

## La Voz Nueva

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### Orphanage unique in its mission

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Over 210 million orphans are estimated to live in our world today. About every two seconds, another child becomes an orphan. Although approximately 250,000 children are adopted each year, every day, about 38,000 children will reach the maximum age to be adopted and "age out" of the system, possibly becoming orphans for their entire lives. It is estimated that Mexico alone has 10 million orphans within its borders. Organizations like UNICEF (The United Nations Children's Fund), create resources for children on a global level. Countless other small non-for-profit organizations around the world and nation focus their strength toward feeding, adopting, and preparing orphans to live the best life they can. One organization has its base in Alamosa, Colo. Our Family Orphan Communities (OFOC) is unique in its mission. They do not wish to build another orphanage, rather they seek to create economic developments that provide enough financial stability for families to be able to adopt children from orphanages and give them a different kind of life. In developing nations around the world, the organization strives to establish economically self-sustaining orphan communities in which businesses participate in sustaining families and families sustain their newly adopted children. Furthermore, OFOC attempts to make these communities environmentally green and high technology based where street orphans can thrive within a family. The child would ultimately receive healthcare, education, learn computer skills, job skills and training, participate in social and recreational activities, and complete a college education in hopes of being prepared and preparing others for the future of their country. This dream took shape in the life of Bob Miller, chairman of the organization, in the early 1990s. On a trip to Guadalajara, Mexico, Miller volunteered for a week with an orphanage of 120 children called Casa de Protección al Niño, in Tlaquepaque. He returned five more times, one of those times saddened to discover one of the owners of the private facility had died, leaving the only option of disbursing all the children to other orphanages around the country. Two children however, asked Miller to adopt them. Although he never saw it in the cards, he agreed to become their adopted father and went through the five-year process of securing green cards and passports. Miller soon saw the differences between children who grew up within a loving family versus those stuck in the orphanage system. OFOC is currently concentrating on development of orphan communities within Mexico, Vietnam and Liberia. The organization has word of strong interest from cities in Mexico such as Chihuahua, Tamaulipas and Durango in adapting the Families for Orphans project. In the above cities, the proposal to build communities for orphans is being discussed within the governor's office. Durango has requested a visit to Mexico to further discuss the possibilities. The University of Colorado at Denver College of Architecture and Planning also recently finished creating a 100-page master plan for the orphan community of Mexico/Chihuahua. The plan consists of details for community buildings and construction as well as ideas for integration into an existing pueblo. To see the plan please visit [orphancommunities.org](http://orphancommunities.org) and read the newsletter section. Volunteer options, donations and ideas are also much appreciated. To support this unique and generous organization please visit the above website or call 719-379-3755. Emma Lynch is La Vida Latina and Arts & Entertainment Reporter at La Voz. She can be reached at [attractions@lavozcolorado.com](mailto:attractions@lavozcolorado.com)