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In the early days of The Clinic, the doctors and therapists from Tucson would meet in the morning for breakfast and then all hop into a van supplied by Jim Click Ford to go down to Nogales, Sonora. We'd go to an orphanage where there were swarms of mothers and children waiting for us.

We set up a mat in the middle of the waiting area and that became the physical therapy room. We worked there with the children with everyone sitting around and watching as they waited their turn.

It was a fun atmosphere most of the time with everyone encouraging and hopeful. When a child laughed, everyone laughed. When a child walked for the first time, everyone cheered. Of course, it wasn't always that easy. Occasionally one child would start to cry and then all the children would start to cry making for a challenging therapeutic environment.

There were so many wonderful people who made this all happen. Mark Frankel, MD, was the guiding force who brought all the health care professionals together. Dan Leal brought braces and good cheer. The women who volunteered made things run smoothly and did their best to translate for us. They weren't professional translators and sometimes ended up talking to the doctors and therapists in Spanish and the patients and their families in English. Somehow, we all managed to understand each other.

I still remember the first after-clinic luncheon. We all went to the Valencias' home where a woman in the kitchen was busy preparing fresh tortillas and some kind of meat for tacos. We were told it was tortuga, and it tasted great. No one told us until later that tortuga was Spanish for turtle.

There was a young boy there that day who was helping out with translating and serving food. He was a great help. Many years later he returned to The Clinic as the head of orthopedic surgery. He was Francisco Valencia.