



The Missionary Society of St. James the Apostle
Diocesan priests serving the poorest of the poor since 1958.

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"A Network of Love, that Transforms Lives..."

Dear Friends,

Each year I have the opportunity to visit Santa Cruz, Bolivia where we are committed to supporting a Children's Cancer Project known as 'Padrinos Mágicos' (Magical Sponsors). Here in the first world, it is difficult to imagine that there are very little resources available to families who must endure the trauma of a child being diagnosed with terminal cancer. But sadly, that is the reality in the developing world. I came to know of the Padrinos Magicos foundation through Fr. Roger Clarke, a St. James Society priest, who served for many years as Chaplain at the public cancer hospital in Santa Cruz, Bolivia.

There, I was able to experience, first hand, the difficulty these children and families endure just trying to receive basic treatment and medication. In this issue we will introduce you to the 'Padrinos Mágicos foundation...

The Padrinos Mágicos Foundation cares for children and adolescents in Bolivia who face cancer, HIV and childhood drug dependence. Our mission is to provide medical, emotional, social, and economic support to the most vulnerable families, ensuring that each child continues their treatment without interruption and with dignity. We believe in the power of love, solidarity and the human presence that changes destinies. We therefore provide comprehensive programs that include medications, transportation to and from therapies, medical consultations, medical studies, food, hospitalization expenses, emotional support and specialized therapies. Our goal and hope is to ensure that the little warriors of Bolivia do not face their battle against cancer, HIV and drug addiction, alone.

Our Vision: We dream of a foundation present in every region in Bolivia. We want our own subsidiary organizations, where children and their families find support, to provide emotional support, and programs that respond to each of their needs. Since the beginnings of the Padrinos Mágicos Foundation, Fr. David Costello, Superior General of The Society of St. James, has been a key figure and collaborator in our journey. With more than a decade of commitment, Fr. David has provided tireless support to children facing cancer, HIV and childhood drug dependence. His dedication, discreet and constant, has made a profound difference in the lives of hundreds of families. We appreciate his faith in our work and how his generous heart is always open to supporting the most difficult causes.

Padrinos Mágicos has a sponsorship program, called "Fairly Odd Parents". This program specifically seeks to aid those children who have abandoned their treatment due to a lack of financial resources. These are young lives who are at great risk and we have created this specific program to ensure that poverty does not prevent a child's continuity of care and medical treatment.



The Team at Padrinos Mágicos Foundation

In Bolivia, as is the case in other parts of the world, there is no single cause for childhood cancer. It is multifactorial and can be influenced by various factors such as radiation exposure, passive smoking and hereditary genetic syndromes.

In terms of statistics, it is estimated that approximately 120 out of one million children in Bolivia, will develop some type of cancer each year, while only one in four of these children will receive satisfactory medical care.



The statistics demonstrate that, in Bolivia, there have been 3,347 new cases of childhood cancer between 2016 and 2023. These alarming statistics highlight the fact that only one in four of these children will receive adequate treatment for their disease.

Padrinos Mágicos supports patients from various regions of Bolivia including provinces and both rural and peri-urban areas. Each family undergoes a thorough socio-economic evaluation to ensure that the help reaches those who really need it.

Another group whom we help, are children who are afflicted with HIV. Many of these children are cared for by grandparents, who live in extreme poverty. Their families often lack means of transportation and they also suffer from frequent power outages in their homes, which obviously is very disruptive for care. We are focused on ensuring that these children, who lack financial means, continue treatment for their disease or condition.

In Bolivia, many children living with HIV face an extremely harsh reality. When one or both parents die or are unable to provide for their care, these children are often left in the care of their grandparents or distant relatives or even people outside their community, who do not have the necessary resources to sustain their treatment.

This situation causes serious difficulties such as a lack of economic resources to cover transportation for medical consultations and check-ups. This interrupts their ability to receive necessary medication, and puts their health at risk. Deficiencies in vitamins and minerals, from basic food groups, are also a primary concern for these patients.

Padrinos Mágicos Foundation strives to provide these children with transportation for their check-ups, healthy food and basic needs, as well as complementary medication and emotional support for their caregivers. Our desire is for any child living with HIV, to receive help and treatment, even if they lack the economic resources.

In partnership with a local non-profit, Comunidad Encuentro, we develop educational and productive gardens for children and young people at social risk. We call these gardens, "Sowing Hope".



These gardens provide vegetables to help improve nutrition for our children. We also seek to develop socio-emotional skills, promote social and labor reintegration and support families of children with cancer and HIV by providing healthy foods. In this way, the earth becomes a classroom of life, recovery and opportunities.

Another critical aspect of holistic care is occupational therapy. We offer fine and gross motor therapies, and emotional therapy along with psychological support workshops and first-aid and craft workshops. One workshop we offer is called "*I breathe and follow*" which teaches patients how to develop and practice breathing techniques for coping with stress, anxiety, and pain management. We also give other workshops for patients and their families which aim to strengthen self-esteem, adaptive skills, and physical and emotional recovery processes. We work with transparency, ethics and love. Every support received is transformed into life, hope and continuity in the treatment of children. We are a network of love that changes destinies.

The Padrinos Mágicos Foundation is so much more than an organization: it is an act of love that transforms pain into hope; abandonment into a shared journey; and needs into opportunities. All who work here are committed, in love, to help these children. We thank you for reading our story and for supporting The Missionary Society of St. James the Apostle!

Please follow us @: <https://fundacionpadrinosmagicos.org.bo/>



With Every Good Wish in Christ,

Rev. David Costello, Director



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For the purpose of wills, bequests, and living trusts, our official name is:

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