

## DECEMBER 2010 news bulletin



**RED VIVA  
PARAGUAY**  
*juntos por la niñez*

How many times don't we, as adults or children, make plans and projects that we intend to accomplish... then reality hits and things end differently than expected. Early on comes life's lesson that we can not have ever everything that we want, and that things will not always be as we thought they would. Perhaps simply because it may not have been "good" for us, or there might be something better, no matter how "spectacular" our idea may seem.

God is our Father, it's He who gives us projects and makes them reality. This is why we can leave them fully in His Hands, as Proverbs 16 and Psalms 138:7-8 well express. He is concerned about the person, not the project as such. Only God can receive and transform the life of a boy or girl, who are suffering any type of abuse. His heart is broken for them, and wants to use us in the process of protecting them to show His Love. We witness this precious process in the life of Viva Network Paraguay, among the Christians and churches uniting in favor of children at risk.

Anja Goertzen  
President of Viva Network Paraguay

### PRAYING WITH OPEN EYES

"Praying with Open Eyes" took place 7<sup>th</sup> of December, in the Concordia Mennonite Brethren Church, hosting this month's prayer meeting for local Christian leaders. It was a precious time of faith being strengthened by the testimonies of what God is doing through the different ministries that work on behalf of children at risk. It also was an opportunity to renew strength and encouragement by sharing work experiences and challenges in the service of the Lord. Three local churches were represented, as well as one of the network member organizations and several staff from Viva Network Paraguay. Each spoke a bit about what their current work and vision is for children. They also shared their prayer requests, one being "strength and courage for in the Children's Home, to face the holiday celebrations usually followed by confusion and deep feelings causing a lot of stress among the children." Another prayer request expressed was for the challenges that will come in the new year, and the need for God's guidance in all plans and activities.

The coordinator of Viva Christmas Parties took the opportunity to comment more about the events that were to be held for children in the community a few days later, and churches were encouraged to support the network event in whatever ways they could. The PROTECT team explained more about the work that has been developing in the area of Child Protection. Also the Coordinator of Prayer in Viva Network Paraguay, directed the general public to commit themselves to pray for children, explained several strategies that Viva has in this area, such as World Weekend of Prayer, the 1M Campaign (1 million prayers for children) and Praying with Open Eyes encounters. You can also be a part of these initiatives; especially Pastors and Leaders of churches and ministries working on behalf of children at risk are invited to join in "Praying with Open Eyes", meeting once a month to exchange experiences and ideas to support one another in prayer.



### VIVA CHRISTMAS 2010



Once again, this year's holiday parties were celebrated in very colorful style. The 2010 version of Viva Christmas Parties in Paraguay was organized by the network member organizations and their surrounding churches. As in 2009, the celebrations were held in the Mburicao Park and the Ko'ēju Feeding Centre in the Botanic Port neighborhood, on Friday 17<sup>th</sup> and Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> of December. Although the number of children that participated was less than the expected 2000, the main objectives were reached:

- To create an opportunity of celebration in family, children together with their parents or caretakers, promoting united family values and the true message of Christmas.
- To have a good time in a community location, together with all the children, with gifts and a small meal to reward their participation, and with fun activities for them to enjoy with their parents connecting with volunteers from the local churches.
- To include in a special way those children that are frequently left aside (those living with HIV or with disabilities), through personal invitation, provision of transportation, inclusive activities and volunteers dedicated to receiving them.
- To raise the participation of children within the ministries, in the development of community parties, in making Christmas Cards for the children in their community, and by helping wrapping the "Christmas Kits" in which their cards would be included.
- To give teens beneficiaries of the ministries leading roles in the parties, as volunteers in the activities of the events.





The boys, girls and their parents were able to have a lot of fun with the prepared games; they also received a special message about God's love, food and a gift to take home. Many comments were shared by the participants, for instance a boy of about 9 years of age, having opened his Christmas Kit, took out a toothbrush and happily exclaimed "This is what I needed!". A mother expressed to one of the staff, "Thank you, because you give us a chance to play with our children". What beautiful memories will be treasured by this mother and her son! Another aspect that should be highlighted, is the valuable collaborative efforts of the volunteers, many of which are youth but also younger kids and adults that didn't hesitate to invest their energy to help create a real party. Their willingness to work, and their tenderness and care shown to each child could not be unseen. We want to congratulate and thank each and every one of them. God will bless each richly! Last but not least, the party scene at Mburicao Park was left very clean at the end of the activity: a great testimony for the entire community.

### TRAINING SEMINAR, 4/14 WINDOW

The Association of Nations in America for Christ (ANAC) held a training seminar on the 4/14 Window, under the theme "Embrace the Future". Facing the challenges of our children with a focus "How to gain, transform, and protect our children". The event took place from 9<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> of December in the Centre of Life Church in Lambaré. It offered a variety of workshops, with excellent speakers such as Dr. Antonio Montiel, Gerd Dück, Pastor Diego Yang, Pastor Gastón Guzmán, and other international guests.

Viva Network Paraguay participated in organizing workshops under the topic "Child Protection", networking different leading national organizations and professionals to present different aspects in child abuse prevention and attention. One, for example, was led by the psychologist Patricia Barbosa of Decisions and an interdisciplinary team. During the workshop, some of the activities of PROTECT modules were presented, such as "The Seven Biblical Principles", "Supporting Pastor Armenio" allowing participants to offer and work through possible answers for abuse prevention, simulating different situations that Christian Institutions face. Following each workshop a representative was selected to give a short summary to the general assembly, and together the pastors present and audience prayed for each speaker blessing their lives.

### "ENTANGLING OURSELVES" (ie from spanish, en-networking-ourselves)

The third "Entangling Ourselves" event was held on Saturday, 6<sup>th</sup> of November in the FAHCE (Evangelical University) with about a 100 people, who came with a lot of enthusiasm to share experiences and receive valuable training to enrich the work with children in their organizations. After the welcome given by Anja Goertzen, President of Viva Network Paraguay, the participants were guided in prayer by Pastor Marcos Vergara, as he spoke on the importance of prayer and our responsibility as partners in extending God's Kingdom defending those who cannot defend themselves. He invited all to join strengths and efforts, in an organized prayer strategy on a national and international level through Viva Together For Children, participating in existing opportunities such as the World Weekend of Prayer or 1 Million Prayers for Children Campaign. They then divided in small groups, introducing themselves and their ministries, praying for children with emphasis in various aspects of child protection, such as the inclusion of children who are frequently left aside (disabilities, HIV AIDS, etc), their personal security, and so on.



A brief presentation was given, explaining the Mission and Vision of Viva Network, and how to be a part of that vision; a video of the Viva Christmas Parties 2009 and its impact was shown, introducing the network's intention of repeating the celebrations again in their community in 2010, and challenging participants to gather with other Christians in their community to do the same. During the projects presentation, the coordination team of Protege (protect) Program led the audience in an introductory game called "The smiles thief", that marked the importance of giving protection to children, supporting the idea that some are more vulnerable than others (for instance those with physical disabilities). Based on this activity, the facilitators of Protect were able to give a short explanation on how the Program works to build the capacity to protect children in a Christian organization, training leaders to construct and implement a Child Protection Policy effectively, reaching the children in and around their ministry.

The participants were then able to choose from two workshops offered. A good number participated of the "Recreation and Well-treatment" given under Mabel's guidance, representative of the organization CLAVES Uruguay, offering several specialized courses for children's work. Using songs, dances and games, the practical tools of how to promote recreation and well-treatment with children were developed, with much animated participation from those attending the workshop.

The other workshop, "Protection Alternatives" was given by the Director of the Adoptions Center (of the National Department of Children and Adolescents), who explained the functions of the Center in the adoption process, and specifically in the alternatives of protection being Family Foster Care, Small Home Fostering and Adoption itself. The participants manifested their concerns on legal requirements and the difficulties of the adoption process, to which the facilitating team responded and offered advice and further explanation. Much was left for further discussion, and the representatives of the Adoption Center assured their personal commitment to continue answering questions and applications that individuals and organizations might present to the Center. In the same way, the organizations for children represented in the workshop expressed their desire to be a part in helping the Center in whatever way possible.

## PROTECT PROGRAM



"Sorry for the Inconvenience! We're building a new policy to protect boys and girls, children and teenagers". This phrase expresses what the 18 organizations have been doing in this stage of the Protect Program. We're working on "In whose hands?": the selection of volunteers and staff; "What resources to we have?": internal and external resources to attend to child abuse situations, tackling the issue effectively in each organization and as a protective network. The monitoring phase, between workshops was focused on supervising the tasks given in the first and second workshops, grouping similar ministry types together in work sessions at the office of Viva Network or at locations of the participating organizations.

Workshop number 3, "The Process", was held Saturday the 20<sup>th</sup> of November from 8 am to 3:30pm, in the auditorium of one of the network members "Dulce Refugio" (Sweet Refuge, for children living/affected with HIV) also participating in the program. All 18 organizations were represented by their leaders or delegates that day. Together with the much appreciated facilitators, we were a ble to reflect on the spiritual abuse issue, and on the importance of reporting and denouncing abuse from the biblical perspective, using examples and cases to know what to do in such situations. In the legal field, in how to make a legal report to authorities, we received the support of a lawyer and forensic psychologist, who gave us direction on how to build the critical route of reporting and protection according to our legal system, in an abuse case. Many questions and issues where brought forward during this time, from the participants. Finally, and after a good midday meal and time of exchanging experiences, a few testimonies were offered of the implimentation of these new tools in their ministry context.



Challenges? Besides reproducing the workshop 3 in their own organizations under the leadership of each ministry, more than ever the challenge is to BUILD the protection policy, especially the Behaviour Code according to each programatic and physical reality, and in the formation of Protection Committees in each organization, whose members will participate in the 4<sup>th</sup> and last workshop that will be held on saturday, 19<sup>th</sup> of February 2011. MEANWHILE... we have arranged, for December and February, small workgroups according to ministry type: homes, schools, feeding centers and churches, with whom we will work on clarifying doubts and giving guidance in the construction process. All this, ofcourse, will take place alongside a delicious "tereré" (paraguayan social green tea) which cannot be missing at this time of year, much less for any building project!

## FINAL WORDS

The office of Viva Network Paraguay will remain closed for the holidays, from December 24<sup>th</sup> until January 16<sup>th</sup>. Thankyou so much to all the people who have contributed to the network during this past year, whether with prayer support, ideas, promotion, donations of any kind, volunteering or in any other way. From all our heart we wish you a Merry Christmas and a 2011 full of blessings!

## FOR MORE INFORMATION:

[www.redvivaparaguay.org](http://www.redvivaparaguay.org)  
[www.latinamerica.viva.org](http://www.latinamerica.viva.org)