-quality fresh fruits and vegetables week after week, providing the opportunity for children to have daily access to fresh foods. When it comes to handling food, the cook wears a hair cap, a mask and keeps her hair tied up. She tries to keep the cooking area in excellent condition and keeps the surfaces clean. In addition, the cook uses specialized gloves to chop and beat food. On an ongoing basis, they check that everything in the kitchen is working excellently through continuous maintenance. The kitchen and food storage areas are fumigated every month. By doing so, they avoid pests and keep the home a safe place.

- ☐ Proceed with the extraordinary things they do in this category.



Right to Safe & Adequate Water & Facilities

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

In the first few months of the year, Casa del Jardín was inspected by Firefighters and Civil Protection. By doing so they obtained the corresponding certifications for their hard work and compliance with all the requirements requested. They currently have the Internal Civil Protection Program (PIPC) folder, which integrates all the processes and regulatory rules. This includes emergency plans for any contingency, brigade formation, as well as all updated plans and opinions to comply with the requirements and codes of local authorities. In this home, personnel have been trained in all the civil protection brigades to deal with any contingency that may arise. They have the different areas equipped with: fire extinguishers, smoke detectors, emergency lamps, a light generator, equipped kits and medical supplies necessary to provide first aid. Additionally, they carry out three drills a year.

Casa del Jardín has accessible, clean, and safe water for children to drink. Director Armando is responsible for taking care of maintenance issues to meet the preventive and corrective needs of the facilities through the preparation of reports. He is also responsible for checking the pressure of the pressure gauge of fire extinguishers and smoke detectors each month. They have a volunteer who is a certified electrician who supports everything related to electrical installations and they have a light generator in case the electricity is out. The exterior of the facility is well lit. Currently, every bathroom and room has its lights working and in good condition. They have a safe drainage system that does not contaminate drinking water. The faucet sinks and shower heads in the bedroom bathrooms are in good condition. All staff and children have been made aware of the care of drinking water and its relationship with health.

- ☐ Implement an annual maintenance plan for all areas that make up the home (kitchen, living room, bedrooms, bathrooms, patio, etc.)



Right to Quality Education

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

The children who live in Casa del Jardín take their classes inside the home. They have a multigrade teacher certified by the United Nations that teaches them. The teacher supports children at the elementary and secondary levels. They also have a volunteer that supports the girls that take high school classes online. The Casa del Jardín school is incorporated under an agreement with Highland College, who issues ballots and certificates in accordance with the regulations of the Ministry of Public Education (SEP).

At Casa del Jardín, the extraordinary teacher provides each of the children with personalized counseling to achieve their objectives, educational goals, and helps them catch up when they are behind in school. Every two months, the children's grades are reviewed by the teacher, who, upon detecting a risky situation in the grades, immediately informs the principal and provides the necessary support to the child in need. When the children arrive at home, they are evaluated to measure their level of educational delay. A plan is then developed to support the child to achieve the expected objectives. If a severe delay is found, children are taken to Children's Hospital of California to be treated by a specialist. Inside the home, children are encouraged to read and they have a shelf with a wide variety of books that are accessible for whenever children would like to read them. They have various educational and recreational materials. Casa del Jardín offers young people the opportunity to study a university career and cover some of their expenses. They also have computer equipment so that children can carry out their homework.

☐ Continue monitoring housing for young people after completing their time in the home.



Right to Equal Opportunities

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

At Casa del Jardín, they make sure that all children have the same opportunities. From the time they enter the home, they give them all the services that are provided to give them the opportunity to live in a loving and equal environment. That's why all children have space available to store their clothes and personal items inside their bedrooms. In addition, all children have the opportunity to develop through going to school, having books, educational and recreational materials, personalized counseling, psychological and psychiatric care, extracurricular activities, as well as specialized professional support as needed. Currently, children participate in dance, ballet, guitar, singing, and computer classes.

Regarding plans for the transition to adulthood, the psychologist is frequently working with adolescents, training them to obtain skills and tools that are useful for their lives. At Casa del Jardín, all those who work there show a lot of respect to children and classmates. They try to be an example of good behavior with children, they always look very well groomed, balanced, and presentable to children. Inside this house, they have resources and teaching materials that have been donated by the United Nations Organization, allowing for necessary tools to strengthen the knowledge and skills of the children who live there.

- ☐ Continue with psychological therapy support for children as they have been doing.



Right to Guidance

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Casa del Jardín stands out for its professionalism, ethics, organization, planning and great work, which is why they have guidelines, policies, and written evidence/ This makes it possible to make all the processes that are carried out there visible. They have several policies, including those related to children's sexual behavior, as well as a series of simple and clear rules that are communicated to children so that they can understand expectations. They have a job description for when they are looking for new caregivers, this helps to determine if they are quality mentors.

Caregivers show respectful behavior both with children and with their co-workers. They are constantly trained in how to address sexual behavior, what is the protocol to follow, how to model, teach and reinforce good behavior in children. Children are educated to take care of their bodies and set limits. Children receive psychological care on a weekly basis. With regard to adolescents, they have received training from experts to strengthen education related to responsible sexual behavior. It also gives them the opportunity to expand their personal interests so that they are prepared for their future. To this end, they have been brought to professionals to talk to them about the different professions in which they are interested, such as a writer who came to the home to discuss his book and answer any questions regarding literature. Adolescents are encouraged to carry out activities of daily life in which they gain knowledge and experience such as: taking a taxi, going to see the locations of the schools where they are interested in studying, allowing them to buy food, and strengthening their skills. In addition, they have the support of all the staff to communicate openly on the topics of interest they want to discuss, both in educational and personal matters.

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



Right to Be Heard and Participate in Decisions

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

At Casa del Jardín they try to encourage a family environment and to instill in children the value of trust. Fortunately, this condition has allowed children to express their needs, to be heard, and to take their opinions into account. They are also allowed to decide what activities they want to do in their spare time, as long as they respect the rules and are under the observation of the caregivers. In addition, they are considered to participate in menu planning, including support in food preparation. Children have the option of choosing the clothes they want to wear day after day taking into account the activities to be carried out, for example, if they are going to church they are motivated to wear nicer clothes, if they are going to do any outdoor activity they are motivated to put on sportswear. Another of the activities that are encouraged to participate in at Casa del Jardín is motivating children to obtain leadership roles such as being the leader of their bedroom, taking charge of an activity, etc.

All children and caregivers receive information about medical care procedures, with the intention of answering their questions, ensuring that they are calm, and to avoid a possible traumatic situation. In this home, individual development plans are implemented for each child. Each plan consists of a folder that has their entire history separated by areas such as: psychology, education, legal, medical, nutrition, among others, in order to highlight their development and monitor the various areas.

☐ Continue with the activities they have been doing excellently in this category.



Right to Be Prepared for Citizenship

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

From the moment the children enter Casa del Jardín, efforts are made to have the DIF provide them with the corresponding forms that have the most complete documentation possible. If a Birth Certificate is needed, they do everything possible to obtain it so that each child has this document that gives them their identity and allows them to continue their studies and be supported in their rights. Each of the children is assigned responsibilities to fulfill in the home according to their age. The children of Casa del Jardín have the opportunity to learn about ethics and the governance process, either from experts who come to the home to give a talk or through school classes. On one occasion they had a very beautiful activity in which they recreated a democratic process by assigning candidates, using a ballot box, creating their marketing dynamics, and holding votes. This exercise allowed the children to be part of a whole democratic process created by them and motivated by the teacher in charge.

Children have participated in community activities by donating some of their toys at Christmas. They also support the directors in preparing pantries to donate to other people and recently, the girls participated in a choral event in which they shared their beautiful voices with other children in the city to show their talent to the Tijuana community. With respect to adolescents over 15 years of age, all staff, especially the directors, coordinator, psychologist, and teacher, act as mentors who teach them skills for daily living. Caregivers are continuously trained in ways to help children be responsible and to put this value into practice. In this house, national holidays are celebrated, such as "The Day of the Mexican Flag", the "Independence of Mexico", "Christmas" and other festivities in which they carry out civic activities such as honoring the flag and shouting for independence. The directors always share important events with the children to keep them informed and up to date with the news of the home.

☐ Continue with the good practices they carry out.



Right to Safe from Abuse & Neglect

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Casa del Jardín is a home in which they maintain a high level of security due to the characteristics of the town they are in. They have external and internal cameras and always keep the front door closed, in addition, they have strict registration control for every person entering the premises. With respect to the surrounding community, they feel in a safe environment. According to government guidelines, inside the home they have bedrooms separated by age and gender, as well as private bathrooms so that children can bathe, dress, and go to the bathroom.

This home is distinguished by its great sense of responsibility with the care of children, staff, and volunteers. This is why each of the children has psychological evaluations at the entrance to work on their traumas. Initially, these evaluations are done by the DIF and then the home psychologist performs a second evaluation. They promote strict monitoring of the policies they implement there, such as: the child protection policy that ensures that children will not be physically, sexually, verbally, emotionally or psychologically abused by caregivers or other personnel. This is a policy to prevent child exploitation and that prohibits time alone between a child and an adult. In addition, their regulations include educating children on the subject of abuse and methods for reporting it. The people who make up the management team are certified specialists in issues of abuse, exploitation, and trafficking, so they are the first to provide all the attention and care to the children in their care. Caregivers have received training in positive discipline techniques, alternatives to corporal punishment, and how to identify, prevent, and avoid abuse. When the children leave the home, they are always accompanied by a caregiver.

☐ Maintain the high level of work they do in this category.



Right to Dignity and Freedom

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Good treatment and the opportunity to live in a safe environment are characteristics that identify Casa de Jardín, because they always try to provide children with everything they need to strengthen their personality and show them how important they are to the team. This is why all children have access to their own bed, sheets, blankets, and suitable bedspreads, which are washed very frequently. In addition, each child has sufficient underwear and clothing, as well as their own toothbrush and clean towel. Children are taught to take care of themselves and to be self-sufficient to carry out personal activities for themselves within their maturity level. Children bathe daily, and there are those who bathe twice a day because of the amount they sweat according to their stage of development.

The home has a space intended as an outdoor play area, which is safe and suitable for children of all ages. They also have toys and materials appropriate for the children's age, which are available once they are finished with their scheduled activities. At Casa del Jardín they have a behavior modification program in which children are invited to complete the assigned tasks and have the opportunity to go to the "Little Shop" and they can exchange their points for toys, candies, or other supplies. This program has been of great benefit to the children in the home. Children have the opportunity to do some additional activities to earn a privilege.

- ☐ Maintain a high level of commitment to the activities they carry out in this area to continue offering maximum well-being to children.



Right to Spiritual Development

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

Spiritual development is one of the processes that are promoted within Casa del Jardín, for which they motivate children to be part of a spiritual community. The children attend the Christian church service every Sunday and each of them participates in prayers inside the home. They have their own personal bible, as well as other books and religious materials that are accessible and available for when they would like to read them. Without a doubt, the directors of this home are a great example for children and staff, because, in each of their actions, they show love and fidelity to God through hard work, commitment, love, and transparency.

All children have the opportunity to put their spiritual learning into practice. For example, before eating they hold hands and say their prayer of thanks. Among the children they coordinate to decide the one who gets to say the prayer. They are given the opportunity to choose whether or not they participate in any spiritual activity that takes place.

- ☐ Continue with spiritual development as has been done.



Financial Standard

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

The great financial work carried out by the director of Casa del Jardín adds great value. She is responsible for organizing and maintaining the transparency processes of the household and keeps all the records of income and expenses. They have all the information both printed in very well organized folders and digitally. At Casa del Jardín, the records generated by the director are sent to the external accountant of the Moreno Ibarra firm to carry out the corresponding conciliations, annual returns in accordance with Mexican laws, transparency reports and audits. It is worth mentioning that all this information is available for review at any time you deem appropriate. All the receipts generated during the month are saved and a profit and loss statement is created on a monthly basis, from which statements can be generated monthly or annually. In advance, they have all the corresponding information through internal presentations that make it possible to make visible the transparency and the results that have been achieved. Without a doubt, this home has very good financial process practices that allow them to be transparent at all times.

At Casa del Jardín they have a monthly budget that is received from the same organization that is in the United States. Through established guidelines, controls exist and are being followed to minimize opportunities for misuse of funds, since they have items that are labeled for the corresponding expenses. Casa del Jardín is an authorized donee, allowing for an opportunity for more donors to support the cause. All licenses are up to date and at the beginning of the year in The Official Gazette of the Federation it was announced that they have their permission as a grantee in force, which means that they are doing their reports very well and that they comply in a timely manner with all the requirements and processes requested.

☐ Continue with the great transparency work they have been doing in this category.



Governance and Human Resource Standard

SURVIVING

SUSTAINING

THRIVING

The human resources and processes sought to continuously improve have been one of the achievements that the director of Casa del Jardín has been working on little by little. This is because she believes that caring for staff and offering them the benefits of the Act helps them to dignify and value their work. That is why the director has generated various alternatives to support the personal and professional development of each of the caregivers. Each of the caregivers is given a document that details their conditions of employment and description of the work to be performed. Each caregiver has a very complete and up-to-date file that includes their employment contract, letter of no criminal record and up-to-date proof of address, as well as personal documents, reports for psychological care, certifications, courses, and other information. Personalized attention is provided through meetings with caregivers, since they are often held together to discuss issues of concern and improve processes. All caregivers have had training on attachment, child development, the characteristics and values of a family, as well as the creation of a family in a children’s home environment. They have also received medical and hygiene training on caring for a sick child including first aid and CPR.

In terms of governance, Casa del Jardín has a constitutive act in which, within its statutes, it is stipulated that the property and the modifications are secured so that they cannot be sold for its own benefit. However, they are currently in litigation over this space, which had previously been donated. Casa Hogar has two boards of directors, one in the United States and the other in Tijuana, which meet at least twice a year. They have an organization chart, which works as a tool for delegating activities. This home is currently in the process of renewing its license by the DIF.

- ☐ Follow the processes for obtaining license renewal.



Current Improvement Partners



Espere

Espere Community Counseling is a center that delivers psychological therapy services to kids, adults, and survivors of trauma. They strive to increase awareness and access to mental health services so people learn there is a name for their pain, they are not alone, and they can get better.

Espere partners with ACHF in Baja California to provide caregiver support through trainings, workshops, and roundtables” on ways to support the mental health and wellbeing for the children in their care as well as their own self-care. Additionally, they offer support to therapists working in our partner orphanages.

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

