

Christian Children's Fund

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Birthdays, Smiles and Sponsorship: All in a Trip to Mexico

Richmond, Va. – Nov. 25, 2008 – Four-year-old Alma “seemed like the perfect child” to Dan Tearpock.

It was her captivating smile and friendly personality that led Tearpock, a Houston resident, to sponsor Alma after meeting her on a Christian Children's Fund Study Tour to Mexico in September. Alma became the fifth child that Tearpock currently sponsors – four of them girls.

“The little girls have a much more difficult time getting ahead in this world,” Tearpock said, emphasizing that girls have a harder time getting an education in poor areas of the world because education is not considered a necessity for them. Girls also spend much time doing lots of the home chores such as hauling water for cooking and cleaning.

Tearpock's initial goal on the Study Tour was to visit 17-year-old Noemi – a child he has sponsored for about 10 years.

“We celebrated her birthday when we were in Mexico,” said Tearpock. “It had to be the biggest and best birthday she has ever had.”

Besides his sponsored children, Tearpock has two daughter and four grandsons. His oldest daughter, Nicole McMorris, accompanied him on this recent Study Tour to Oaxaca, Mexico.

More than 600 sponsors have participated in CCF Study Tours since the program began in 2002, said CCF Assistant Director of Marketing Gary Duncan. Many sponsors have gone on multiple tours, including Tearpock. He went on his first Study Tour in 2006.

“I wanted to go meet Noemi and I wanted to go see the work that CCF is doing,” Tearpock said of his initial trip. “I wanted to develop a better relationship with the child.”

Tearpock, who is a petroleum geologist and owns a consulting business in Houston, said when he met Noemi in 2006 she had crooked teeth and was reluctant to smile. But Tearpock made sure she got braces, and on this trip she had “big smiles.” He noticed that she was much more interactive on this trip.



Christian Children's Fund (CCF) is a global force for children, helping the world's deprived, excluded and vulnerable survive and thrive in order to reach their full potential. Serving children since 1938, CCF works in 32 countries and assists approximately 15.2 million children and family members worldwide, regardless of race, creed or origin. CCF is a member of the ChildFund Alliance.

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CCF has helped deprived, vulnerable and excluded children through individual sponsorships since 1938. Tearpock has been a sponsor for about 15 years. In addition to Noemi and Alma, he sponsors three children in CCF's U.S. programs – two in Texas and one in South Dakota.

On his recent trip to Mexico, Tearpock observed many of CCF's programs including schools, medical facilities and how parents are involved in the children's lives.

"There is absolutely no doubt in my mind that they are truly helping these children and families out of poverty," he said of CCF's work.

Tearpock said in addition to seeing CCF's programs and children, Study Tours offer a chance to experience the culture in the nearby communities. On this trip, Tearpock spent time in local markets, visiting archaeological sites and getting his first taste of fried grasshoppers, which he said "wasn't too bad."

Tearpock urged all CCF sponsors to go on Study Tours to visit their sponsored children, saying, "They'll develop a bond with their child that will last a lifetime."

For more information on CCF's Study Tours visit www.christianchildrensfund.org and click on "Study Tours."

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