



Colégio Infância Criança

Maria Cristina

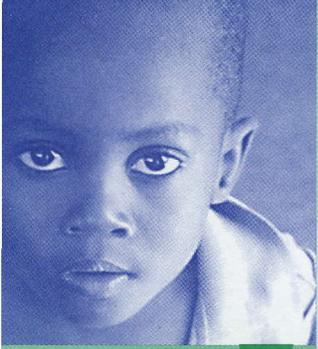
Five-year-old Maria Cristina Almonte Sosa has one skill that few other children her age possess: she can change the channel on the TV with her toes! Unfortunately, Maria Cristina cannot do many of the other things her friends can do, like sit up on her own or feed herself. That's because she has cerebral palsy, a medical condition that makes it difficult for her to control her muscles. Maria Cristina's cerebral palsy is the result of a brain injury she suffered when she was born two months prematurely at the local hospital in Santiago, Dominican Republic, where she lives. Her mother Anna Cristina was having a difficult time giving birth, but the doctors chose to use forceps rather than perform a caesarian section, causing irreversible damage to little Maria Cristina's brain.

Although Maria Cristina has a lot of involuntary muscle movement, she is able to use her feet to bring things to her so she can pick them up with her hands, and her parents say she knows what she wants, so they don't think she has much developmental delay mentally. Maria Cristina has also been able to learn new skills and improve her strength and muscle control through ICC's Community Based Rehabilitation program. The Sosas had a family friend who worked as a promoter (rehabilitation worker) for the program, and that's how they were introduced to ICC. Maria Cristina has been working with Barbara Taveras, her current promoter, for an hour every week for about one year now. In addition, she goes to the local hospital for physical therapy twice a week. Her therapists say she is improving her skills and responding well to the stimulation, and in particular, they are working to help her strengthen her torso so she can sit up.

Anna Cristina, Maria Cristina's mother, is her primary caregiver while her father Carlos is working at a shop painting cars. There are also family members and neighbors nearby who are happy to help watch Maria Cristina if her mother needs to go somewhere. Her parents hope that someday she will find a way to contribute to the family, but there aren't any schools in Santiago that will accept her because of the severity of her condition. In a more developed country, she would have more opportunities because of her skill in using her feet, but the ICC staff will do the best they can to help her reach her fullest potential. When Maria Cristina gets a little older, she will be fitted for a wheelchair, which will help increase her mobility.

ICC's Community Based Rehabilitation program trains rehabilitation workers to go into the homes of families like the Sosas in the Santiago area to teach parents simple exercises they can do with their special-needs child. The program helps children with all types of disabilities, from cerebral palsy to learning disabilities to behavioral disorders. It also makes life easier for their families by improving the family dynamic and saving on expensive trips to doctors and hospitals. In addition to helping the families of children with disabilities, the Community Based Rehabilitation program is working to change long-embedded cultural misconceptions about special needs children and foster understanding and respect for all people in the community of Santiago and the surrounding areas.

CHILDREN and partners **in focus**
A message of healing and hope for our partners.





Partners

New Partner Giving Levels

As all of you are aware, partnership represents the core of International Child Care's ministry. Without you, our committed partners, we would not be able to provide consistent, quality service to the children and families in Haiti and the Dominican Republic who have come to rely on ICC's programs for their health care needs. Because of changes in currency value, inflation in the price of everyday goods, and increased demand for ICC's programs and services in Haiti and the DR, we are asking our Cornerstone Members and Bed for Grace Sponsors to increase the level of their annual commitments to \$1,200 and \$3,600, respectively. That means the partnership levels will now look like this:

Partner in Grace - \$31/month, \$372/year (*no change—same as before*)

A Partner in Grace brings everyday blessings—food, medicine, clean water, and health care—to people in need at Grace Children's Hospital and throughout Haiti and the Dominican Republic.

Cornerstone Member - \$100/month, \$1200/year (*formerly \$1,000/year*)

Cornerstone Members ensure that health services can continue without interruption by providing a firm foundation of financial support for ICC's programs in Haiti and the Dominican Republic.

Bed for Grace Sponsor - \$300/month, \$3600/year (*formerly \$3,200/year*)

A Bed for Grace Sponsor provides care for a child in the inpatient ward at Grace Children's Hospital every day for one year. Sponsors receive photos and stories of the children who pass through "their" bed.

Vision of Hope Gift - \$10,000 (or more) one-time or recurring commitment (*new*)

A Vision of Hope Gift supports both the present and future needs of ICC with a gift that is split between current program activities and ICC's endowment fund.

Please take this time to consider increasing your partnership commitment to more fully meet the needs of ICC's programs. To make it even easier for you to give, ICC can assist you with setting up automatic monthly payments on your credit card—just call the office to set this up. Many banks also have bill payment services that you can use to send your monthly ICC partnership gift. Keep in mind that our partnership program can be flexible to meet your giving goals, so if you are interested in giving regularly at an amount other than those shown above, the ICC staff is happy to help you with that.

Thank you again for your faithful support of the children and families of Haiti and the Dominican Republic!

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