



Merry Christmas from Chicuchas Wasi and Best Wishes for 2007

This has been a wonderfully surprising year for those of us at Chicuchas Wasi. Last year we were in an economic crisis and confronted with closing our school in Cusco after 19 years of extraordinary accomplishments. Just when we accepted the fact that these difficult global times have made it impossible to keep our Peru project funded, we were prepared to close our doors when we received your generous donations --- giving us another year to operate and hope for the future. We moved to a new location in Cusco and are in high gear today as the 2006 Peruvian academic school year nears the end.

Please put a donation into the Chicuchas Wasi stocking. We are still enthusiastically doing the work we started 19 years ago --- with outstanding results.

The Chicuchas Wasi Class of 2006 is made up of 21 little girls, ages 3-5 years. 9 of these girls will be sitting for the entry test required to begin Public school next year; the remainder of the class will be ready next year. Our students consistently do well on these exams, placing in the top 10% of all students be tested. Our girls have come far in being able to take this test in Spanish, as their dialect is Quechua. We attribute Chicuchas Wasi's success to Ruth Uribe, our dedicated Director/Educator, who has a special talent for helping these families and their daughters succeed. We are also thankful for Erik Vera, Ruth's husband and our Chicuchas Wasi pro-bono lawyer. Erik is an exceptional counselor and he assists our students by encouraging the legal system to help them and their voiceless families.

These little girls reveal the hard reality and difficult-to-hear stories of the poor and frustrated. A few of these stories follow. Please remember that we are intervening and teaching better ways of coping --- thus changing the behavior of all involved.

---- Nataly is the result of a violation. Abandoned by the father, her mother is unable to financially provide for her. Because of resentment, Nataly has been beaten by her mother. When Ruth discovered bruises all over Nataly's body she spoke sternly to the mother, forbidding any more beatings. The bruises continued, and the abuse became even worse, resulting in an attempt to drown the child. When confronted again, the mother wanted to give Nataly away.

Ruth went to the police and when threatened with jail, the mother controlled her behavior. Our "School for Parents" has helped this mother and others find new solutions to hopelessness and despair. Little by little, Nataly's mother has become a

better, calmer parent. Erik also used the legal process to bring the father forward, winning a court decision that mandated that the father assume financial responsibility for Nataly.

---- Another case is Fatima. Her mother, married with one child, was raped by an unknown man. Her husband abandoned her when he found out she was pregnant from the rape, and Fatima's mother has been unable to provide for herself and her children ever since. Erik is counseling the husband about being a responsible father for his own daughter and Fatima. This counseling is still going on and good progress has been made. Chicuchas Wasi is currently providing nutritional assistance to this family and the husband is close to a solution that will benefit the children.

Look at our enclosed photo page showing our little girls today - Chicuchas Wasi's Class of 2006!

---- Yoshio has parents but they suffer from ignorance. For some time, Yoshio has suffered from a nasty inflamed artery on her face which has gone untreated due to her mother's misunderstanding of the initial diagnosis years before. Her mother was depressed and cried constantly; she believed she could do nothing to help her child due to the family's impoverished state. Yoshio's mother replaced the absent father with a new man, and due to fear and ignorance, he became close to getting rid of her afflicted children.

Yoshio's mother and boyfriend confided in Ruth that they had thoughts of killing the children and then committing suicide, because they believed they would contract something terrible. Ruth calmed them and took Yoshio to a medical specialist, who explained that a simple cream would solve this problem for Yoshio and all the children. With Ruth's help, and a little education, the family came to understand that the situation was not as grave as they had believed.

---- Almendra is the result of a violation - of her mother by a 14 year old brother. Almendra's mother now wants nothing to do with her daughter. The grandmother cares for Almendra while constantly speaking ill of her and showering roses on the offending son - disbelieving entirely that he violated his sister and that he is Almendra's father. The sad and difficult situation is further complicated by the fact that the son provides the only financial support for his mother.

As these stories show, many Quechua children and families have problems as they relate to the poor and uneducated Andean people. Chicuchas Wasi's efforts have proven successful and the changes we see in the children and their parents are our rewards. These little girls will grow up to become strong women with more choices than were available to their mothers and grandmothers before them. Chicuchas Wasi girls will be better mothers to their children thanks to you and your loyal support all these 19 years.

We appreciate your financial generosity this year, and in years past.

Blessings from all of us to all of you.

In California:

Rae Lewis (Pieraccini)
Karen Amoroso
Mary Salfi
Terry McDonald

In Peru:

Ruth Uribe
Erik Vera
Gloria Socorro - teacher
Danisa Corimanya - assistant



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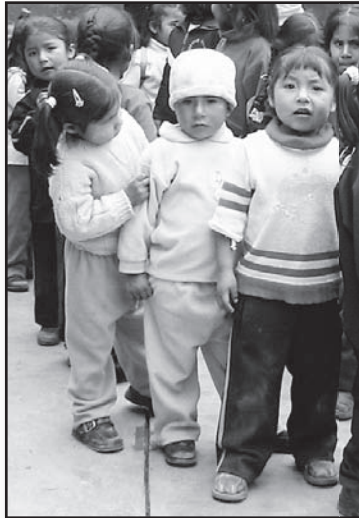
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Inside:

*News of Chicuchas Wasi
girls and our school
in Cusco, Peru!*

Chicuchas Wasi
THE CHILDRENS PROJECT
ALTERNATIVE GIRLS SCHOOL

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Merry Christmas
from Chicuchas Wasi!

