

Travel with us to Peru...



2024

Annual Report

supporting

Casa Hogar Juan Pablo II



Father Joseph Walijewski
Legacy Guild



Casa Hogar Juan Pablo II

Vision & Mission



Vision

To embody the entrepreneurial missionary spirit of Fr. Joe through the development efforts of the Casa Hogar children's home in Peru and nurturing the concept of reverse mission, advancing his Cause for Canonization and increased awareness of Fr. Joe within our Diocese including parish life, evangelization, catholic education and charitable words.

Thank you for your continued support for Father Joe's legacy missions, prayers for intercession and promotion of his exemplary life. For more information about his Cause and the Guild, please visit www.frjoesguild.org

Mission

The Father Joseph Walijewski Guild serves as the guiding organization of Fr. Joe's Legacy. It promotes, funds, and conducts the beatification, canonization, and continued missionary works in the spirit and zeal of the Servant of God, Father Joseph Walijewski serving the people of God in the Diocese of La Crosse and around the world.



Father Joseph Walijewski
Legacy Guild
 Casa Hogar Juan Pablo II

Dear benefactors,

Thank you to all who are joining us this year for the Annual Casa Hogar Dinner. We always look forward to spending this time with you to share some of the adventures and projects from the blessings of 2024.

This year we had a record number of visitors—groups and individuals and families. All of this fulfills the desire that Father José Walijewski had that we all participate in the mission of Casa Hogar. We help reach out to families and children that cannot make it on their own and through faith and family the children are able to build a better foundation for their future and to be able to help their own families. By coming to Casa to spend some time we do more than just observe, we learn too how to give of ourselves and to develop a missionary zeal and desire to serve others. It is a double blessing for us to see the impact that your visits have with our children to encourage them and to walk with them during this time of their lives and it is a blessing to see the changes in the volunteers who come to Casa and to learn from the poverty and richness of our children. We all gain more than we give.

This year we have a new face in Viterbo University—Leonardo. It is no easy thing to make the transition from Casa to La Crosse. He has been preparing in every way for several years and is doing well in this new environment. He joins Rosa who is now in her second year. You will hear from them both tonight.

Another special blessing this year was the presence of three seminarians and three priests. They came to work on Spanish and were excellent role models to the children as men of faith and to encourage our young people to enter more deeply into their faith as Catholics.

Thank you all so much for coming. We have been blessed by the inspiration of Father José Walijewski many years ago and now it is our turn. None of us can carry on this mission alone, but together in solidarity and faith we look forward to how the Lord is molding our young people, our volunteers and guiding us to be missionaries in our world. Have a wonderful night sharing with one another.



Msgr. Joseph Hirsch

Always an
Adventure



Walking with **Padre Jose**



In 1985 I met Father José Walijewski when he was the parish priest at Cristo Salvador parish in the district of Villa El Salvador, the most populated and extremely poor area of the city of Lima. I was invited to work as a social worker in the programs that he carried out. While working with him for more than 20 years, I got to know a great priest who through his work transmitted hope, strength, love, humility, humanity, and so much more.

I am a witness that during his stay on earth he dedicated his life to God through the social works that he did with the purpose of satisfying the hunger of the people and protecting homeless children. In Villa El Salvador he organized 40 soup kitchens and the glass of milk program for residents and children in extreme poverty with the support of 150 women from the community.

In the Cristo Salvador parish, he created a technical training center for young people with limited economic resources, for careers in sewing, cooking, baking, hairdressing, cosmetology, etc. He also carried out small productive projects, giving the opportunity to unemployed women to earn some income to help support their families.

After the visit of Pope John Paul II in 1985, Padre Jose bought a piece of land and began to build. In March 22, 1986 Casa Hogar Juan Pablo II was inaugurated to house orphaned children abandoned in areas throughout Peru, with the goal of offering these children a better future.

Never one to say that's enough, he wanted to provide adolescents an opportunity to gain skills in another field, which he set up in the city of Oxapampa. With the purchase of a 35-hectare farm he gave each teenager a hectare to plant and raise cattle so that each teenager would have an income that would help them progress professionally and economically. Unfortunately, this dream could not be achieved because of the terrorists' threat to take Father's life if he continued the work.

I went to Oxapampa with him on several occasions. It was during one of those trips that Father went to the market and came back with two little lambs and sent me to buy two bottles of milk to feed them until we reached Lurín. When we arrived back to Casa Hogar, all the children ran to him and he, like a small child, told everyone that the lambs are called Adam and Eve and he started to play with them like any other child, giving joy to the children for a long time.

During this process of carrying out my work with Father José Walijewski, I got to know a great human being open to all people and especially the abandoned children.

He saw in him a HUMBLE man in his great works. He did not speak of them in the first person, he always said that it was the work of everyone and he thanked and valued those who supported him. He never differentiated the people on his team, he treated everyone with the same respect and affection.

I also saw in him a very BRAVE man for his perseverance, strength, and tenacity, who put his effort into his work and did not rest until he achieved it, all the time he was creating and thinking about new projects to improve the future and quality of life of the young people who graduated from the home.

All of his actions as a father were directed towards looking out for needy families and defenseless children. A story that fully illustrates who Father Walijewski happened when our house was full. It was on a Friday that the team met and determined that because we had 110 children we could not take any more at that time. All was agreed to on that Friday, but by the next Monday morning, Father had another plan. Over the weekend the police had contacted him because they found 4 pre-adolescents sleeping in the rain under a staircase, and he could not leave them out in the street, cold and alone. And so that day, we started the San Jose family.

When he was sick and his health was very poor, he showed himself to be very strong and optimistic, showing a lot of hope and faith in God. Over time, I saw a very WISE human being in the formation of children in his life, in his family and in the love of God. His exemplary life and teaching are a model of life for each one of us as we hold him dear in our hearts.

I had the privilege of working with and knowing Father Joe. He helped me to deepen my faith in God, to grow as a human being with love for my neighbor. Professionally, he gave me the opportunity to support others and to be people who find true love for God in service, to have strength in difficult times and to not make hasty decisions in the face of an adverse situation. He was a beacon that guided my life.

Senora Alcira





"In January 2005 our lives took a sudden turn that marked a before and after in our history."

**Cesar and Maria
Family Assistants**



We went to work at Casa Hogar with our two biological children, Cesar, 9 years old, and Margarita. For them to suddenly have 8 sisters was something new but over time they came to love each other and to join in the daily lives of the other children. Cesar was delighted because he could play his favorite sport with the children, soccer and Margarita was the baby of the house, the girls combed her hair, took her to play, dance and sang with her.

Coming to Casa allowed us to get very close to God because by participating every day in Mass, Holy Hours, Saturday Rosary and experiencing Holy Week in a different way, for us as a couple and family, was something beautiful that we had not known or lived before coming to Casa.

We got to know Father Joseph Walijewski, a person who reflected such great peace and tenderness that we had never seen before and the children loved him very much. We were very hurt by his death. We will never forget the words of Father Sebastian when he told us that we would be the parents for the family of Our Lady of Fatima and that I would get tired of seeing my husband, in fact he said you will see him even in the soup hahahaha.

At first it was difficult to adapt because I knew how to lead a family such as cleaning, cooking, washing, doing chores, etc., for my family of 4, but now I had 10 children. The first months were difficult because we had to learn their names. We confused them a lot but over time everything flowed and now we have been here for almost 20 years.

Every night my husband and I talked about what we were going to do the next day to improve some behaviors and to be able to help the girls in their day-to-day lives, we divided the work as the laundry, cooking, cleaning, homework, going to school for meetings and talking to teachers also for medical appointments at hospitals.

During our time at Casa we felt comforted because we realized that we managed to impact the lives of our girls and much more when we heard them say Mom and dad. Still today we have a bond with girls that were at Casa. We get together to eat, talk and remember those times as a family, every birthday we call each other. We are always aware of them and their families that they have formed now.

Also the presence of Father Joseph in our lives is fundamental with his advice and his spiritual guidance, he gives us strength to move forward. Every December we renew our wedding vows which makes us stronger in our faith and our marriage.

Being at Casa allowed us to meet great people from the United States forming beautiful friendships and with great joy we look forward to their return to Casa.

Today we are no longer parents of a family, but as assistants we are still in several families supporting and guiding the boys and girls of this home that belongs to everyone. Many greetings to everyone in the United States, especially to all the benefactors who make it possible for the home to move forward.

May God and the Virgin bless you very much for your great heart. We are always praying for all of you.



"Where would I be?"

Well, like everyone else, I entered Casa Hogar because of family problems.

When I entered Casa Hogar I was 7 years old and it was somewhat difficult for me to adapt because of all the rules and norms that there are here, but the Casa provided me with many things that my family perhaps could not do such as being by my side in the moments that I most needed help.

Sometimes I wonder what would have become of me if I had never entered Casa Hogar.

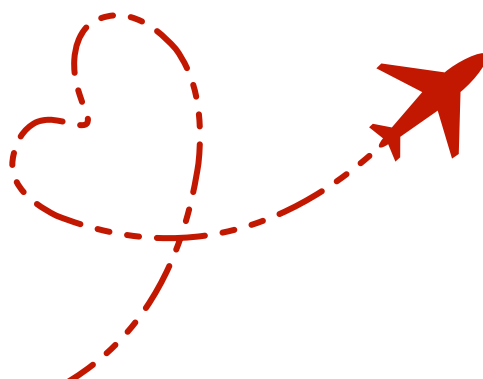
In my house no one had ever taught me to read or write since they never had time for me. All my brothers left me alone in the house with my brother and I would decide whether to go to my school or not. Many times I did not go and when I went no one was there to pick me up. My teacher would take me home since it was already night and it was very dangerous where we lived.

I would have gone down the wrong path like many of my brothers or maybe I wouldn't even be studying. Maybe I would never have been baptized or given my First Communion and worse I wouldn't be preparing for my Confirmation. I would never have known God. I wouldn't have known about the infinite things he has done for me or how much he loves me and took care of me. I would probably have concluded that because there is so much suffering in the world, maybe God doesn't really exist or that nothing would matter. I would be a totally different person without principles or values. I would be on a road very very far away from God.

When I was little I thought that God did not exist and that everything was pure lies when people talked about him. When I came to Casa Hogar I realized that God does exist. I still have doubts but I have realized that God is Almighty and that he loves and created us in his image and likeness. He is our anchor and our hope in a world in which life can be uncertain and unpredictable. He is the firm foundation on which we can lean when things seem to collapse around us.

Thanks to God and Casa Hogar I was able to meet good people in whom I could trust and be myself, those people who always give you support when you need it most. Those who do not leave you no matter the situation or moment you are going through. Those people who really care about me and care about my happiness as I also care for them.

I thank God for not leaving me alone when I needed it most. Thank you... Laura



God asked the question and *I answered*



My name is Esaú and I am 16 years old. I entered Casa Hogar February 2, 2022, along with my sister, Eli, who is two years younger than me.

I come from a very dysfunctional family with financial problems. We are four siblings in total. My mother left us when my youngest sister was barely 4 years old and I was 6, my second sister was 8, and my oldest brother was 15. To make ends meet my father worked day and night. I blamed God for everything bad that happened to me, but there was something I couldn't understand, because when I went to church I felt peace and tranquility. I knew God from a very young age and my family was always Christian.

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, it was a hard blow for my family since we couldn't go out. I ignored much of the virtual classes which we had to take. I preferred to go on the internet to play video games and it became a vice for me. I was not on a good path, disobeying my father, running away and not doing my school work. I started to meet people that I thought were my friends, I started to use bad language and arrived home late in the night, sometimes at 12:00 pm or 1:00 am. During that time I went through the stage of falling in love and having a steady girlfriend.

In 2021 I met a former maestra from Casa Hogar who lived near my home. She talked to my father and sisters about Casa Hogar. She told my father this would be an opportunity for my family. My father spoke to us and said that we should make our decision, I didn't know what to decide since it was going to be a radical change for my life, and besides, I had a girlfriend, but my little sister wanted to enter, and she didn't want to go alone. I realized that she was right and out of love for my family I came with my sister Eli to Casa Hogar.

We met with Alcira, the social worker from Casa Hogar and she evaluated our situation. We then had a medical and psychological evaluation. We were accepted and told that we could enter the following year.



When I entered Casa Hogar, I joined the San José Obrero Family. It was very shocking. Everything was strange and different. I had to go to Mass, which was something new for me, since I had always been a Christian and not Catholic. Little by little, I got used to the norms and responsibilities at Casa Hogar, but even so, I made a mistake: I ran away from Casa Hogar. My dad told me I should return to Casa if I wanted to get ahead and be the anchor of my family. I came back.

I decided to be baptized and make my First Communion. These were special days for me, because I understood that, from everything that was happening to me, God was not working in the way I asked him to, but in the way I needed. I advanced and was seen as an example for my brothers in the family. I was even asked to be sacristan, which means I have the responsibility of helping Father José along with two others to care for the chapel and to organize the servers.

These responsibilities have broadened my perspective on life and faith, helping me to deepen my own beliefs. Through the classes and the conversations, I have come to understand and reflect on what is really important to me. Being a sacristan has been a journey of self-discovery and connection with others that I never imagined I would experience at this age. Interacting with the community has shown me the importance of empathy and service. I have seen how small actions can have a big impact on the lives of others, I feel that I have to be a role model for younger people, which motivates me to behave in a way that reflects the values I defend.

On December 8, 2023, I was confirmed, which was a decisive moment for my life and I had to be committed to what God wants for me, to seek my purpose and vocation.



A Pilgrimage of Faith, Hope and Love



In August 2022, I traveled to Casa Hogar with a group of colleagues to learn more about Casa Hogar Juan Pablo II. The experience of going to Casa was an incredibly powerful journey that changed our lives and encouraged us to forge a new path. We fell in love with the children, the story of Fr. Walijewski, and the people of Peru. This developed into a beautiful partnership between Casa Hogar and Viterbo University. The fruit of this partnership has produced the following opportunities: the creation of a pathway for two Casa Hogar graduates to be full-time students at Viterbo University (Rosa in her second year and Leonardo in his first year), the opportunity for Viterbo students and staff to visit Casa on a yearly basis (our 3rd student group to travel March of 2025), and the development of grant opportunities to support future longer-term volunteers (pray for a successful grant application!).

Looking back on the journey we have taken to this day, I recognize that the Lord was asking me to deepen my relationship with Him. He was asking me (and Viterbo University) to be a part of a journey of faith, just as Fr. Walijewski was moved to be a missionary and travel to Peru to encounter the people of God in Villa El Salvador and eventually the children of Casa Hogar in Lurin, Peru.

This invitation from God was not all-of-a-sudden. I remember building a relationship with Msgr. Hirsch in my early days as a campus minister. He stopped by Viterbo University to see FSPA sisters, Fr. Conrad Targonski (our University Chaplain), and share with whoever he would run into the story of Casa Hogar Juan Pablo II. One of my favorite stories involves when Msgr. Hirsch came into our Campus Ministry lounge and asked the dangerous question out loud to a group of students sitting there. He said, "I wonder who God might be calling to be the next longer-term volunteer for Casa Hogar?" When Msgr. Hirsch announced his question out loud, one of our student leaders, Becca, exclaimed, "Father! I think I need to talk to you!" Becca had been seriously considering being a volunteer after hearing Msgr. Hirsch at a recent Sunday Mass. The morning before this encounter, she asked God for an unmistakable sign...and a sign God did provide. Becca went on to volunteer at Casa for the summer, and when she returned, she could not contain herself in sharing the life-changing experience she had.



This was the beginning of an invitation for me to consider bringing students to experience Casa Hogar. To consider the deep story of Fr. Walijewski's life and example. To experience a deep sense of hope and gratitude within my own life as we shared in the life of the children and the staff of Casa. Recognizing God's plan of sheer goodness, when Viterbo traveled to Casa for the first time, we knew that God was asking for more. Our team deeply heard the call of love in our experience. It was not enough to just visit Casa Hogar. It was not enough to send students to Casa Hogar. We knew that the Lord wanted us to create a pathway to provide individuals a way to study with us here in La Crosse. We wanted to bring a piece of Casa Hogar and Peru with us, to be in a deep intimate relationship with our neighbors in the South.

I'm so deeply grateful for the plan God has laid out for our community. It has been a sacred pilgrimage of faith, hope, and love to be able to experience the life-changing effects of God's love on his beloved children. I see the hearts of our students and community being healed, changed, and transformed through this new opportunity and community the Lord has created. The Lord has been creating a beloved community where our individual stories are meeting in His heart to be transformed into something more than we could have ever imagined. Pray for us as the beautiful journey continues!

Emilio Alvarez is the Director of Campus Ministry at Viterbo University. He is married to his beautiful Emily, and together they have four beautiful children: Lucia (10), Blaise (8), Violet (4), and Marie (2). He is also a candidate for the Diaconate for the Diocese of La Crosse.



An Unexpected Journey



I am from a small village in the Cusco region. My father died when I was a baby and my mother, unable to take care of myself and my 4 siblings, sent us to Lima when I was 7 years old. My actual path to Casa Hogar opened up when I was 11 years old. At that time, I was living with my older sister Luzmarina, her husband, his 4 children and my sister's daughter. When I first arrived in Lima I lived at another orphanage, but due to circumstances I could no longer live there. My mother was living far from Cusco with another husband and her son. Though it was not ideal, my sister took me into her busy home.

I love my sister but my education with her and all the children was a challenge because she was more focused on her husband's children and her daughter, I was always the last option, but I was okay because my sister was 21 years old and was trying to be a good mother for my niece. After three months my uncle and my sister decided to go to Casa Hogar Juan Pablo Magno to talk with the Social Worker, Senora Alcira about my situation to ask if it was possible for me to live at Casa Hogar. I liked that idea because my brother Christian had been living at Casa for many years. I was excited and at the same time nervous because it was going to be a new experience for me. I would be far from my older sister who had grown to be my maternal figure.

The first day at Casa Hogar I met so many kind people, I had new clothes, fresh food, my bed, a new family, and, most importantly a God. Every afternoon I went to visit my brother and play with him, now I have many good memories with my brother. I remember the first time when I was walking in Casa Hogar and said this is a castle, it was the most beautiful place that I had seen in my life.

I always studied hard because I knew what happens when a person does not have a degree or career. When I had the opportunity to come to Viterbo to study, I was excited but I knew it would not be easy. My classes would be in English and I was still learning the basics of the language. It was, and still is, complicated to learn the language, the subjects for my degree and understand life in La Crosse.

Like Msgr. Hirsch says, when we, the kids at Casa Hogar, are given these opportunities, it is not just for us, but for a better future for our entire family. That is a big responsibility that I take very seriously.

My life has been like traveling roads in Peru with many turns and potholes. I am grateful that I have had this adventure and look forward to the journey I still have before me. Thank you for all you do to help the children at Casa Hogar have a future that they never knew was possible.

Rosa, Sophomore Viterbo University
Graduate Casa Hogar Juan Pablo II





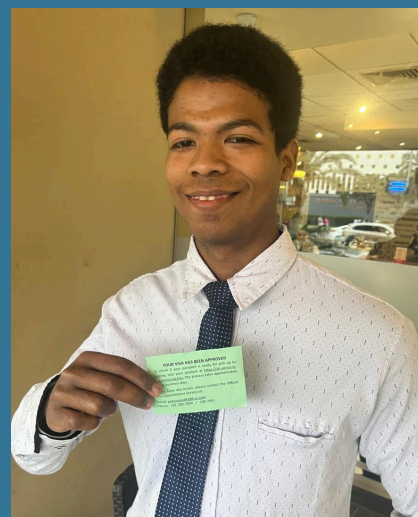
*Every step,
every decision,
every moment
**brought me
to this point.***



During my last year at Casa Hogar, I was given the news that I had been selected as the winner of the scholarship for Viterbo University. Receiving this news was incredible. After 6 years of effort and constant growth, I had finally reached one of my biggest goals! Once I processed the news, my preparation began, and it lasted almost a year. I remember that by then, I was already learning English and studying more on my own, but I still hadn't decided what career I was going to follow. However, I knew that something related to numbers and computers would be a good fit since it was what I enjoyed and excelled at.

From the very first day, my teachers helped me understand how important this opportunity was. They gave me advice and cleared up most of my doubts. They, like my biological family, were very excited. But I will talk about my family later. The process at Casa Hogar was complicated because it was also my last year, and saying goodbye to the people I loved was never easy. I remember that year with great affection because it was the year I got to know many people better and strengthened friendships. After six months of receiving the news, it was time for my graduation from Casa Hogar. That day, I gave a speech about what I liked the most about Casa Hogar, my best and not-so-good experiences.

That same month was also my high school graduation. I said goodbye to my friends, knowing that each one would follow a different path, leaving our reunion to fate. On December 25th, I packed my things and moved to my grandmother's house to spend my last months before traveling to the United States. With Christmas approaching, I was preparing for a new stage of my life. Moving to my grandmother's house was the first step toward my dream of living in the United States.



I lived at my grandmother's house for 8 months. It was there where I turned 18 and got used to life outside Casa Hogar. I shared a routine with my cousin: we studied in the morning, exercised in the afternoon, and did our homework at night. Occasionally, we played soccer with my uncle and his friends. The afternoons were perfect for playing. I could feel the wind on my face, the warmth of the sun on my skin, and the excitement of competing with my uncle. We often won, and my uncle's friends invited us to work as helpers in different tasks so that, by working, we could be more useful.

During this time, I also strengthened my family relationships. I started to see them from a new perspective, and the conversations, which used to feel superficial, became deeper. We talked about religion, family, and life in general. It was a time of real connection, an unexpected gift before my departure.



During the last month, my family was very excited and organized a farewell party with all my relatives, some friends, and Father José, who shared stories about my early days at Casa Hogar. We reflected together on everything I had lived up to that moment. That was my last day in Peru, a day full of mixed emotions. Saying goodbye to my homeland made me realize how much I had grown, but also how much I still had to discover.

Looking back, I understand that every step, every decision, and every moment brought me to this point. Leaving Peru was a mix of nostalgia for what I was leaving behind and excitement for what was to come. Now, with my eyes set on the future, I feel ready to face any challenge that life in the United States may bring.

Leonardo, Freshman Viterbo University
Graduate Casa Hogar Juan Pablo II



Seminarian & Priest Program



Father Isaac Pecha

Associate Paster
Holy Family, Arcadia
Sacred Heart, Pine Creek



Zach Goodchild

Seminarian
Diocese of Columbus , Ohio



Father Tim Reither

Associate Paster
St Patrick, Onalaska
Campus Chaplain
Aquinas Middle School



Jeremiah De Groot

Seminarian
Pre-Theology II
St. Francis de Sales
Diocese of La Crosse



Kyle Lang

**Seminarian, Theology III
Pontifical North American College
Diocese of La Crosse**

"I will die with my shoes on." Padre José Walijewski indeed died as he said he would, with his shoes on — that is, busy at work, serving until the final moment. And if shoes could talk, Padre José's rugged, dusty footwear would reveal a man who walked the walk, who put in miles of missionary labor to reach the poorest of the poor. They would speak of the thousands of people who traveled with him along his journeys to the jungle, the countless sick he visited and comforted, and the mobs of children that constantly sought his paternal care.

"Travel with us." Such was the message Padre Walijewski's shoes seemed to emit, and such the message remains at Casa Hogar nearly forty years after its founding. But even more than "travel", time spent at Casa is a pilgrimage, a mission. Though a different Padre José has care of the community today, boys and girls from troubled families continue to receive a robust, faithful, and joyful model of family life. I was grateful to spend two months participating in this family life.

Days were full. With the niños, we visited the sick and elderly to pray a rosary or deliver food and other material goods. We taught classes, climbed mountains, sang songs, met with non-Catholic pastors, built campfires, made pizza from scratch, and challenged other orphanages to soccer. It was arduous and fatiguing, yes, and life was by no means perfect, but it was adventurous, it was joyful, and the hinge around which everything turned was prayer and the Eucharist. As Msgr. Hirsch constantly said, we are not here merely to sobrevivir (survive), but to florecer (flourish). Christ came so that we "may have life, and have it abundantly". At Casa, there is life in abundance.

Joy and flourishing imply a fullness, but in order to be full, something previously wanting must be filled. For some reason, the word that kept returning to my mind throughout the summer experience was starvation. While we indeed encountered material hunger, even more noticeable was spiritual hunger, a great desire for God that seeks fulfillment. During the first week in Peru, I providentially met a small community of faithful adults who gather every Monday for two hours of prayer and Bible study. They asked me to lead discussions on the gifts of the Holy Spirit and other themes they were studying. In that community, I encountered a deep hunger for the Word of God. Where I was concerned about my less-than-fluent Spanish, the participants did not seem to notice; they were desirous only to know Christ more fully. The broken Spanish and modest buttered bread for dinner were merely afterthoughts. Observing their desire in turn left me hungry, starving even, to better understand Christ's mysteries and drink deeply from the Scriptural fount. When we travel with Christ, we simultaneously feed his starving flock, are fed with his words, and desire to receive his eternal food all the more.

"There is no such thing as vacation," Monsignor Hirsch constantly told the niños, "only a different mission." I am happy that God gave me the mission to serve at Casa for two months. I am happy to return to Italy to continue studying for the priesthood, where I may visit the Pope who made Casa Hogar Juan Pablo II possible and pray for Padre Walijewski's intercession. And I know that both saintly Polish priests are happy that a small community in western Peru is continuing the mission to create an army of disciples eager to "die with their shoes on."

Thank you to all who make Casa Hogar possible, and may God keep you.



A Journey of Faith and Love **Following in the Foot Steps** *of Fr. Walijewski*

When a student signs up for classes, there are many options and rules about what they must take. When they sign up to learn a new language, it might be with the intention of traveling to a new country, hosting an exchange student, volunteering with the Peace Corps, or just to do something different. At Columbus HS, many students continue to study Spanish with the hopes of joining the school mission team and traveling to Casa Hogar in Lurin, Peru. They wish to continue the work of Fr. Walijewski, and to help to provide "Faith, Family and a Future" for the children of Peru.



While learning Spanish, the classroom is full of pictures of places that I have visited, or traveled to with my students. Stories are shared. Excitement builds. But by far, the stories that my students focus on most are of the life and legacy of the young boy who once told his mom that he wanted to become a priest and to also provide homes for children without a home. That young boy grew up to become Fr. Walijewski, the founder of Casa Hogar Juan Pablo II in Lurin, Peru.

My students know the story of how "Joey" struggled as a student, and was told he was not smart enough to become a Priest, but they also know that through faithful prayers and dedication, Father Joe was able to fulfill his promise to his mom and to God.

My students are motivated to learn well, to work hard, and to follow God's lead to Casa Hogar, bringing donations and being prepared to do whatever chores Casa asks them to do. But in addition, they give of themselves. They follow their hearts to where the Spirit leads. The 2024 Team worked hard for 2 years, to earn the trip. Then they had a 24 hour journey to Peru, bringing 28 heavy bags of donations with them. We hosted the 2024 Casa Hogar Olympics and completed many service projects with smiles, and then looked around for what else we could do to help. Some projects were easy, some were messy and others heavy, but my students smiled the whole time. When given free time, they went to play and chat with the students and to make friends. My heart nearly burst with pride when my students asked if they could buy new volleyball equipment for Casa Hogar and Caritas Felices and to paint the home of a local elderly lady. It was easy to see that they had found the same faithful passion and compassion that had led Fr. Joe all those years. Before each trip is done, my students are already coming to me with "ideas for next time" and also asking, "If there is room next time, may I come again?" There is a peacefulness and loving Spirit at Casa that binds us all together with our Casa family as we follow the path so lovingly prepared for us by Fr. Joe.

Deb Kennedy
Columbus Catholic School, Retired K-12 Spanish Teacher

homeajpm.org/project-milk

PROJECT MILK

**Sharing Our Resources with
Casa Hogar Orphanage in Peru**



***You can make a BIG difference
by donating to Project Milk.***

***It costs \$100 to send one bag of milk to Peru. 100% of your
donation is used for the purchase and delivery of an annual
shipment of 800 bags of powdered milk.***



Father Joseph Walijewski
Legacy Guild
Casa Hogar Juan Pablo II

For more information, or to receive promotional resources,
please contact the Diocese of La Crosse Office for
Ministries and Social Concerns at 608-791-0161.



My Journey to Casa Hogar

I am a member of the Eye Glass Mission and have been to Casa many times. I lead the dispensing area; we are the folks that find glasses that best fit the patient's needs. Let me tell you a story.

There are lots of miracles that happen to us all, some big, some small. A Quechua woman (indigenous mountain people) came to the Eye Glass Mission, accompanied by her son.

I understood she was over 90 years old, and her eyes were just a pitiful wreck. Mountain people generally live above 5000 ft. and have little regard for the intense sunlight. Her patient card basically said that she could not be helped. But her son begged me to try something, anything that might help. She just wants to walk in the back yard twice a day, he explained. I talked to the doctor that examined her. He held little hope, but suggested something. I did a little computer wizardry and picked a pair of nice glasses for her. Wonder of wonder, miracle of miracles – she could see!! She laid hands on me and prayed over me in her Quechua language. Tears filled my eyes. But that's not the miracle. The miracle is that I actually mixed up the numbers in my head and picked the wrong glasses. The wrong glasses worked!! Tell me that this was not the hand of the Lord, a minor miracle.

With this story in mind, what about my journey to Casa. One Sunday after mass at Newman, there were a number of tables set out with volunteer opportunities. The posterboard for the Eye Glass Mission caught my attention. Six months later I got on an airplane to Peru, and went on my first eyeglass mission. I took my son with. It changed his life. Then I took my wife on the next mission, and then my daughter. My wife calls Casa her "happy place." Yes, it is. Apart from the good work of the Eye Glass Mission, all together we sponsor 3 Casa kids, 2 Casa graduates in the Project for Life, and one grandchild. They are our extended family. I can't explain the metamorphosis that happened to all of us. But I am reasonably certain, if you go on a mission, it will change your life too.

If you have not seen the movie, **"Field of Dreams"**, try to watch it sometime. **"If you build it, they will come,"** is a thematic phrase from the movie. Kevin Costner hears a voice saying this phrase over and over. He is not sure what it means, but he builds a baseball field in his cornfield in Iowa. And the rest of the story follows. It's magical if not spiritual. Father Joe Wallieski must have heard the voice when he founded Casa Hogar. **"If you build it, they will come."** Do you hear the voice calling you?? It is just a tiny voice that can change your life.

Dennis Dorman, Optical Mission

Making a difference from California



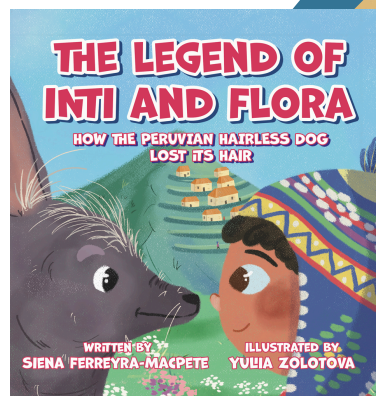
Siena Ferreyra-MacPete was raised in a Peruvian household, making empanadas with her abuelita, watching futbol with her dad and abuelo, and hearing stories about their lives in Peru. Growing up in the United States, she always felt fortunate to have been born in America. Hoping to find a way to give back to less fortunate Peruvians, she discovered Casa Hogar and was moved by its mission to raise its kids in a family environment. When she reached out, she discovered that Casa Hogar needed basic supplies like cough medicine, a glucose meter for their diabetic kids, vitamins, nail clippers and more. She contacted multiple companies asking for donations but only Roche pledged a glucometer and strips. Determined not to give up, she started a GoFundMe page to raise money to buy the needed supplies.

Unfortunately, her trip to Peru in December of 2022 was canceled due to widespread Protests and political unrest. Although she was disappointed by this setback, it gave her a chance to do more fundraising. By April of 2023, she had raised almost \$1300, and the political upheaval had settled enough to allow travel to Peru. On Good Friday, she traveled to Casa Hogar with three large duffel bags full of the requested medicines, vitamins, clothes, nail clippers, sunscreen, lotions and toys for the kids. The highlight of her mission was meeting everyone at Casa Hogar and partaking in their Easter celebrations.

Meeting the kids left a lasting impression, and Siena was determined to do more. Last Christmas she organized a Christmas card writing event at her school. She recruited her high school classmates to make home-made cards that she mailed along with some candy to share the Christmas spirit. This year, she plans to organize another GoFundMe campaign for Casa Hogar this December for the holidays.

A few months ago, Siena published her first children's book *The Legend of Inti and Flora: How the Peruvian Hairless Dog Lost Its Hair* to share Peruvian culture with young readers and she will be donating proceeds from the sale of her book to Casa Hogar.

Siena hopes her story will inspire other kids to help Casa Hogar. Her story shows how one person (even a teen) can make a difference and help people thousands of miles away.



July 1, 2023 – May 31, 2024

Financial Report

Revenue

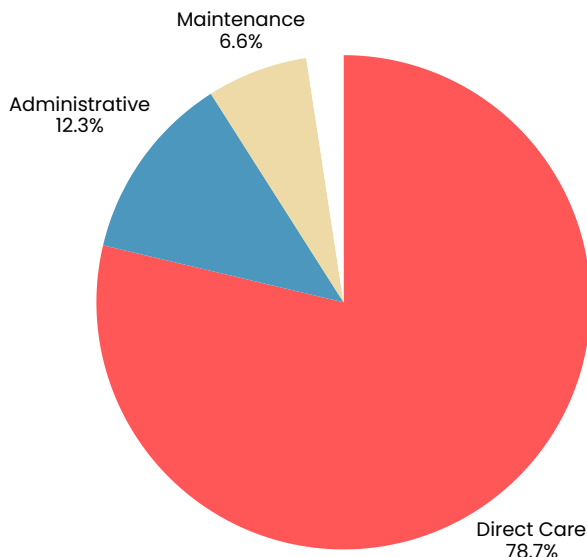
Donations \$767,818

Cash, Interest, Endowment, Appeals, Sponsorship, etc

In-Kind Donations \$152,368

Project Milk, Food, Supplies, etc.

Total Revenue \$920,186



EXPENSES

Direct Care \$643,926

Family Teachers, Program Staff, Clothing, Food, Medical and Psychological Care, Education, Social Services, Project of Life, etc.

Administrative

Expenses \$100,427

Transportation, administrative staff, taxes, legal expenses, etc.

Maintenance &

Upgrades \$54,050

Campus improvement, general maintenance, utilities, security, etc.

Other Expenses \$19,734

Travel, printing, mailing, fundraising, volunteers, mission teams, priest education program, etc.

Total Expenses \$818,137

Father Joseph Walijewski Orphanage Endowment Trust

- **Trust Balance \$496,553**

- **Net Gains –\$27,806**

July 1, 2023– June 30, 2024

The Trust grows through the generosity of donors and through the strategy of value-investment. A donation to the Fr. Joe Walijewski Endowment Trust ensures that Casa Hogar Juan Pablo II can continue serving the children of Peru for years to come. Donations to the Endowment Trust in the form of cash, real estate, insurance policies, estates, etc., are greatly appreciated.

For more information, contact Jeff Reiter, Director of Stewardship & Development, 3710 East Ave. S. La Crosse, WI 54602-4004. Phone 608-791-2685

The annual distributable amount was determined in accordance to the Endowment Trust: Policy Statement and Norms, Diocese of La Crosse. This policy ensures that the Trust principle cannot be touched and will always remain intact. Trust assets are held by Trustpoint.

SUPPORTING CASA HOGAR JUAN PABLO II IS AS EASY AS 1, 2, 3

Please help us support the mission of Father Joseph Walijewski by supporting Casa Hogar Juan Pablo general expenses the sponsorship program, and campus projects both maintenance and upgrades through the Father Joseph Walijewski Legacy Guild.

1

Use QR Code for online donations or go to www.homeajpm.org/donate



2

Mail donation to
Father Joseph Walijewski Legacy Guild
3710 East Ave S
La Crosse, WI 54601

3

Set up ACH one-time or monthly payments by contacting Sarah Komperud at 608-791-2653.



FOLLOWING IN THE
FOOTSTEPS OF
Father Joseph Walijewski
PILGRIMAGE



SEPTEMBER 2025

If you would like to be on the mailing list for this amazing pilgrimage opportunity, please contact Noel Furger 608-791-2677.

Thank You

*The children pray
everyday for the
benefactors that
give them hope for
a brighter future.*



Our Contact



608-791-2677



nfurger@frjoesguild.org



homeajpm.org



Casa Hogar Juan Pablo II