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I was a teenager when I started volunteering at The Clinic in June, 1974. Dr. Frankel was treating me for a sports injury in Tucson, and he invited me to come to The Clinic. At that time, The Clinic was held in an orphanage in the Buenos Aires neighborhood which was a pretty rough neighborhood, even by the standards back then. It was a very humble setting—part orphanage and part convent for the nuns, and we were using the sleeping quarters for the nuns. The room was hot and stuffy that first time. The doctors took the dressings off a patient; the bandages were bloody. The bone had not healed properly, and the doctors were going to have to rebreak it. I stepped outside because I felt ill.

After my first experience, I began to appreciate all that the doctors and other volunteers were doing. As I worked more and more with the doctors in Orthopedics, especially Dr. Frankel and Dr. Speer, I became more interested in pediatric orthopedics which would later become my medical specialty.

Early on I observed the heightened sense of hope among the families. Some families did get very positive news. But, other families did not. As the interpreter for the doctors, I had to convey that bad news. I remember one child who was paralyzed because of an auto accident and couldn't move his legs. I was the one who had to give the family the news that the doctors could do nothing for their son. I was about 15 then. That family's sadness was really heartbreakingly sad for me.

At the orphanage I remember that the courtyard was used as the waiting and physical therapy areas. There was one small desk where a metal file with records was kept. There was a blue mat for the physical therapist to conduct physical therapy. There were two rooms used by the doctors. The Clinic would run until about noon or 1:00 p.m. when everyone would adjourn to the house of one of the volunteers for a festive lunch. Sometimes there was horseback riding or a barbecue. As The Clinic has grown, there hasn't been much time and opportunity to do those kinds of things.

When The Clinic moved to St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, the Orthopedics Department was located in the hallway opposite the kitchen—where Pediatric Nursing is today. There was a great deal of traffic going past with patients, families, and volunteers going back and forth between the Parish Hall waiting area, the kitchen, and the restrooms. We were in the midst of all of it. When one of our patients walked for the first time, everyone cheered, not just those of us in the Orthopedics Department. Through the years I've witnessed many positive things happening at The Clinic, not just in our department. I remember watching a boy, who lost both legs in an accident, walk on his prostheses for the first time. The mom had tears in her eyes, and so did we. Other memories I have are watching a child with new eye glasses, another child hear for the first time, another child "talk" with a speech communication device. These are all things made possible by our medical and non-medical volunteers and donors.

It is unfortunate that when people think of the Border area they think of the bad news that gets reported—drug trafficking, illegal immigration, poverty, etc. St. Andrew's is an example of what can be accomplished when individuals come together for a common cause. The Clinic has created an improved quality of life for hundreds of children over the past 40 years. And, in doing so, it has brought together people from different religious, cultural, and political backgrounds who work together in a loving and kind community. This contributes to the spirituality of The Clinic. I think the families respond to that spirituality, and that's what makes our clinic different from others. It has been an honor for me to be part of St. Andrew's Children's Clinic.

