

Daily routine at the centre

8:00	Welcome and activities in Art Area
9:00	Breakfast
9:20	Cleaning teeth and washing
9.30	Morning circle: songs, stories, and large group activities
10.00	Plan, Do, Clean-up (Personal choice of activities)
11:00	Snack and Review of morning activities
11.20	Small group activities (Planned activities relating to the observation area for the day)
12.00	Outdoor play (Paddling pool, small sandpit, chalk etc.)
1.00	Lunch and cleaning teeth
1.30	Rest time - music and stories in the Quiet Area
2.00	Smaller children sleep Older children do puzzles and quieter activities Adults plan
3.30	Play time in sandpit or Active Play Area
4.15	Snack
4.30	Free play as mothers begin to arrive
5.00	Hometime



Quarterly Bulletin of the Maya Childcare Trust

A charity based in the United Kingdom which is dedicated to supporting the work of the Centro Infantil Bellota - a childcare centre for disadvantaged children living in Quetzaltenango, Guatemala.

PROGRESS OVER THE PAST THREE MONTHS

The Centre has been dramatically transformed over the past few months. In January, we started to fully furnish and equip the building. It is now a great play space for children, with lots of potential for active learning. We also interviewed and appointed staff, and were extremely fortunate in the people who accepted posts. You can read a little more about them on page 3.

In February, we were able to complete the legalisation process (after producing a couple of very thick files of time-consuming documents) and were authorised to work with children. We enjoyed a couple of weeks of training and

preparation together with new staff, which was a very useful and productive time.

Then, on the 1 of March, our first children arrived. We now have a reasonably small but lively group

of 2 – 4 year olds who seem remarkably at home in the Centre. We are gradually introducing more children as these settle in. The Centre is full of children's music, laughs and shouts, occasional tears and lots of happy play. It feels like a good place to be.



LOOKING AHEAD

In just a short time, children have come a long way in adjusting to a new environment and to a new pattern of life. They are getting to know the daily routine and now expect to wash their hands and brush their teeth at the appropriate times. We are hoping that relationships will continue to grow over the next few months and that we will see improvement in their overall health and development in their skills in many areas.

We still have places to accept a few more children. Now that we are fully up and running, an increasing number of people are approaching us for help, and we are concerned to ensure that we offer places to those most in need of support.

We are also concerned to do what we can to secure funds to ensure that we can continue to offer this care in the coming years, and we are very grateful for your ongoing support!

You have received this Bulletin because you are listed on our database as a supporter of the Trust. The Trustees believe that this quarterly communication is an important way of letting you know how your donations are being used. If you would prefer to be removed from our mailing list please either email us at: info@mayachildcare.org or write to our Secretary, **Mr Andrew Ker, 24 Ravensdale, Newtownabbey, Co. Antrim BT36 6FA.**



Children's situations

The majority of children currently fully registered at the Centre are 2 years olds (though we celebrate a birthday this week, which should be fun). All of them come from single parent families. In some cases the father was part of the family for a time but was violent towards the mother; in many cases he was never part of the child's life. Many of these families include at least one other child and most have an average income of Q500 – 600 per month (about £38 - £45). One mother gave birth just a week ago. She could not work in the final stages of her pregnancy and so has had to depend on the support of friends over the past weeks to try to meet the basic needs of her 2 year old and newborn child. The day-care provision of the Centre will allow her to seek work, once she is strong enough to do so, with her baby strapped to her back.

Mothers all seem delighted to see how well their children are settling into the Centre. One mother in particular was enormously relieved to hear how well her 2 year old has been getting on. Her daughter used to sit around the kitchen of the café where she worked and spent most of the time crying. When the owner of the café heard that she was going to be attending a day-care centre she commented, "She'll never stay. They'll be knocking on the door to give her back. That child does not stop crying". So far, she has been a delight. She cries when she wakes in the afternoon, but with a little comforting and a bit of distraction she has

been fine. She has a fabulous smile and a heart-melting laugh, and it is wonderful to be able to enjoy them.

Another mother who lives a bit further away told us that one day when she was not feeling well she told her 4-year-old son she didn't think she would be able to take him to the Centre. "Oh", he replied, "Well, that's okay. Just give me my bus fare and I'll go myself. I know where it is". He was most put out when he didn't get to go.



New Staff



Rubén is doing a wonderful job as a childcare worker at the Centre. He brings a great deal of experience to the role as he has worked with children for many years and was previously the director of an orphanage with an excellent reputation. He also

helped to establish and run a training programme for parents and will take on responsibility for much of this work within the Centre.

He comments:

"The experience of working at the Centre has been important. It brings daily rewards through the smiles of children and the joy they take in their activities. It is so satisfying to see their delight when playing in water and to share each moment with them. Each child has his or her own personality and in the short time we have spent together we have learned so much. I believe that over time we will be able to do a great deal to meet their emotional needs and to help them grow in all areas of their development."



Veronica, our cook, trained and worked as a primary school teacher and then became the cook for a local hospital. She has a very good relationship with the children and produces excellent meals.

She comments:

"I really enjoy my work at the Centre. I particularly enjoy the moments I share with the children. It is so good to see them doing well."

We have also appointed Romael and Angelica to work part-time as the cleaning and maintenance team. They are also doing a great job, and are grateful for the employment because they both suffered significant losses due to Hurricane Stan.

Spread the Word

We are sending all our supporters this bulletin by post so that we can include a few copies of our information leaflet for you to pass on. Now that the Childcare Centre is now up and running, we are anxious to ensure that its work can be sustained into the future. We hope that you will be able to pass these leaflets on to your friends and family to increase our donor base. If you would like any additional copies please contact Andrew - his details are at the bottom of the back page.

Belfast Fundraiser

A big thank you to everybody who supported the Barn Dance in the Grosvenor Hall in Belfast on St Patrick's night. This was the second barn dance organised by the Grosvenor Hall Congregation and was every bit as enjoyable as the first one, with Bill Patterson once again putting the young and the not so young through their paces. The event raised £1148.80.