

**“When we help a child, we enrich our own lives.....for all of the children of the world
deserve the best from all of us.”**

EDIE LYNCH/ PROFESSOR PETER LUCAS

ADVANCED INDEPENDENT PROJECT

THE NEW SCHOOL UNIVERSITY - GRADUATE INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

“A PHOTO STORYBOARD AND WRITTEN ACCOUNT”

BY EDIE LYNCH

INSTITUTING POSITIVE ACTIVITIES

THAT HELPED TO BOOST

CONFIDENCE AND SELF ESTEEM

OF THE RIO HOMELESS AND ORPHANED CHILDREN

AT AMAR, A HOMELESS TEEN SHELTER

AND

THE VILA ISABEL ORPHANAGE

In RIO DE JANERIO, BRAZIL



Daniel and Jorge Learning English At The Vila Isabel Orphanage
Gabriella (Orange Tee Shirt - With His Buddies That Were Sent To Another Home)

The Vila Isabel Orphanage Boys Sitting In The Room That Serves Both As
A TV Room And A Dining Hall



Three Boys Watching TV In A Makeshift Garage



The Boys Getting Belongings Out Of Their Lockers In Their Dormitory

I have been living in Rio six months out of every year for seven years as a means of staying in touch with my beloved composer son, RB, who has made his home in Rio de Janeiro for the past fifteen years. I became interested in the homeless kids that lived on the street when I noticed them first in my Leme neighborhood in Rio and then in my son's Gloria neighborhood. I even made a half hour film about these homeless kids as part of my Thesis work in my Master's Media Studies at The New

School. When I was given the opportunity to look at the homeless problem from an insider's viewpoint at both a teen shelter, AMAR, and at an actual Orphanage in Vila Isabel - I was relieved to be able to become more informed about why the problem of so many homeless children in Rio existed in the first place.

Ester Arantes in *Lost Arguments* says "He who does not provide conditions for a child to develop his or her life also violates the right to life...so, if we don't organize ourselves politically, culturally, affectionately, poetically, musically, philosophically, we won't change anything".....and all of the problems that affect children will continue as before.

In the many months I had been working with the homeless and orphaned children I had seen so many volunteers start out enthusiastically at both the Orphanage and the Shelter but leave on a somber note because they had not been able to say, "Ahh, this thing that we have done (are helping to perpetuate through our volunteer work) has remarkably changed for the better these children's lives."

The thing that is most desired and most lacking in the lives of the Orphan Boys at the Vila Isabel Orphanage is self-esteem. And if we are to believe what Agnes Heller writes, published from the Netherlands, a book titled "On Instincts" - "the source of self-esteem is usually not to be found in man himself, in the human individual, but rather in what man owns: property and position."

The kids learn very early that they are property that can be manipulated and moved at will by those with important positions. The child is blocked from every direction in his self-actualization and finds his self- confidence with acts of aggression. There is a lot of pushing and fighting at the Orphanage. There is little opportunity for a child to develop his personality, his own unique nature, so he must learn to fight to survive.

I chose a book published in the Netherlands to explore because there is always an abundance of volunteers from the Netherlands at the Orphanage, volunteers that hear about the homeless problem in Brazil and want to help in some useful way.



Two Dutch Volunteers Playing A Game With The Vila Isabel Boys
A Dutch Young Woman Watching A Teen Who Is Learning To Sew

The volunteers come, they watch a child or children engaged in an activity, and often they participate in socializing activities - playing ball, going to the park, chatting with the children, helping to serve the meals - but they rarely return for ongoing visits after the initial volunteer period has ended.



This WasThe Only Girl At AMAR That Would Permit Her Picture To Be Taken

Rio de Janeiro is a city of contradictions where opulent wealth and shameful poverty sit side by side. You only have to direct your glance in any direction and you will see unbelievable differences in lifestyles. Look upwards from your posh seat at an upscale sidewalk cafe and view the shacks of the favelas covering the mountainside - or look to your left or right or even just yards from your own feet and witness the barefoot people sleeping on the street, with their misery for all to behold. Force your heart, your eyes, your soul to really see - for the homeless are invisible. They are there but few people actually talk about them.

The wine is drunk, the appetizers are tasted, and the entree is enjoyed and it is just another trifle in the day when one notes that the police have come to vacuum up the homeless just as if they are trash, so they won't be around to be seen during your dessert. Their pitiful belongings and old, used, artifacts that they have laid out in hopes of selling for money for food are thrown into the police van along with the people themselves, or simply left as trash for a cleanup crew to put into a dumpster. Eduardo Galeano in his brilliant book, 'Open Veins Of Latin America' says, "Forty Two percent of the population of Brazil eat less than they need...How to avoid those majorities becoming ever larger, if the system doesn't function for them.....Leaving aside charity, the police remain." These police crews are everywhere and yes I have seen them, a dozen times or more, haul people into the vans, including some of the homeless teens that appeared in my film.

These marginal people have families that cannot help them. Often they are the head of the family, giving up their strength finally to the sidewalk - for they have nothing to look forward to, no work, no home, no place in society. It is particularly heartbreaking to witness young people being swept up like rubbish before their lives have had a chance to even begin. Many can be classified as wageless

laborers - their labor being only that of moving about in quest of a safe and dry sidewalk to sleep upon.

Brazil has had a long history of the exploitation of hundreds of thousands of workers on rubber, fruit, sugar, coffee plantations and in the many mines that brought so much wealth to so few and so much misery to so many who labored a lifetime mining ore and diamonds with little enough to eat. Some of the children at the Orphanage come from such background stories...where for generations the parent, grandparent, and forebears raised corn, potatoes, beans, manioc, bananas - but there is no land or home for such today. With land values escalating the poor are migrating to the cities looking for work so they can feed their families. Tony de Jesus, in his 2002 film, 'Global Informal Settlements' on Brazilian Favelas says that thirty five million people earn less than \$40 a month and that they are constantly in search of jobs as ground keepers or housekeepers for the rich, as construction or hauling crews, as porters and sanitation workers, but the sad reality is that most - because of discrimination and lack of education - will continue to suffer because "the rich have lined their pockets and there are no jobs for the poor."

The little boy I hope to see again, Leandro, who comes to the Orphanage to eat, is the son of a fisherman who brings home the fish to Benfica that he catches when he is unable to find harvest work. Leandro's family is as poor as any family could possibly be. Amazingly, the mother and father are still together. But in so many families affected by such poverty, all that remains are relatives broken by the system that denied them a place in society - denied them 'self esteem' to call their own.

Galeano explains, "There is a legion of workers who driven by hunger, move around to the rhythm of successive harvests and each region experiences a dynamic cycle and then decay sets in with the competition of substitute products, the exhaustion of the soil , and the initial productive drive fades into a culture of poverty, subsistence economy, and lethargy."

These workers suffer from despair, alcoholism, drug abuse, hopelessness, schizophrenia, rage, a host of things that make it impossible for them to raise their children - so the children end up homeless or in an Orphanage. The factories today because of the advances in technology require less and less workers so the problem of finding any kind of work is compounded. I recall reading in Galeano's book "that some are condemned to obey, others are appointed to command" as was authored by the creator of the International Monetary Fund policy in Brazil - which of course was intended to help promote high employment and reduce poverty. It does seem that there is a greater chance today of people being forced into the position of having not only to obey but having a noose placed around their necks - and so constraining and demoralizing is this noose controlled by the greedy capitalists - that the ability to make a living in Brazil for so many deserving people is just not a possibility.

When I ask about the parent of a child at the Orphanage more often than not the answer is that the parent is simply unable to cope, or their whereabouts is unknown, or that they suffer from alcoholism or drug abuse - but even though this may be the case - most children would rather be in a neighborhood environment than in the Orphanage. Too many times I have gone to the Orphanage looking forward to seeing one of my favorite children, only to be told that they have run away.

Marcia is devoted to saving as many of the orphaned and homeless children as is humanly possible and whether her 'angel dust' is rubbing off on my shoulders I have yet to realize - but I have gone to several favelas with her to look at the possibilities of us getting a home there that could be more effective in helping the children than an Orphanage that will keep them a short time and then send them back to cope with the same problems and environment they came from. I do know for certain, though, that my love for so many of the children at the Vila Isabel Orphanage is "real" and I will continue in all efforts to help as many as I can to have interesting and productive lives. The problem for all of the children at the Teen Shelter and at the Orphanage is as Heller notes, "What can be more frustrating in our self-esteem than the impossibility to realize the faith assumed in complete self-actualization...if we don't know where we want to arrive we cannot even start off, and it is our duty to examine at each and every moment whether we have indeed started off in the right direction."

The kids at the Orphanage have no free time for such thoughts and explorations....Their lives are about routines established by others...the possibility to even curl up with a chosen book does not exist as there is no privacy, no hidden corner to hide in. One must live in a fish bowl, with every moment dictated by someone in charge.

There is a strong need for creation of opportunity for these children and volunteers come and go and the children come and go and life goes on as before with little changing excepting the psychological disturbances that are bound to happen that will render so many of these children dysfunctional before they are even out of their teens.

Where will an individual child acquire the know-how necessary for successful participation in society? So many will flee the oppression of the institution and head back to the freedom of the streets, and others who want to stay and hope to learn something will be turned away because their time is up...they have received all that their six to eight month ticket ordered by the Judge allowed them, a little bit of schooling, a clean bed, a balanced meal, protection from the negative environment they came from...but the sad fact is most will be returned to that same environment.

Rio is being prepared for the Olympics, and everywhere one sees the cleansing of the city - and I've noticed that in areas where the homeless used to sleep in Lapa under those famous Lapa Arches there are now huge piles of the miniature cobblestone rocks with construction crews moving them ever so slowly. One wonders just how long can it take to reconstruct a reasonably small area that used to be a public gathering spot for the homeless? It has been six months and the stones unearthed are still in an unruly pile. I suspect that these areas are all being cleaned

up to be picture perfect for the Olympics so naturally the homeless people are not sleeping there anymore. But where are they sleeping?

To be sure there are many homeless people that one can see on the streets, and sadly many children too, but I worry about what will actually happen to so many thousands of homeless people in preparation for the Olympics. I worry because a friend, Altair, who used to work with the homeless population for nearly twenty years in Rio says that he wants to take me to this terrible place to show me where the homeless are being moved to and I have not yet had the heart to go. I don't want to discolor my heart anymore for I am already worried about why the boys that I had just begun to know and like for a few short months have been moved from the Vila Isabel Orphanage to other Orphanages where they are better suited, I am told.

I ask myself is it possible that six boys that I visited weekly and worked with on Art projects could actually be thriving and learning in other places? Why other places and not Vila Isabel? Can it be good to be moved about so much if you are a child that already is saddled with more than any child should have to handle?



Leandro, Who Often Comes To The Orphanage For Meals And Art Classes But Who Lives With His Family In Benfica, The Toughest Slum in Rio



Leandro Holding His Paper Mache Artwork

Each week I meet a few new children and then they are gone - so I am grateful each time that I come with my paints or clay or treats to entice the boys to play the different roles of being shop keeper or customer so they can learn English - grateful that the boys I love are still there to repeat in English "one dollar, um real."

I don't want them to be taken to some other place, to suffer some other destiny away from Marcia who I know cares deeply about what happens to them. Marcia lived on the mean streets of Rio for fifteen years as a child and it is remarkable that she has chosen to devote her life to caring for homeless and orphaned children. If ever an

Angel could be called by a name, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil it would be the name of Marcia.

Marcia would call me down to the kitchen from where I was fixing, upstairs, a little library for the boys adjacent to one of their dormitory rooms. Down in the kitchen would be Leandro who would smile at me and come running into my arms. Who was this arresting boy that I was so drawn to and he to me? Leandro would always sit next to me during any Art session that he attended (he came to the Orphanage on occasion to eat, not stay) and it was not until the night of my husband's heart attack and subsequent death when I was leafing through family photo archives and ran across a three year earlier photograph of Leandro who turned out to be the little boy I had taken home to sleep in the guest room because he had gotten lost from his mother who sold water on the beach. He was crying on the street at midnight, imagine! He was so little and sweet and looked to be about five or six but actually was eight. Now he was eleven and had grown so tall I did not recognize him. I had no idea that this little boy who came to Vila Isabel was the same boy that had spent the weekend in my Leme apartment. I helped him find his mother who loved him dearly and was happy to have him returned safely to her. She had looked everywhere for him but, with a baby in her arms and two other toddlers, her hands were tied. The police were not that interested in helping a mother find a child that lived in an abandoned warehouse in Benfica, one of the toughest and poorest areas of Rio – where armed policemen are posted everywhere with drawn rifles.

Where Leandro lives the air is thick with smoke from dope, thick with crime and thick with ugliness of every kind. There are shattered bottles, spent bullets, filthy papers and drunken bodies on the black dirt field that serves as the play yard for Leandro and his friends so you can imagine that a dark corridor offers at least a bit of comfort where one can lean their back against the split boards of the rough plywood walls before they make that all important throw of the colored glass balls that will make one of them the winner, if only for a few brief moments. One doesn't often get a chance to win when one lives where Leandro lives so winning is no small matter. Leandro believes that he wins every time he manages to run away a bit.



Leandro - The Night I Found Him On The Street In Rio, Lost From His Mother

It is never for a long time that Leandro runs away because he loves his family too much to be gone an extended time. He runs to places with green grass and blue ocean waters, places that will lift his heart away from despair, allow him to breathe fresh air, allow him to release his clenched jaw, the jaw that is always primed for a gunshot or a police siren, or the wail of one of his siblings in trouble, something that spells "Disaster With A Capital D."

In my mind, I keep going back to that little boy I brought home to my Leme apartment, sitting in his new clothes that I bought for him in the pale green upholstered chair with Sonja J, my porcelain doll, holding a puppet in his hand. I pray he is safe and that we will be reunited again. I am always waiting for Leandro to show up again at the Orphanage but for the past three months I have not seen him.

Leandro, In My Leme Apartment In Rio Where He Spent The Weekend



As I said, I made a film on the Rio Homeless Teens that lived in my neighborhood in Leme and witnessed firsthand the many horrible things that were happening in their lives while they were trying to sustain themselves living on the brutal streets of Rio - and I wanted to do something more than lament the fact that the Brazilian Society was most unkind and uncaring per its young, homeless population. I was, and am, still grieving over two boys in my film that lost their lives and I wanted to do more than grieve. I waited months to be introduced to Pedro Pereira, the Executivo Coordenador of CEDECA, the Centro de Defensa de los Derechos del Nino y del Adolescente (the Center Rights of Children and Adolescents.)

After hours of talking to me about my interests in the children that lived on the streets of Rio, Pedro encouraged me to teach Art and regularly visit the children at AMAR, a Teen Shelter in Sao Cristovao that picks up the homeless kids for a shower, meal, and some form of daily activity and then returns them back to the street - and to also visit the Vila Isabel Orphanage, an umbrella of AMAR where fourteen boys ages

eight to fourteen live on a semi/permanent basis, if one can call two to eight months (rarely longer) a permanent basis.

I had for many years taught Art to At Risk children in Harlem, quite successfully, and I was eager to try my hand in Rio as that was the spot where my beloved son, RB, had chosen to live his life. Art is an amazing thing, the lessons and tranquility one can receive from working with paints, and clays, and woods, and found objects.....One might say that these things become the "Melodies Of The Unsung Child."

Maxine Greene in "Variations On A Blue Guitar (The Teachers College Press of The Lincoln Center Institute Lectures on Aesthetic Education) says: "There is no human being, no matter what age, who cannot be energized and enlarged when provided opportunities to sing, to say, to inscribe, to render, to show - to bring, through his or her devising, something new into the world." In my Creative Find Gallery Workshop in Harlem, "Excelsior" was our motto, and I was anxious to see if it would work with the kids I would be interacting with at AMAR and at The Vila Isabel Orphanage.

I began at AMAR, teaching the girls and boys how to make various paper and paper mache artifacts. Many girls at AMAR participated but only one wanted her picture to be taken - as living on the street makes it difficult for a young to keep up her appearance. The Teens at AMAR were a rowdy, rough bunch, and at first I thought, "No, this isn't going to work at all," but I Hung In There and little by little the classes that were sheer bedlam in the beginning (with counselors coming in and pulling out by the feet teens that were "acting out" - and there were even kids who would weep because they couldn't get their scissors to make the right cuts - and once a ten year old boy sobbed out loud that he loved me and would not take my class because he knew I would end up leaving him as all the others had.)



The Beautiful Park I Walked Through In Sao Cristóvão To Get To The AMAR Shelter

Those were rough weeks and finally I landed upon the idea (as I took the long walk after I got off of the subway through the beautiful park that would take me up many steps and through winding lanes and up steep hills to the AMAR building - that I would buy materials and teach the Teens how to make decorative pillows for a bed that hopefully someday they would have.....a way to dream for real about having a pretty pillow upon which to put their heads and not upon the dirty sidewalk.

Bingo...it worked...the kids were sewing and learning to relax (even taking naps in between their stitches as their materials lay beside them) - so anxious were they to

own something they had made themselves. The pillows became a point of pride even for the macho boys who crushed them as though they were unimportant - when the photos were taken.....but all who witnessed the pillow making understood the significance the pillows had in the teens' lives.

I will never understand the administrative decision made that the pillows had to stay in the institution and could not be taken away by the actual kids who had made them. The self esteem gained in the making of the pillows was thus lost again when those in charge said, "Yes, you made it, but it is not yours to keep, only to enjoy when you are here at AMAR." It was during this time that I made the decision that I would concentrate on the kids at the Vila Isabel Orphanage that had a more welcoming environment.



This Little Boy Said One Day, "I Think I Love You," - And I Was Grateful That He Realized That I Would Stay With Him Until His Pillow Was Completed



"Tough Guy"
AMAR Kid

Showing Off The Miniature Dream Box He Created



The AMAR Shelter Kids With Their Counselors & A Dutch Volunteer, Right End.



Kids Handmade Artwork

The Teen Who Made The Rabbit Ear Box Suddenly Cut Off Its Ears, And When I Asked Why - He Said, "Nothing Good Ever Lasts In Life" ...We Repaired The Ears



Arme (I Could Never Correctly Pronounce The Ending Of His Name With Freddy. Freddy Never Learned To Read And Was Just Learning To Write His Name When He Was Sent To Another Orphanage. He Is One Of My Favorite Children - So Smart About The Intelligent Things In Life – Like Being Kind And Well Mannered



Felix Was The Little Devil, Always In Trouble, But He Did Always Commit Himself To His Artwork



Marcia Sewing, Above, With Daniel (Lollipop) And Anderson At The Vila Isabel Orphanage



Marcia And The Boys Showing Off Their Handmade Decorative Pillows At The Vila Isabel Orphanage In Rio
The Pillow Making Took Up The Better Part Of Three Afternoons That Were Filled

With Moans Of Frustration and Shouts Of Joy When The Last Stitches Were In Place....And One Sad Little Note: One Boy Did Not Want To Take His Pillow Home To His Schizophrenic Mother So He Refused to Be Photographed With It. He Gave It To A Volunteer So His Pillow Could Be In A Real Home, Not An Orphanage.



Above, One Can Appreciate The Lighter Moments That Happen When Marcia And The Volunteers Fully Engage The Vila Isabel Kids In Some Real Playtime In The Courtyard.



Gliadson Shyly Showing Off His Handmade Pillow At The Vila Isabel Orphanage

Gliadson had little interest in food and always had to be coaxed to eat, or be spoon fed by Marcia, who never ran out of patience while helping this dear, sensitive child who has many obstacles to overcome. Gliadson loved dancing, though, and would abandon his shyness when his favorite sambas came over the air waves on the beat up radio/phonograph that sometimes worked at the Orphanage. Gliadson has been moved to another Orphanage, and I miss the times he would ask if he could lay his head on my lap while he watched TV.

Mateos Is Extremely Intellegent And A Gifted Artist . He Is Constantly Moved About From His Home In The Favela To The Vila Isabel Orphanage - And Then Again To Another Orphanage Nearer His Favela Home. He Is So Deserving Of A Better Life And One Can Only Hope That It Will Come Soon.



What are the actual chances that one of the homeless or orphaned children have to become a functioning and productive member of society? If one looks at someone like Marcia, whose own Pae (Daddy) actually fathered thirty five street children, it is a miracle that Marcia not only survived but grew up with a passion to find an imaginative life for herself, and not one of anger and aggression. "Like a steam boiler, man has a certain load of pressure, and where this energy goes depends on what valves are habitually open," - Agnes Heller quotes Bain on the Theories of the Instinct of Aggression (found on P. 36 in Heller's Book, "On Instincts.")



Jorge, Really Upset With His Life And His Injured Finger Marcia Giving Aid

At the Vila Isabel Orphanage, there is often much angst that the boys feel about the circumstances of their lives and when internal stimuli (the biological source of anger) accumulate and cannot find release for a protracted period of time, the ultimate release will take on a more violent, more aggressive form of action. I noted that Jorge was very upset that his finger was injured and he seemed to be enraged that in addition to the fact of his having to be in the Orphanage, his finger had become injured too - he was in the most awful sort of mood.

When Marcia showed him kindness by validating that indeed he was injured and offering him warm water in which to soak his injured finger, Jorge calmed down and then really became the hopeful child again - particularly when a male visitor interacted with him in pleasant moments of personal conversation.

Jorge has a beautiful singing voice and it is astounding how graceful he is in dancing. In order to engage the children in something different, one afternoon I taught them the basic beginning steps and positions of "Ballet" and all eyes were on Jorge because he picked up the moves instantly and performed with the passion of a dancer destined for great things. It is always in the back of my mind of how can I achieve getting Jorge enrolled in a professional dance class?



Jorge Enjoying His Conversation With Leonardo, A Friend Of A Volunteer



Jorge Preparing To Give Leonardo A Heartfelt Hug Before Saying Goodbye

Jorge showed the affection he had in his heart that he was longing to release and it was a remarkable transformation of an angry little boy to one who again had seen the possibility of change through some form of positive action, intervention, you might say. It is these moments of intervention that I try to offer the boys through our Art Sessions, through our English Lessons, through the trips to my son's apartment for Piano Lessons - that will give the boys a glimpse of a "more imaginative life," a life that can be achieved through their own work and actualization. Just as jail does not solve anything, covering up the problems of homelessness by offering Band Aids of meals and temporary beds if one is obedient to house rules - does not and cannot work. Something more is needed.

It is that "something more" that I try to offer in the hope that something, maybe just one thing, will stick in the mind and be the seed that will grow and help the individual to stay strong enough and creative enough to imagine and achieve another kind of life. It is my belief that the extermination of the young people in Brazil not only happens with the actual killing of the street children but the practices that allow the children to be disqualified as human beings which so many great minds discuss in the book, *Lost Arguments*, the critical reflections on the legal practices of the Centres

for the Defense of Children and Adolescents. Enza Mattar says in Lost Arguments on P. 124 about the prisons of Brazil - "it seems like a garbage where anything we don't want to see is put, and then a cover is placed so the smell won't be felt, which is what is done nowadays." And though that may be a dramatic statement to illustrate the problems of some of the Shelters and the Orphanages in Brazil, it does say what I have found to be true about the problems facing the two that I know about - that much more sensitive thought needs to be executed to insure that some lasting good happens in the lives of the children who are the inhabitants of these places.



Jackson Explaining To Leonardo The Circumstances Of His Mother's Death And His Father Being Unable To Care For Him And His Brother Eddy (Kicking Ball In The Courtyard) Because Of The Shortage Of Work And Also Because Of His Difficult Problems Due To Alcoholism.

I, personally, am weary of hearing the constant reply that I hear, "Oh, that child, well he was moved to another Orphanage, or he attends a different Shelter now. People cannot be moved around like Chess Pieces on a Board. Those making the decisions in a Just Society can be more creative than that.



Our Trip To The Miseria Favela



Marcia and Vila Isabel Counselors Stopping To Enjoy The Sights Near Miseria.



The Beautiful Terrain On The Road To The Favelas In Miseria and Mangueira,



An Alleyway Of Houses Familiar To Jackson And Eddy In Their Home Environment Of Misericordia



Marcia examining An Artistic Creation In The Miseria Favela

Taking A Trip To Miseria, The Favela That Jackson's Father Lives In And Reporting Back To Jackson And Eddy That Their Father Is Fine And That He Will Come To Visit The Orphanage Helped Greatly To Diminish The Boys Pain Of Missing Their Home And Being Away From "Pae." The Boys Were So Happy To See The Familiar Sights And Surroundings Of Their Favela Terrain.



Reginaldo, In The Blue Checkered Shorts, Just Got Out Of The Hospital After A Long Stay With An Affliction That Blew Up Both Legs . Here He Is Posing Earnestly With Jackson and David. Marcie Was The Angel That Went Every Single Day To Visit Reginaldo In The Hospital.



Marcia Playing The Tambourine For The Boys Prior To Their Weekend Camping Trip At The Home Of A Kind University Professor. Marcie Has A Brilliant Ear For Music And Could Easily Have Made A Living As A Musician And Performer.



The Boys (Marcie's Son In The INSA tee shirt) A Little Weary From Their Weekend Camping Trip But "Happy" - Returning By Van To The Vila Isabel Orphanage.

Rio de Janeiro is a city of contradictions where opulent wealth and shameful poverty sit side by side. You only have to direct your glance in any direction and you will see unbelievable differences in lifestyles. Look upwards from your posh seat at an upscale sidewalk cafe and view the shacks of the favelas covering the mountainside - or look to your left or right or even just yards from your own feet and witness the barefoot people sleeping on the street, with their misery for all to behold. Force your heart, your eyes, your soul to really see - for the homeless are invisible. They are there but few people actually talk about them.

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relatives broken by the system that denied them a place in society - denied them 'self esteem' to call their own.

Galeano explains, "There is a legion of workers who driven by hunger, move around to the rhythm of successive harvests and each region experiences a dynamic cycle and then decay sets in with the competition of substitute products, the exhaustion of the soil , and the initial productive drive fades into a culture of poverty, subsistence economy, and lethargy."

These workers suffer from despair, alcoholism, drug abuse, hopelessness, schizophrenia, rage, a host of things that make it impossible for them to raise their children - so the children end up homeless or in an Orphanage. The factories today because of the advances in technology require less and less workers so the problem of finding any kind of work is compounded. I recall reading in Galeano's book "that some are condemned to obey, others are appointed to command" as was authored by the creator of the International Monetary Fund policy in Brazil - which of course was intended to help promote high employment and reduce poverty. It does seem that there is a greater chance today of people being forced into the position of having not only to obey but having a noose placed around their necks - and so constraining and demoralizing is this noose controlled by the greedy capitalists - that the ability to make a living in Brazil for so many deserving people is just not a possibility.

When I ask about the parent of a child at the Orphanage more often than not the answer is that the parent is simply unable to cope, or their whereabouts is unknown, or that they suffer from alcoholism or drug abuse - but even though this may be the case - most children would rather be in a neighborhood environment than in the Orphanage. Too many times I have gone to the Orphanage looking forward to seeing one of my favorite children, only to be told that they have run away.

Marcia is devoted to saving as many of the orphaned and homeless children as is humanly possible and whether her 'angel dust' is rubbing off on my shoulders I have yet to realize - but I have gone to several favelas with her to look at the possibilities of us getting a home there that could be more effective in helping the children than an Orphanage that will keep them a short time and then send them back to cope with the same problems and environment they came from. I do know for certain, though, that my love for so many of the children at the Vila Isabel Orphanage is "real" and I will continue in all efforts to help as many as I can to have interesting and productive lives.



Daniel, In A Rare Moment Of Being Alone. Daniel's Mother Suffers From Schizophrenia And It Is Impossible For Him To Live At Home. His Aunt Promised To Take Him To Live With Her But After Six Months Of Waiting Patiently For This Opportunity To Have A Home He Could Call His Own, The Aunt Changed Her Mind And Daniel Was More Than Disappointed – He Was Devastated. Little By Little Daniel Is Adjusting To The Often Chaotic Events At The Orphanage And Finding Little Moments Of Tranquility . Not So Infrequently He Goes To The Office And Sits With A

Counselor At The Computer. And Though Life Goes On, Daniel Holds Fast To His Dream That "Surely One Day He Will Find His Rightful Place In The Sun."



My Home In Muriqui Where 14 Vila Isabel Boys Will Come On Dec. 10 To Visit



It Is My Hope That On Weekends Several Of The Children Can Come For Regular Visits To Get Away From The Frustration They Often Feel In Rio In That Often Noisy And Frantic City