

March Bulletin Friends of the Deaf

We have had a fantastic start to the 2011 school year here at LAVOSI! Monsignor Joseph Catrambone, executive director of the Guatemalan and El Salvador Children's Mission Fund and member of the LAVOSI Board of Directors, was with us to help get our new home in order. As usual, he brought many gifts for the children and supplies for the school. He also provided the morning snacks during his stay and donated the money to provide the morning snacks for our students for the next three months! He is currently organizing a visit for part of the LAVOSI staff to visit Gallaudet University in Washington, D.C. I will report more on this exciting trip in the April newsletter.



Thanks to a grant from the Forix Foundation (www.forixfoundation.org), we have two new teachers, Vicky and Nelson, who are doing a wonderful job. Vicky's pre-elementary class has four students and Nelson's elementary class has fourteen students. This is tremendous growth from the two students we had when we opened our doors for the first time in January last year!



We are fortunate to still have on our permanent staff as volunteers: Álvaro Ernesto (Guatemalan Sign Language Instructor), his father Álvaro (Director of Education) and Melvyn Mejia (Coordinator of Activities). I say "fortunate" as I do not know how long they can continue to work for no pay!



Therefore my main fundraising goal this year is to 1) increase our certified teaching staff from two to three and 2) convert our permanent staff from volunteer status to paid status. This will require

raising \$24,000 (6 x \$4,000). Just think, for only \$4,000 per staff member per year, LAVOSI will be in a great position to continue providing a quality education to our deaf students.

Volunteers: LAVOSI continues to be blessed with volunteers that share their time and talents with our staff and students. We recently had Carolyn with us for two weeks to help us start the new school year and still have Jackie helping out until she returns home in April. Carolyn and Jackie spend their time helping our students one-on-one with their class work. This is very important as our children do not have the ability to hear and the younger ones need special attention.



Donations: LAVOSI recently received generous donations from Jan McConnell, Geran, Marcelline and Billie. They brought us a wide variety of school supplies, games, art supplies and cooking supplies. The cooking supplies will help us with our plans to start the LAVOSI bakery this year. We plan to use this project as a tool to teach our students how to start and run a business. Our goal is to provide our students not only with the education but also the practical skills they need to be successful.



Also, Peter and Marlene Maclaren recently donated an audiometer and hearing aids to LAVOSI. Their very generous donation will enable us to begin another project on the drawing board: The LAVOSI hearing clinic! This project will enable us to do periodic testing of our student's hearing right here at our facility!



Thank you for your continued support! Chris www.friendsofthedeaf.org