

The “Aldea Infantil Sagrada Familia” (Holy Family Children’s Home)

The “Aldea Infantil Sagrada Familia” was started in 2001 by Fr. Frank Cortis mssp, a Maltese missionary belonging to the Missionary Society of Saint Paul (mssp). On the 10th of August 2012 he passed away while playing basketball with the children at the home. As from then onwards I, Fr. Alex Busuttil mssp am in charge of the home.

At present there are 27 boys in the home. These boys are taken away from their families because they lack the conditions for a proper childhood and in most cases not even the protection that children should be given. Though people refer to the home as an orphanage, most of the boys have their parents still alive. We describe the boys in the home as having been physically and/or morally abandoned. In some cases, the parents of these boys are either in jail, are drug addicts, violent, sexual abusers, sex workers, alcoholics, delinquents, etc. At times we hear about feminicides, and the home receives the children of these families who end up without the mother. Exceptionally the boys come because of the death of either one or both parents.

The boys come to the home through a court order or what is called the D.E.M.U.N.A. which is a child protection government organization within all the Municipalities. The boys leave the home when they are eighteen years of age, through a court order or because of very serious bad behavior. While the boys are in the home, we are responsible for their upbringing in all aspects twenty-four hours a day all the way. This includes their nutrition, clothing, education, health and all a child needs to have a proper upbringing. The home is run by a multi-disciplinary group of professionals who look after the various needs of the boys. The boys are given spiritual care, psychological attention and trained in proper values in order to become future valuable citizens.

While in the home the boys are prepared to be inserted in society and be able to move forward on their own once they leave. They live in two sections within the same compound. There is an infrastructure for boys between three and twelve years of age, and another one from thirteen years till eighteen. The younger group learn how to do some basic things like self-hygiene, doing their bed, some cleaning, etc. Once they move to the older group, they are given more responsibilities. At this stage they take care of the cleaning of all their living area, they do their laundry and ironing, under supervision they prepare the food for all the home on week-ends, wash dishes and do some basic works in the field on the compound, and little maintenance which they can handle. All this is done with the objective of self sufficiency once they are on their own.

The boys go to public and private schools in the area, depending on their capabilities. Once they finish high school they are encouraged to continue studying or be inserted into a work experience. In very few exceptions they start university, more often they are inserted into trade schools and some start working. The money they earn while they work is kept for them for when they leave.

The home does not receive any government support. There are three local businesses that support economically in a very limited way. All the rest is left into the hands of providence especially supporters from abroad.

A present need at the Children's Home

Presently one of the needs at the children's home is to update the computers in the study and computer room. The present ones are now nine years old and to update parts would be more expensive in the first place and technology simply won't work because it is too different. It is very important to change the computers because now all research given to students to do at home has to be done on the internet through computers. What we need is to have fifteen computers that can be used at different times so that all the boys at the home can use them by taking turns. We prefer the desktop computers in this case in order not to have the computers taken out of the computer center in the home. If we get laptops, they are more likely to get damaged if taken out of the hall.

We have been looking on the best deals to get the fifteen computers and an all in one printer plus the installation and the cost goes as follows.

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