

### **Can't I just volunteer my time and not pay the program fees or donation?**

We have numerous people each month who contact us with the desire to volunteer their time at our orphanage. In many cases, they don't want to pay the application fees, the program fees or make a donation, but just give their time. What they don't understand is that without their financial support--there would be no special needs orphanage to volunteer at!

Our orphanage in Cuenca was created to care for some of the most severely handicapped or developmentally challenged orphans in Cuenca. Because of their unique and difficult challenges, they require not only more day-to-day assistance, but significantly more financial support as well. The application fee, the program fees and the donation that each volunteer pays are an important part of taking care of our children with special needs.

When a volunteer applies to our program, the first thing we do is make sure there is nothing in their background that might be of harm to our children. This is why we do a criminal background check (this costs us money) and have someone in the office check their references (this also costs money). We want to make sure, as best we can, that each volunteer is emotionally stable and will be a positive influence for our children.

Some of the program fees are used to help support the orphanage with regular day-to-day expenses. You can see from our program fee structure that you pay a significant amount for the first two weeks and then lower after that. Some of those higher initial fees are to cover things like in-country transportation, activities and other volunteer expenses. However, any left over after these expenses is used to support the orphanage. We believe those that stay for only a short period of time should give more financially to benefit our children, since they are not sacrificing as much time.

Our children with special needs also require additional things like seizure medication, oxygen, feeding tubes, adult diapers and a host of other expenses that are not normally needed at other orphanages that take care of healthier children. Also because of the fragile nature of many of our children, they are in the hospital more frequently and usually for longer periods of time than most other orphans. All of these things significantly increase our costs to run our special needs orphanage. We try to cover some of these additional costs with the required donation that each volunteer gives.

Remember, our children need both your love and your financial support.

We hope this better explains the financial structure we have; it is truly to benefit our special children.

Michael Lehman  
**Managing Director**