

## SPRING SUMMER NEWSLETTER 2012

MORE NEWS & PHOTOS FROM AROUND NIÑOS DE CRISTO

TRAVELS THRU THE CAMPO

ABOUT CHARLES DECKER FOUNDATION



Charles Decker Foundation

Newsletter #11

June 2012

About CHARLES DECKER FOUNDATION ([click here](#))

### Spring Summer 2012 Newsletter

The month of May marks the end of an eventful school year for the children and young people of Niños de Cristo and the beginning of summer and all the attendant activities.

Late summer will also be the beginning of construction of the new boys dorm, a gift from singer Marc Anthony (see story below) and possibly the beginning of the addition to the school on the grounds of Niños de Cristo.

#### THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS

First and foremost I want to begin with a "Thank You" to our donors.

Your support makes our contributions and help to Niños de Cristo, possible. I consider ourselves partners in this mission. Because of your donations, we are helping to provide food, medical care, schooling, college scholarships, security, and love for these children.

When you see the photos and expressions on these children as you read this report, it is hard to believe these were homeless, abandoned, or orphaned children. Everyone of them.

I have seen children as they arrived (or were delivered by police, authorities, etc) at the door of Niños de Cristo as infants or as old as 10, often emotionally traumatized, infected with parasites, lice, frightened, abused, confused, I have seen some who could not speak for months.

To see these same children a few months later, playing with the other children, skipping to class at Niños de Cristo, comforting a new arrival, perhaps years later going off to college, perhaps medical school, law school, or the Dominican Olympic Volleyball team, is amazing. All it takes is people like Sonia, her team, and the facilities of Niños de Cristo, and financial support.

Thank you for helping us help them.

#### THANK YOU TO DECKER FOUNDATION VOLUNTEERS

We have a wonderful group of volunteers who are the "arms and legs" of our support and on occasion

surrogate Mothers and sisters to these children. They also interface with the staff of the orphanages, meet with our supporters, reach out to potential supporters and donors.

Many have been with us since we started in 2004. In the recent past the lead volunteers are Andrea Coronado, now in Santo Domingo, (now working at the U.S. Embassy) and Sardis Rijo and Victor Jimenez, in La Romana, Lisa Casado in New York.

In New York, Zoraida Santana is the original "go to gal" for anything related to Niños de Cristo. Also, Miguel Rios passionately aids our efforts in Southern California, Tom Tanno, also in Southern California, is always on the lookout for press and publicity for us. And Lumi Perez, now a new Mother, who I am sure will be bringing her new baby Diana to Niños de Cristo soon.

And the list would not be complete without mentioning Deena McKelvy, who has been volunteering at Niños de Cristo since I began. If you are in La Romana, and see someone who looks like a movie star "schlepping" some kids from Niños de Cristo, around La Romana, it's Deena, taking them to the dentist. (Deena also quickly responded recently with a contribution for our Montecristi orphanage support.)

This is by no means a complete list of all those who volunteer and help directly at Ninos de Cristo.

## DONORS 2012

(as of June 14, 2012)

Austin Community Development  
Dell Foundation-Dan Sheth  
Warren Borron  
Caroline Heller, DVM  
Joyce & Chris Frost (*Montecristi Orphanage*)  
Martha Illuela, MD  
Rev. George Kinney  
Bertie Kinsey  
Manuel Knight  
Martha Knouss  
Pierson Mapes  
Deena McKelvey (*Montecristi Orphanage*)

Cesar Molina MD  
Tom & Fran Qualter  
Susan Butler Plum  
Soralia Roa (*Las Matas*)  
Ted Sanella (*Montecristi Orphanage*)  
David Searby  
Bob Strang  
Wapakoneta Foundation (*Bruce, Daniel Jr, David and Joan Searby*)

70% of our contributions come in the last 3 months of the year.

## DONORS 2011

### \$25,000 and above

Daria Foster (*in memory of Bill Foster*)

### \$10,000 and above

David and Mary Alice Sherrill

### \$ 5,000 and more

Caroline & Cesare Combemale  
(Colgate Palmolive)  
Sam & Beth Chapin  
Christina and Robert Dow  
Foundation\*  
César R Molina MD  
Wapakoneta Foundation  
(Searby Family)

### \$2,000 and more

Bob & Benne Druckenmiller  
Bill Haldane (Diogonese &  
Haldane)  
Soralia Roa and George  
Fernaine, MD

### \$1,000 and more

Susan Butler Plum  
Bill and Sonia Dunham  
Allison Glackin & Family  
In Memory of Allan Haack &  
Rob Lenoir  
Caroline Heller, DVM  
Jet Blue  
Jlm and Kathy O'Brien  
Janis Reh  
Allen Rosenshine  
Dave Stulb

### \$ 500 and more

Stefano & Simona Amerio  
Bruce Goodman & Family\*  
Susan Lenoir & Family  
Dan Sheth & Family

### \$200 and more

Anonymous  
Tom and Mary Ellen Decker  
Jim Dineen  
Jessica Foster  
Galanga Rest (Patrick & Titi)  
Allen & Edith Haack  
Bertie Kinsley  
Ed and Terry Samson

### Up to \$ 100

Diana Itseleva  
Jim Kelley  
Rev George Kinney  
Gabriela Kutting  
Mary Murphy  
Luisa Ruiz  
David & Christine Searby &  
Family  
Julie Zahm

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## News From Niños de Cristo

### **Marc Anthony To Build New Boys Dorm**

Pop singer and actor Marc Anthony is going to build a new dormitory for the boys of Niños de Cristo. It will be located in a lovely section of La Romana called "Bella Vista." The land is being contributed by the town of La Romana with help from Central Romana Sugar. This dorm is needed as the 30 boys are currently living in a 3 bedroom home in La Romana.

Here is the press release on Marc Anthony's gift

*"The Maestro Cares Foundation will work in association with other organizations to help fund programs that directly improve the well being of children. The first of the orphanages that will benefit from Maestro Cares is Orfanato Niños de Cristo in La Romana in the Dominican Republic, where 40 boys are in need of housing.*

*"The creation of Maestro Cares is a testimony to the wonderful spirit of Mr. Anthony and Mr. Cardenas," said Sonia Hane, Founder of the Orfanato Niños de Cristo. "The commitment of these gentlemen is an inspiration to us, and I am confident that the impact of Maestro Cares will be felt by the children in this country for many years to come."*

To view photos of Marc Anthony's visit to the Orfanato Niños de Cristo, visit <http://www.maestrocares.org/>



Photo courtesy Maestro Cares

### **New Psychologist on Staff**

After a number of experiments with visiting psychologists, Sonia and her team made a brilliant move, they hired Keila\* as Psychologist for Niños de Cristo. Keila is unique and ideally qualified for this position. She lived at Niños de Cristo (with her brothers) after being abandoned. She was a model child from her earliest age and went on to University Caribbe East (UCE) in San Pedro to earn a Bachelors degree in Psychology. She graduated last year with honors. She is very excited about the challenges and confidently said "Charlie-I know all the things that are on the minds of these children." Among other things she has started a Big Sisters program involving the older "alums" who are still living in the area. (Keila also has a beautiful singing voice and has recorded a number of CD's) (Keila is on the left)



\*we do not use last names for privacy and security

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### **COLEGIO FONICRIS SCHOOL EXPANSION**

As a result of the success of the school at Niños de Cristo, a 2nd level addition is in the planning stage. Fund raising (including a substantial personal contribution) for this expansion has been led by New York real estate executive Ted Sanella, along with Wall Street executive Richard Williamson and his wife Maritza, in collaboration with Lou Gilmore, of Philadelphia and Casa de Campo, a long time supporter of Niños de Cristo. All quarterbacked by Zoraida Santana. Also, in Casa de Campo, longtime supporter Deena McKelvey held a fund raiser in her beautiful home, over looking the Caribbean





Children at FONICRIS lining up to go to lunch

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**Some of the Niños de Cristo “alums” now College Students and their Majors**



Medicine



Medicine





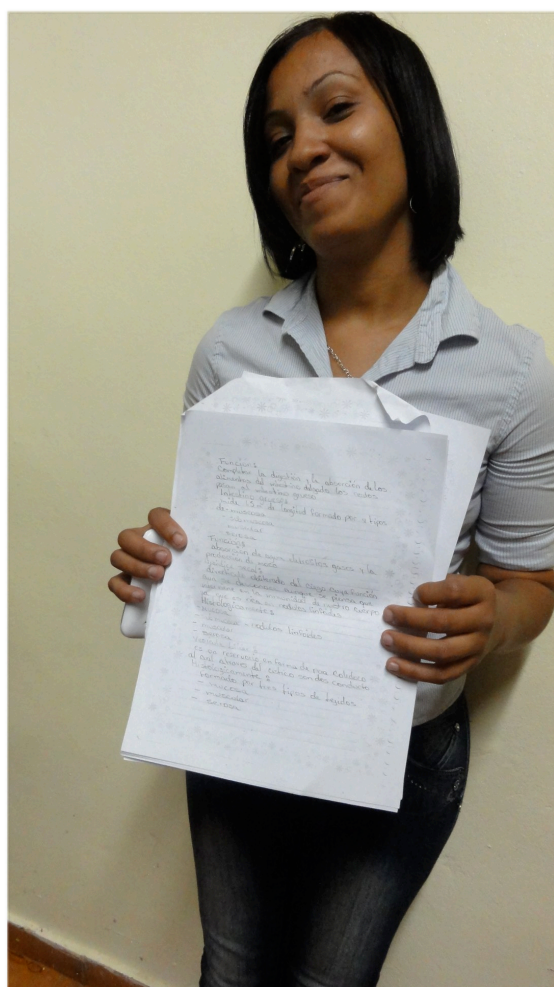
Medicine



Art and Painting



Law

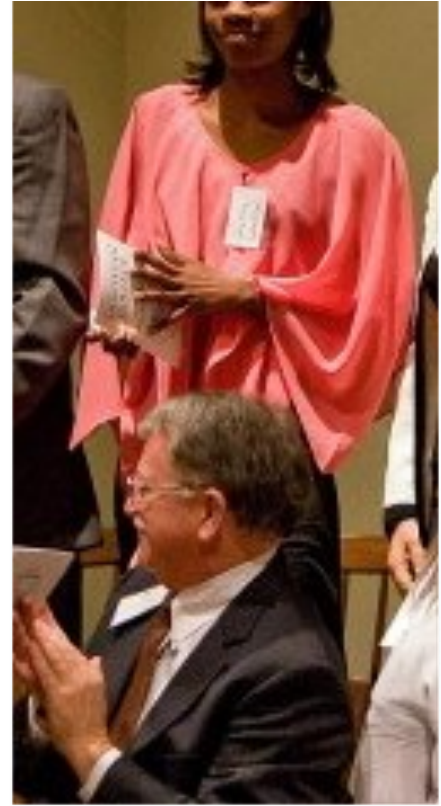


Medical lab technology





Orthodontics



Dominican Republic National Volleyball team (may go to the Olympics)

## NEWS FROM CHARLES DECKER FOUNDATION

### Scholarship Fund Launched

All agree that education, (college when appropriate), job training, or trade school are critical next and final steps to prepare these young adults to go into the world, prepared for a productive life.

Consequently, with more and more of the girls at Niños de Cristo in their mid teens, (the oldest boy is only 12) we are hoping to raise more financial support for their high school, college, job training and trade school programs. The cost of these schools and programs are quite modest (and the U.S. dollar is strong vs the Dominican peso.)

Karolina\* (in photo immediately above) was the first recipient of a full university scholarship from the Decker Foundation. She is studying dentistry and orthodontics at UCE. Her days (and nights) are long as she serves as the Assistant Director of the boys dormitory.

### Local Food Drive

La Romana friends Victor Jiménez and Licet Casado (now living in New York) led a drive among friends and companies in La Romana and Santo Domingo, to donate food, clothing and toys. They were welcomed at Niños de Cristo with open arms on Three Kings Day.





## !! Dona un Alimento Para el Orfanato Niños de Cristo en La Romana !!



### Para Mayor Información Contactar a:

Víctor Jiménez 809-693-8832 Pin 323E5C13 Rep. Dom.  
Licet Casado 1-646-363-3838 Pin 32F95329 New York



### Jet Blue Supporting CHARLES DECKER FOUNDATION

The Charles Decker Foundation is pleased to have the support of Jet Blue for our efforts to help children in need in the Dominican Republic. Among other things, they have given us tickets to offer to help jump start our orphanage volunteer program in Montecristi. (See below)

Jet Blue has given the Dominican Republic a high priority in its service and believes showing Dominican travelers their commitment to helping children in need in the DR is strong way to do that. We hope our supporters will patronize Jet Blue.

### Launched Orphanage Volunteer Program in Montecristi

From the earliest days of the CHARLES DECKER FOUNDATION, we have been helping *Orphanage Hope of A Child* in Montecristi, located on the North Coast (Atlantic side) of the Dominican Republic, at the frontier with Haiti.

*Hope of a Child* has been run since 1985 by Montecristi residents Pastor Ramon Perdonio and his wife Martha Acedo, who also serve in a small nearby church. At the peak of the *Hope of a Child's* operation, they had 60+ children.

After 15 years, in late 2011, a U.S. NGO which was bringing volunteers to the orphanage, abruptly ended their volunteer visitors program and that was the end of *Hope of A Child's* financial support.

This past March, Andrea Coronado, (now with the U.S. Embassy in Santo Domingo) visited the orphanage with Charlie Decker to meet with Pastor Ramon and his wife Martha, and Volunteer Program Manager Jonny Marte, to see if we could help bring in volunteer groups.

We quickly agreed to restart their volunteer program and put together this website to use for this purpose. <http://tinyurl.com/orphanage-volunteer-program>

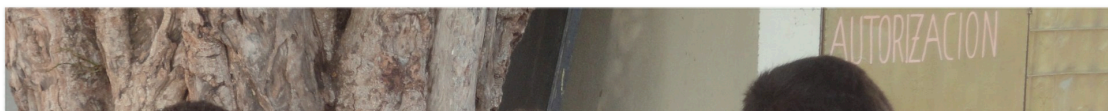
Our first group of volunteers is scheduled to arrive on June 18 and a 2nd group (from Canada) is scheduled for early July.

More volunteer groups are needed to keep the orphanage open. If anyone wants to organize a one week (or longer) visit to Monticristi and help out first hand, let me know, and we will help you put it into motion. We are offering a free Jet Blue ticket to anyone who organizes a mission group. The closest airport is Santiago.

## Photos from Orphanage Hope of a Child and around Montecristi



Volunteers at Orphanage Hope of a Child climb Mt. Morrow (in background), and swim in the bay





Some of the boys at Orphanage Hope of A Child

### Hogar Para Niños Discapacitados (Puerta Plata)

On my last trip to Montecristi I noticed the sign for this orphanage on the side of the road. I stopped by for a one hour visit. There are 18 children there, mid teens and younger, boys and girls. All have some degree of disability. It is not too far from the orphanage in Montecristi so we are planning to include time at this orphanage when the volunteers come to Orphanage Hope of A Child.



Visiting Mustard Seed's small orphanage near Puerta Plata Airport, on North Coast. 18 children-all disabled to varying degrees. Volunteers going to Hope of A Child in Monte Cristi will be visiting and helping here as well.



### Luis Canela Joins DECKER FOUNDATION as Advisor

I am pleased to announce Luis Canela is joining the DECKER FOUNDATION as an Advisor.

Luis has had an exemplary career in academia, banking, and publishing, in the Dominican Republic and the United States. He was a senior executive with Banco Popular Dominicano. before that was a Director of Banco

Centro de la Republica Dominicana. He served as President CEO of BPD Bank, an affiliate of Popular, in New York. He also served as Editor of El Caribe, an important newspaper in the Dominican Republic, owned by Popular. Three years ago he launched an on-line newspaper with primary readership in Spain and Latin Amerca. <http://www.hechosdehoy.com>

Luis was born and raised in Santo Domingo, graduated from Pontificia Universidad Católica Madre y Maestra, in Santiago, then went on to The Victoria University of Manchester (UK) where he recieved an MA in Economics then returned to the DR to serve as a professor in Economics for 4 years at Universidad Católica Madre y Maestra. Luis's public service includes Hostos Community College Foundation, and he is a Board member of New York-Presbyterian Hospital

Luis is returning "home" to his beloved Dominican Republic and we are fortunate that part of this new chapter in his life is to "give back." His passion for helping children in need in the Dominican Republic is strong. He has been taken by Niños de Cristo, the children and the staff. And of course he has been a strong supporter of the CHARLES DECKER FOUNDATION.

Luis has a home in Casa de Campo as well as Santo Domingo so he will be near Niños de Cristo where he has visited on several occasions and impressed with all that Sonia and her team have accomplished.

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### **Expanding Contact within the Dominican Community in New York area**

We have been expanding our support base in the Dominican community in New York. NYS Senator Adriano Espaillat, his staff, family members, and many others, have led the way for us. Beginning with Sen Espaillat who has visited Niños de Cristo, as well as his chief of Staff David Jose, they are making important introductions for us, (including to President Leonel Fernandez, and the First Lady, to Ambassador Raul H. Yzaguirre, who in turn has taken a strong interest in our work, aided by Andrea Coronado, now a staffer in the Embassy in Santo Domingo. These expanding supporters will help our efforts. There is nothing more important to Dominican people whether they live in the U.S. or the D.R., then family and children, and they have strong compassion for the children "back home" who are in need.



Ydanis Rodriguez New York City Councilman    Nurys De Oleo, Sr Advisor Senator Espaillat

I have gotten to know Sen Espaillat, Councilman Ydanis and Nurys and impressed with their tenacity on behalf

of their constituents and eagerness to help us in our mission.

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### **Always on the Lookout for New Volunteers**

The volunteers, especially the Dominican women, who serve as big sisters, surrogate mothers to the children- from the infants to those in high school, provide invaluable help-whether it be taking children to the dentist, church, reading to them or just talking about their life, school, family planning, personal care and hygiene, etc.

### **Introducing Other Foundations, Organizations and Donors**

We have also introduced other foundations, volunteers and visitors who want to help. A special example is Aino Jakobsen's [mestizaje.org](http://mestizaje.org), a Danish-Dominican Children's Foundation. As you may remember in earlier newsletters, Aino and I spent much time together at Ninos de Cristo, Jackies House, and at Las Matas de Farfan, and collaborating in Santo Domingo. Two years ago Aino formed her own foundation, [mestizaje.org](http://mestizaje.org), and has picked up the baton and taken the lead on building and operating the community center in Las Matas de Farfan. We continue to make financial contributions there and hope to visit this summer. Soralia Roa and her husband George Fernaine, MD and her father Tomas Roa, guide our support in Las Matas de Farfan. and contribute generously.

Another example is Daniel Sheth, the first group leader of Airline Ambassadors' mission trips to the DR. They brought money, and pallets of clothing, food, medicine to Jackies House and Niños de Cristo. Daniel is now leading student volunteers from the *Mandell School* in Manhattan's Upper Westside, jointly with Ken Cohen, *Mandell's* Chief Operating Officer and Treasurer.



Mandell School volunteers (teachers and mothers of students) hosting pizza party at Niños de Cristo



Dan Sheth on right and Jackie of Jackie's House on the left, Charlie Decker in the middle

### **CLOSING THOUGHT**

Any one of these children could be the next President of the DR, a famous doctor, a Nelson Mandella, an Eleanor Roosevelt, a Steve Jobs or Louis Armstrong (all famous orphans) or simply a young woman or young man, prepared in every way to move into responsible adulthood, for life, family and work.

This says it all:

*All kids need is a little help, a little hope and someone who believes in them.*

*--Magic Johnson*

**Here is the link to our DONATE section of the Website:**

[http://www.charlesdeckerfoundation.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=25&Itemid=19](http://www.charlesdeckerfoundation.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=25&Itemid=19)

Have a wonderful summer!

Charlie



[Click to go to "More News and Photos"](#)

