



In February 'Children of the Sewers', produced by Desmond Wilcox, was broadcast on Carlton television. The documentary showed the inspiring work of Jaime Jaramillo with Colombian street children. Jaime set up Fundación Niños de los Andes (FNA) to give the children a home, schooling and loving care. FNA has received much of its funding from Children of the

Andes. Over two thousand viewers contacted Children of the Andes for information and to make donations. Welcome to our new supporters and thank you to all our supporters for bringing a smile to the face of Colombia's children in need. Inside you can read about the projects which your donations have funded.

Dear Friends

In March, 4 months into my job as Director, I made my first visit to Colombia on behalf of Children of the Andes.



I arrived in Bogotá to the shocking sight of children working and living on the streets.

Children as young as 6 working as car attendants, picking through piles of rubbish, or just begging on the streets. I asked myself what can Children of the Andes do to make an impact on such a widespread problem?

It was when I met the men and women who work with the children on the projects supported by Children of the Andes that I knew the answer. Amidst all the suffering they radiated an unshakeable resolve to do the best for the children. It was as if the obstacles they face - poverty, violence, natural disasters and the breakdown of state institutions - make them even more determined. Their creativity and love make our support go twice as far.

Thank you from all of us at Children at the Andes for your help this year. Without your fantastic support the smiling children you see on these pages would be telling a very different story.

Jackie Reik

Children of the Andes brings you news from Colombia and from some of the children's projects which we, with your help, support.

Life is precarious for many children in Colombia, this year more than ever with escalating violence in the countryside and severe unemployment in the cities. In January a devastating earthquake left 150,000 homeless in the region of Quindío.

Children of the Andes has launched an appeal for child victims of the earthquake. On the diary dates page you can read about the exciting events we are running to raise funds for this and other projects.

Read on for news about:

- Colombia's worst earthquake ever and what Children of the Andes is doing to help
- What is life like at Fundación Niños de los Andes?
- An English artist in Colombia...and a Colombian volunteer in England tell their stories.

...and more

Devastation in Quindío

Children of the Andes funds desperately needed day care centre. Our ongoing earthquake appeal will bring more help to the children of Quindío.



On 25th January the most severe earthquake in the history of Colombia took place. The first movement at 1.19 pm brought down many buildings in the town of Armenia and the surrounding 27 villages in the region of Quindío. The second quake, at 5.41 pm, brought down many more buildings and buried families alive. The tragedy killed 2000 people and left 150,000 homeless. Seventy four per cent of school buildings were destroyed.

Jason is a 10 year old boy who survived against all odds. At the first tremor he, his mother and two brothers rushed to the hallway of their house but the walls caved in before they could get out. His mother was killed instantly and the three brothers were trapped. Jason kept speaking to his little brothers until they died and he was buried alive for 36 hours before being rescued. Miraculously his leg, which had been crushed by a wall, did not have to be amputated. Today he is living with his father who was not at home at the time of the earthquake.

When I visited Quindío two months after the earthquake I saw for myself the devastation - rubble everywhere, the shells of buildings, houses propped up by bamboo, a crater where there had been an office block. The shelters made from black plastic sheeting will be home to many until reconstruction takes place. But that could be a year or more away.

In the village of La Tebaida children of all ages wandered around, a few playing but most of them looking bored and listless. The mothers were worried. Their children's lives were on hold and they couldn't go out to work because that would mean leaving the children alone all day.

They urgently needed a day care centre for the children and this proved an ideal project for Children of the Andes. In the last two months we have funded the construction and equipping of a building, training for five mothers to run the centre, and therapy to help the children recover from the trauma of the earthquake. Two hundred children will attend. Our ongoing earthquake appeal will bring more such projects to the people of Quindío.



Sandra, a volunteer from Colombia



'When I arrived in England four years ago, I was happy but at the same time sad because I had left behind my country and my family. I knew there was a charity in England which supported Fundación Niños de los Andes (FNA) but I did not know its name. After spending almost two years searching, one morning my husband phoned asking me to put on the fax machine and a minute later I received a newspaper article about Jaime Jaramillo with details about Children of the Andes.

Three months later I started. Since then I have found the closeness to my country very comforting. I have learned more about the difficult situation in which many Colombians are trapped and which you are not so aware of when you live in the country. I have helped to relieve some of the pain and suffering. I have met many beautiful people who are committed to our aims or who have been the beneficiaries of our work. I have learned that there are many projects apart from FNA that are supported by Children of the Andes. But the most significant thing is that I have developed a great sense of respect for all those who have helped to improve the lives of the children of my country.

I am very grateful that I was given the opportunity to be part of the team working behind the scenes.'

Life in a home for street children

Your donations have been used to fund medical treatment, counselling, education and vocational training for former street children at Fundación Niños de los Andes (FNA).



Twice weekly, FNA staff visit children on the streets of Bogotá bringing them a friendly ear, a hot drink and medical checkups. Their aim is that the children leave the streets and try life at the home. At first the drop out rate is high but once they are settled they rarely leave. Thirteen year old Abel left 6 times before finally settling down. He told me:

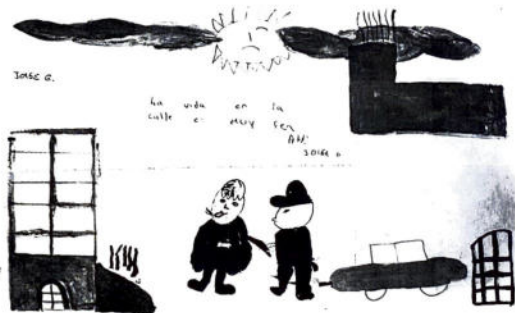
'My mother left home when I was one and a half and my father made me work carrying rocks. If I didn't want to work he would hit me. So I left home and went to live on the streets. I was terrible when I first came here. I used to get into fights with the other kids. One day I decided not to take the bait and from then on things got better. Now I visit my father at weekends. We've both changed and he treats me really well.'

Victor had a hard time coming off drugs and used to hit his head against the wall. But he was determined to get an education and insisted on starting school on his second day at the home. Today, one year on and 13 years old, he will soon go to a secondary school outside the home. If he

makes the grade he will go to college after that.

Richard, the psychologist, and Claudia, the dentist, are with the children all day. This, I was told, is so the children get used to them and relate to them like family members and not distant professionals. The approach works. When I went to see Richard, I had a hard time finding him underneath a mountain of teeming children. Eventually he emerged smiling while several children fought to give him a cuddle. Claudia's surgery was full of pictures and love letters sent by the children. Quite something for a dentist.

Martha told me that before going to bed the children settle any differences between themselves because they are taught never to go to bed feeling angry or hurt. Nancy has been teaching at the home for 11 years. She said: 'Street children are the best children because they have had the courage to leave home when things are bad and they have managed to survive on the streets. They appreciate everything you do for them especially the love you give them.'



An English artist volunteers

Paula Cox, a professional artist, spent two months at FNA running art workshops with the children. She is holding an exhibition in the autumn and will produce a millennium calendar and cards in aid of FNA and Children of the Andes.



'The children gave me their friendship and love from day one. Working with them with their bright eager spirits and big hearts was an incredibly enriching experience. They appreciate life, learning and love far more than other children who have not known the cruelties of life.'

I painted a mural of angels protecting the children as they danced in a circle with a dove, the symbol of peace, flying above them. While I was painting, the children would whiz in, look at the mural and get all excited. They really responded to the images and would talk to me about them. It was as though they felt they would protect them.'



Nursery for shanty town children

Your donations have been used to pay for nutritious food for 90 children aged 3-6 from one of Bogotá's poorest neighbourhoods.

In January 30 children, undernourished and small for their age, started to attend the Fundación Colombo-Británica nursery. They will attend for 3 years until they enter primary school. The children are given 3 meals a day with carefully selected menus. Shirley Martínez, who works at the nursery, reports: 'It is amazing to see the difference in the children even after a few months in our care; this is apparent not only in their physical appearance but also in the outgoing and confident expression which has replaced the wary and defensive look they had.'

The children are flourishing thanks to the good food and the wonderful caring provided by staff at the Fundación. Most of the children are from single parent families and their mothers can go out to work with peace of mind knowing that their children are happy

and safe. If they did not attend the nursery many of them would be locked up in one room for the whole day. Not only is this mental agony for both mother and child, it is also extremely dangerous. Most of the children live in a rented room with a kerosene stove in the corner for cooking and appalling shared sanitary facilities.

Shirley adds: 'We rely on regular contributions from Children of the Andes to continue our work and try to make the lives of 90 small children safer and happier'.



Peace talks

By Nick Caistor, Senior Producer, BBC World Service, Latin American Section

When Colombians voted Andres Pastrana to a surprise victory as President last year, they were voting for peace. During the four years that his predecessor Ernesto Samper was in office, the political violence in the countryside had grown worse with tens of thousands of ordinary Colombians fleeing to the cities.

Although Samper was successful in breaking up the large drug cartels, this only led to a more intense struggle for control of the drugs trade between guerrillas, paramilitary groups and a new generation of gang leaders. Samper himself was suspected throughout his presidency of having taken money from the drug cartels, and commanded little respect from either the armed forces or from the United States, which refused to give the seal of approval to Colombia's efforts to curb the traffic in drugs.

Mr Pastrana seemed determined to change all this. He won the United States' approval by allowing them to play a more active role in the drugs war. He began exploratory talks with the largest guerrilla group, Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). He agreed to pull troops and police out of a huge area in the south of the country so that the FARC, who operate in the region, could feel "secure". Talks began with the second largest guerrilla group, the National Liberation Army (ELN), which is active in the north.

A first round of negotiations between government and FARC representatives broke down this year. The FARC insisted that the government do more to halt the activities of the paramilitary groups and to investigate links between the army and the paramilitaries. Mr Pastrana dismissed two generals and in May 1999 the two sides agreed on the agenda for substantive talks. These involve discussing guerrilla demands for land reform, a solution to the drugs problem and the reintegration of the FARC combatants into society.

Most Colombians doubt that Pastrana will get much further. They say that FARC leaders are stringing him along until they themselves have become the de facto government in the huge area, the size of Switzerland, that has been cleared for the negotiations. And the ELN are demanding similar treatment in the north before they hold any more talks with the government.

New Charity Number

Children of the Andes has a new charity number (1075037) because we have become a charitable company. Our objectives and policies, however, remain exactly as before.

Inland Revenue cuts red tape

Good news for those of you that have covenants. The tax recovery form that you used to have to complete is no longer needed for us to make a claim

YOUR HELP COUNTS

I/We would like to make a donation to Children of the Andes of

£250 * £100 * £50 £25 £10

other

I do/do not require an acknowledgement

Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms.....

Address.....

Postcode.....

Telephone number.....

Or we accept the following cards; Access, Visa, Eurocard, Mastercard, CAF CharityCard

Please debit £.....

from my..... (card type)

A/C no.

Expiry date _ _ - _ - _

Signed..... Date.....

* If your gift is over £100 (excluding payments by Charitycard) we can reclaim the income tax. Please tick for further details

FURTHER INFORMATION

Christie's catalogue Please send me further information about purchasing a catalogue (this will be available in September)

Fundraising Please send me further information about ways in which I could help fundraise

Regular donations Please send me information about making tax effective regular donations to Children of the Andes

TELL YOUR FRIENDS!

Do you know someone who would be interested in receiving a copy of this newsletter? (Please obtain their consent before sending us their details)

Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms.....

Address.....

Postcode.....

Children of the Andes NEVER gives supporters' details to other organisations

Please return this coupon to Children of the Andes, 4 Bath Place, Rivington Street, London, EC2A 3DR.

Street children appreciate everything you give them, especially love.



Diary Dates

June 11

Poetry Evening Colombian poet Juan José Pimienta's book 'La Puerta Abierta' will be launched at Canning House. Jason Wilson from University College London will introduce Pimienta's book. All proceeds from the sale on that day will be donated to Children of the Andes. 6:30 pm
Venue: Canning House, 2 Belgrave Square, London SW1. Tel: 0171 235 9258

June 29

Salsa party for Colombia's Children in Need

Salsa the night away at Soho's Bar Rumba! The night will feature Colombian vocalist Martha Acosta-Niño and her sizzling eight-piece salsa band CANDELA plus DJs Fernando and Alex "El Gato" spinning upfront and classic Latin beats. There will be a raffle of very attractive prizes: tickets for a Spice Girls concert, dinner for two on the Thames or at a trendy Italian, and much more. Admission £4. Times 8:30pm-3am. Band on stage at 11pm.
Venue: Bar Rumba, 36 Shaftesbury Avenue, London W1.
Tel: 0171 287 2715
www.barrumba.co.uk

Join us!

July 11

Run the Andes Or at least run 3 miles around Hyde Park on Sunday 11 July. Many of us will be running the Flora Marathon for Women. We hope our female supporters will want to join in. Registration fee is £10 of which £5 will go to Children of the Andes if you nominate us. For more details please contact the office.

Sept 13-18

Colombian Art Exhibition and Talks Visit this outstanding collection of paintings and sculptures by some of the best Colombian artists who have donated their works to raise funds for the earthquake victims. Daily from 10:00 am to 6:00 pm. Details of talks will be available soon.
Venue: Bolivar Hall, 54 Grafton Way, London W1.

Oct 9

Singing for Children of the Andes The popular Weybridge Male Choir will be giving a concert in aid of Children of the Andes. A wonderful combination of sensitive and powerful singing and humour. For tickets please contact Amelita Williams on (01344) 625562.
Venue: St Erconwald's Church, Esher Avenue, Walton-on-Thames, Surrey.

20th Century Colombian Art Sale

We are delighted to announce the highlight of the year!

The auction house Christie's and Children of the Andes are organising a unique event, the first of its kind in Europe: an auction dedicated to Colombian 20th Century Art which will take place on Columbus Day, October 12th. The sale of this impressive collection, including works by Luis Caballero, Eduardo Ramírez Villamizar, Ana Mercedes Hoyos and Edgar Negret, will raise funds for the child victims of the earthquake. The event is also an important opportunity to promote Colombian art in Europe. In mid September Christie's will produce a full colour catalogue of the Sale (price: approx £15 inc. p&p). If you would like further information about buying a catalogue please tick the box on the reply coupon.

For more information about any of these events please contact the office or visit www.children-of-the-andes.org where we will have regular updates. We would also like to include your local fundraising events in our listings. So let us know what you are planning!



Pastel on canvas by Abiécser Agudelo

Fundraising adventures

We are delighted to welcome Gabriela Bucher as our new fundraising manager. Gabriela is Colombian and has wide experience in public relations, events organising and fundraising.

Walking the Andes



In our last newsletter we mentioned that Max Wood had set off to walk the Andes in the most ambitious sponsored walk to date. He wrote: 'Arrived a couple of days ago plodding 2,359 kms from Buenos Aires. Still have

about 1,900 kms to wander down to Ushuaia in Argentine Tierra del Fuego, the southernmost town in Latin America. Not sure how far exactly, as all the maps state different distances.' Max has since achieved his goal, congratulations!! Thanks to all those who supported Max and made donations to Children of the Andes. Each year we invite supporters to collectively run/walk the length of the Colombian Andes. Many will be following Max's example in the UK, walking and running the Andes over the summer.

Sponsored shark dive

Richard Fitzgerald travelled to Cape Town, South Africa to raise funds from a Sponsored Shark Dive. 'I flew to Cape Town in November to dive off the coast in a cage to film the Great White Sharks. Unfortunately the weather was not kind and after 2 failed attempts to dive at sea the Cape Town Aquarium let me dive with their resident marine biologist into their shark tank but without a cage. The experience was



exhilarating if a little nerve racking.' If you have an original fundraising idea please call us to talk about it.

Raising funds for earthquake victims
Esperanza O'Donald and Lauren Kettleby organised a fundraising party in Enfield following the January earthquake in Colombia. The successful event raised a staggering £2,600.

The Colombian Community organised a festival at Horticultural Hall where more than 2,000 people enjoyed live bands and Colombian food. Children of the Andes received part of the proceeds. Thank you very much to all those involved.

Church relief

Our warmest thanks to Westminster Abbey for their extremely kind donation, a share of the One People collections. Also to the parishioners of St Joseph's Church in Chalfont St Peter who have been very supportive of Children of the Andes over the years. This Lent, the congregation collected £1,800 for Children of the Andes. Please let us know if you would like us to give a talk in your church.

Rotary support

Children of the Andes is grateful for the ongoing support of Rotary Clubs across the country. We are particularly grateful to Philip Bobby, Children of the Andes co-ordinator for district 1090, who has organised a number of talks on our behalf.



Congratulations!

Our congratulations to Jenny Coates and Simon Meredith who are getting married on July 17th and have very generously asked for donations to be made to Children of the Andes instead of gifts.

**If you have a fundraising idea or would like a speaker contact Gabriela
Tel. 0171 739 1328**

Visit our website
www.children-of-the-andes.org
email us at
info@children-of-the-andes.org

Our support in Colombia goes to the rescue and rehabilitation of street children, preventative work in shanty towns providing alternatives to children who might otherwise resort to the streets, and the provision of health care.