

Dear Friends –

We trust you had a safe and happy Christmas and New Year and are looking forward to what God has in store for 2009. Isn't it good to know that He is on the Throne and that His Grace and Mercy is new every morning?

First of all, I want to thank you again for your amazing support this past year. Without your love and prayers and financial support we would not have made it. But, God is good, and His people are faithful in their love for the Children of Emmanuel. Thank you, especially, to those of you who responded to our request for assistance with our utility bills. Your generosity was quite overwhelming. We received designated donations to date to **cover our heating and electricity bills for December, January, and February. Thank you!**

The Lord continually reminds me of why we are here, on this hill in Juarez, Chihuahua, Mexico. We are here because God loves children and He has entrusted 100 children to our care. Sometimes we wonder if we are really making a difference and then He is gracious enough to give us a glimpse of what He is doing.

Here is just one story:

Berenice has a single mom who was a taxi driver in the city. Berenice would drive around with her at night because her mother did not want to leave her home alone but she knew that the situation was not safe or healthy. A friend told her about us and Berenice came to live with us in 1997 and stayed for about 4 years. She was one of the first children involved in our dance ministry and had a gift for tambourine. Once she was old enough her mother took her home and we lost touch.

In December we had a little dance presentation at our Ballet Academy and I was approached afterwards by a woman and her beautiful grown up daughter. She introduced herself and asked if I remembered her. To my amazement, Berenice and her mom were standing in front of me! They had heard about the presentation from a neighbor and wanted to come say hello. Berenice and her mother proceeded to tell me about their lives now. They are doing well, Berenice graduated from high school, got married, and is pursuing an education to be an optometrist. She and her mother told me that the years she was with us are years of good memories of the love and care she received. Berenice said that it was here that God gave her a sense of purpose and determination to be someone.

As I looked around the studio at the children in our care now my prayer was that each one would have such memories and that the Lord would guard their hearts and minds and lives as they grow up so that they, too, might have a good story to tell of how the Lord brought them to Emmanuel where they learned of His great love and plan for their lives.

You are part of the story of Berenice and of all of the other children God has entrusted to our these many years. Your part is as important as that of the dorm mothers and cooks and teachers and pastors and everyone who touches their lives. Thank you and Happy New Year!

God's Richest Blessings-

Betel Lopez  
Executive Director



**Berenice (in pink) and Fellow Dancers Christmas 1999**



**Berenice and Whitney 1999**



**Berenice with us a few weeks ago**