

ACES NEWSLETTER MAY 2017



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**Bron
returns safely
from her trip to
new ACES
support centre
in El Salvador.**

Anthony writes: For the last 20 years ACES (Aid for Children of El Salvador) has been raising money, all of which (less minimal expenses, has been sent to El Salvador to support the work of AMOR (Asociacion Monsenor Romero), an institution staffed entirely by Salvadorans and working for destitute and homeless children in San Salvador (the capital). AMOR, which has no source of income other than what ACES has been able to send, has been both a refuge for vulnerable girls (Casa Amanda) and a day centre for both boys and girls. Some 2000 children have been offered many forms of help for their protection, their health and their education, as well as, (and most importantly) loving care and attention from welcoming staff. But the needs of parents and families can be as pressing as those of the children. Accordingly AMOR is now closing the existing facilities (which as Bron describes below has become unsafe to continue under present circumstances) and opening a new bureau of support offering professional help in the form of legal and psychological advice to individuals and support to families through a social worker. It will remain a welcoming and caring place to which families and their children - many of them already well known to the Centre - can come for help with the emotional and behavioural problems caused by poverty and abuse in this, arguably the most violent, country in Latin America. It will do all it can to meet the urgent needs of these vulnerable families. But, as before, it will have to rely on ACES for its income - the country is too poor to have its own charitable resources. We at ACES will continue to bring these acute needs to the attention of our friends and all others to whom we can take this message, so as to provide AMOR with the income without which it will be unable to continue its work. There is nothing else like it in El Salvador; so the protection and welfare of all of these desperately vulnerable children and families depends on us. Please support us in this vital task.

San Salvador Diary March 2017

Well, my 31st trip to El Salvador, despite having said after last time. "No more!" (That reappearing opera singer has nothing on me.) I arrived exhausted, minus my case, to find the airport vastly expanded and opulent. Goodness knows, why certainly not for tourists. I haven't seen a foreign face since I have arrived. Just the usual beggars. It epitomises the great division between rich and poor.

Here it is high summer, very hot. but cloudy, so I palely sweat. Climate change persists, most rarely rain fell heavily last night.

Most things don't change, the bed shook with two severe earth tremors.

My first day, Ceci & Gabi, (ex staff) got time off to join Coralia, the directora, and Marie, the cook, and I for lunch at Casa Amanda, which we all contributed to. The meal echoed with memories and laughter and sadness too at the end of twenty years of care and effort.

Ceci works in the local prison teaching young offenders gang members who want to rehabilitate and learn to read and write. So she was delighted with all the pencils that I brought. The teenagers readily swapped lunch, for a pencil even though there is not much food there.

The lunchtime conversation was mostly about deaths and violence. Megicanos, where the centre and Casa Amanda are and the staff all live there is a "Zona Rojo" (Red Zone) very dangerous. Life revolves around the tales of the latest victims. Three people who were just putting out their rubbish were killed. Yesterday twenty six people were killed apart from the usual horrific traffic accidents.



Bron outside Casa Amanda

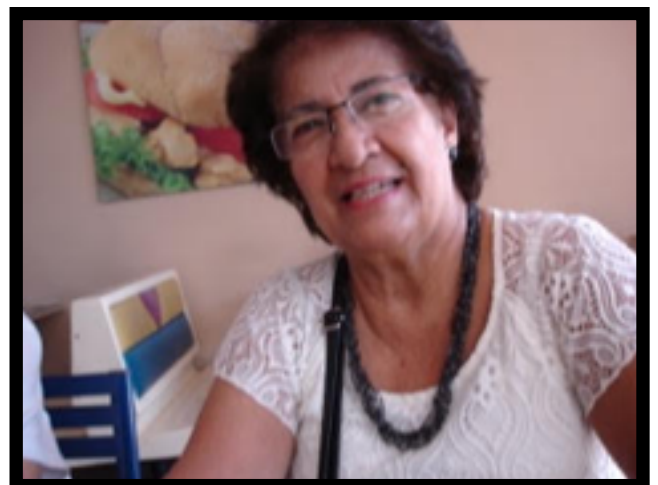
To the change the metaphor the support centre will be an oasis in the desert.

Coralia has already made contact with the two local schools who will provide the main source of referrals of children in need and of course we will continue to help a lot of our old children. We will give them the social, psychological and legal help necessary .

Banks refuse mortgages and loans to anybody in such areas, which makes the sale of the centre harder of course. Cora and Marie have slogged away clearing the centre. All the furniture and contents have been given to the local poor, plenty of them.

Women called today to gratefully carry away chairs and a plant. It was overwhelmingly sad to view the empty rooms and playground. Imagining the children who had filled them over the years.

BUT LIKE A PHOENIX OUR NEW PROJECT WILL ARISE.



Norma the centre's psychologist

The psychological help is Norma who will deal either with individuals or with groups of seven. Kiddies . Those who have been sexually abused will be referred to one of her colleagues in the centre she works in. Of course mothers, mainly mothers, grandmothers and aunts, will be helped while the children are seen by Norma. To date no other institution provides such needed assistance.

All the information will be made readily available to the mums and the availability of social care and where to find us will quickly circulate in the neighbourhood and of course we already have many contacts there. Also contact will be made with an organisation that already helps prostitutes and their children.

Meanwhile Coralia, the centre's director remains in contact with all the most needful of our children, who will form the nucleus of the group. When the children come they will given a meal and of course snacks during the day. A qualified and experienced lawyer will be available and much needed because recently El Salvador has enacted so many laws re abuse that legal help is essential. Typically for every one social worker there are four lawyers. THE THREE HUGE AREAS of Megicanos, Apopa and Ciudad Delgado have ONLY ONE SOCIAL WORKER BETWEEN THEM. If our lawyer encounters any evidence of abuse she will take it straight to the Fiscal.



Coralia & Ana Maria our lawyer.



Luis, an orphan, we are supporting in his bachelata has done extremely well. Luis is top of the class each term, has excellent reports and is determined to reach his goal of becoming an electrical engineer. He wants to study further in university. and has already been offered one (beca) or scholarship.

El Salvador is very affected by Trump, as it is dependent economically on the money sent back by immigrant workers over there to their families at home. Many of them, of course, are illegal.

Luis our Star Pupil! On the road to success

Today we visited our most desperate case to offer continued help. Ruth will know these kids. It was pretty distressing because the children certainly shouldn't be in their home. They are in a situation where physically, sexually and emotionally they should not be. But despite Coralia having been to the authorities about it nothing has been done, because the criteria is if the children are with their family that means they are OK. At least it's comforting to know that we are still in touch with them.

I didn't realise until this time that there is no fostering programme in El Salvador, and Cora & I discussed the possibility of starting up a very small one with these actual children.

Post Script

March 24th 2017, the 37th anniversary of the assassination of Monseigneur Oscar Romero. THE MASS AT SAN SALVADOR AND THE CONCERT IN THE CRYPT FOLLOWING WERE FULL OF HOPE AND JOY - LET LIFE FOR THIS SUFFERING COUNTRY BE SO. Bron.

Fundraising News

Pancakes for Children Across The World

The children of St Catharine's Catholic Primary School, Chipping Campden invited Bron to their pancake party for children in El Salvador and together raised £152.75.

The St Catharine's children love to hear Bron talking about the children she helps over in El Salvador.



Thank you to Father Stephen organised a second collection after Mass at Holy Redeemer for ACES raising £238

Holy Redeemer Primary School Lent Projects

All the children at Holy Redeemer School Primary have been enthusiastically

raising money for ACES this Lent. The school council organised an Easter Story Evening where everyone wore their onsie and drank hot chocolate & marshmallows. Most of the children's mothers received a unique screen printed bag for Mother's Day. Many thanks to Cheryl Crackell for artistic direction & to Amanda from Coach House Books. Year Three organised and held their own extremely popular "Bring and Buy" raising £180. Altogether the children raised raised over £629.50 Many thanks Amigos.

Future Events

Tuesday June 6th 10.30 - 12pm Coffee Morning & Sale in Moreton in Marsh WI Hall, New Street GL56.

Also look out for us at Charlton Fete 17th June 2pm

Saturday 24th June 2.30 -4.00pm Open Garden kindly offered by Lord & Lady Dear, at the Old Rectory, Church Street, Willersey WR12. Also afternoon tea.

24th June Feckenham Wake. 29th July Hay on Wye The Last Great Jumble.

Saturday 23rd September 2pm. Guided Walk & Talk with Afternoon Tea in Chipping Campden. Tickets on sale soon.