



## July 15, 2021 Report from Oblate Youth Ministry in Tijuana.

You might remember the Oblates of Mary Immaculate in Tijuana run an inclusive school. Recently



Fr. Lucio OMI, administrator of the school, shown with students and teachers during exercise time.

our teachers wanted to reach out to the children in the community with special needs, but who are unable to attend our school for a variety of reasons; behavioral problems, physical disabilities or because the children are unable to use the toilet. A decision was made to send teachers out to the community to help these children in their homes. This new program has been a profound blessing for these families. The goal is for the teaches to help the children

develop new skills so that they may attend our school in the future.

Our little friend Oscar, who is 14 years old, was one of the first to receive help from this program. He does not walk, and he clings to his mother. He is agitated often, taxing his mother and siblings. The teachers have been able to work with him to where now he can stay alone for longer periods of time, is willing to walk some, and has more focus. The next goal is to get him to where he can say a few words and get out of diapers. It is a slow journey, but each step makes a big difference in his life and that of his family.



Batman Oscar, Adriana (School Coordinator), Henry (Seminarian), Laura (Teacher)

Oscar's mother, who had been resigned to his condition, is now enthused by his progress. The hardest thing for her to accept is to stop treating him like a baby and speak to him like an adult. She has always treated him like a vulnerable person, but the therapist explained that if she treats him like that, he will develop accordingly. Changing the manner she talks to her own son is hard, but she is willing to follow instructions to help Oscar as fast as possible. The physical therapist has instructed her to use language more whenever she interacts with him, so that he will start learning to listen and eventually communicate.



Oscar and his new friend Kevin being transported with their families for therapy.

Our newest friend is Alma, and she is a 46-year-old mother. She needs to have her appendix removed. She has 3 daughters and 2 sons, but they do not seem understand or care. The oldest daughter is 17 and is already a mother of 3. When Alma called her oldest son, age 24, to talk to him about the possible surgery, he said he does have money to help. Alma said she had called just to make a mother-son blessing in case something happened during the surgery. The youngest daughter is Jasmin, age 14. We eventually learned that Jasmin had been raped at age 12 when her mother left her alone with a relative, and she has not been the same person since. She blames her mother. One time Alma was on the floor in pain and the children present just said that if she dies, she better leave enough money for a funeral. She never felt so sad or lonely.



Alma came to the church in a lot of pain asking for help. When we took her to the hospital the doctor said she needed the surgery immediately. We ended up going to the hospital 7 times in two weeks for pain and attempts to get her in for surgery. We donated blood, got the pre-surgery tests done, and arranged the documents she will need. Alma does not know how to read or write. We were able to navigate the system to where the surgery is going to be completely free for her.

Alma has had a change of heart. She has been amazed at the church's response. The fact that we would take her to the hospital at 5 AM, that we would wait there for hours, that we would donate blood, and that we would shepherd her through the process to where it would not cost her anything. Now she believes that people do care, and she does not feel so lonely. She feels her prayers have been answered. Her attitude toward her family has also been more understanding and forgiving. She vows to be a better mom and Christian, and adds, if God gives her the chance. She also says she is going to start with her own life and become a better role model.



Henry, our priest in the making, donating blood.



Alex Hernández Leal graduated last December with a degree in psychology thanks to his donor was Michal Brennan. Alex is already providing client sessions in the community.

We hope you received our invitation to attend the graduation and mass of our upcoming June graduates via Zoom. It is Saturday, July 24<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 PM PST.

