

Happy Child Mission is a Christian organisation which works with street children living in Belo Horizonte, Brazil. The Mission was founded in 1993 by Joao and Sarah de Carvalho. It has developed a programme of rescue, restoration and reintegration for street children and their families. This includes outreach to children on the streets, a 24 hour emergency shelter for children that have come directly off the streets; a Girls' House and a Farm outside the city for boys. We have just opened three new houses for children at risk within the city centre as well as a Republica for girls aged 16 plus.



Many of the children that Happy Child helps, come from intolerable family situations where there has been repeated violence, abuse and neglect. Many have ended up living on the streets; stealing to survive and sniffing paint thinner. They are in danger of prostitution, drug pushers and disease.

Casa Emaus, our 24hr shelter, is the first stop for children who want to come off the streets. Here they receive food, clean clothes and medical attention. Longer term care is offered in our other houses and on the Farm (situated 21km from the city) where the children live as they would in a large family. They attend school, receive extra tuition, play sport, learn handicrafts, help with the chores and go to church. Spiritually we teach them the principles of the Christian faith and about the love and forgiveness of Jesus Christ. The key is to provide them with a family atmosphere, give them security and build up their self esteem. Our aim is to bring love, hope and healing into their lives.

Where possible, our Family Team tries to locate the child's family and works with them to restore the family structure in the hope that the child may return to live in their own home.

For further information see our website [www.happy-child.org](http://www.happy-child.org) or contact one of our offices. You may also like to read the story of Happy Child in the book, "Street Children of Brazil" by Sarah de Carvalho published by Hodder and Stoughton.

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## Restoring Dignity and Self Esteem

Happy Child's first educational eco fayre was held in the latter half of 2003 in the Baptist Central Church in Belo Horizonte. The aim of the fayre was to give the children a chance to interact with the people of the city and to help build their sense of achievement and self esteem as they sold items that they had either made or cultivated themselves. It also provided an opportunity for people to learn more about the work of Happy Child.

*Cultivating flowers for the eco fayre*



Caroline Taylor writes, "It was an unforgettable day. The children had been preparing for it for months and were delighted to see so many visitors filling the hall, chatting with them and buying their goods. Everything that was for sale had been produced by the children. There were plant pots, mosaics, pictures and beaded jewellery from the craft workshops; fresh flowers, plants, Bonsai, rabbits, ducks and chickens from the Farm; and the Girls' House provided the refreshments including delicious lemon curd, a variety of cakes and homemade lemonade.

A few days later I asked the children if they had enjoyed the fayre. This is what Carlos said: "Oh tia (a Minas expression which means Aunt) I really liked the fayre so much. I had never stopped to think

about things in the way I did on that day".

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"Ah! I had never stopped to think about what I was going to say to people when they came up to buy the rabbits".

"So what did you say?"

"Well, I waited for them to ask a question first and then I added something!" Carlos beamed, "and I sold everything! It was an important day in my life."

I thought about what Carlos had said and realized how important it is for these children to see that they are able to participate in society again. This time the people who approached Carlos didn't see him as a threat, a beggar or a street boy but instead they treated him with respect. What worried Carlos wasn't food, glue, or money but what he was going to say to the people who wanted to buy the goods that he was selling.

I was struck by what a beautiful work is happening in Carlos' life and in the hearts of other children who open themselves up to Jesus. I was reminded of the verse in Philippians 1:6, 'he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion'. These children have been rescued off the streets and by the love and healing power of Christ their dignity and self esteem are being restored."



## Thank you

.....to all of you who support Happy Child financially and through prayer. Your giving continues to bring love, hope, healing and joy to many broken and damaged children.

Please use this coupon if you would like to make a donation or require more information.

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Give thanks to the Lord for each one of our children's precious lives; pray that their dignity and self esteem may be restored; that they may be successfully reintegrated into society.

## Three New Houses for Children at Risk

As we go to print Happy Child has just opened three new houses for children at risk in Belo Horizonte. These houses are being partly funded by the Brazilian State Government who have recognised the excellence of the care that Happy Child offers to the children it looks after.

Over the last few weeks we have been in the process of decorating and furnishing the houses in preparation of the children's arrival. Each house can care for 12 children which means that we can care for another 36 children at risk.

The children who will be living in these new homes are mainly sibling groups who range in age from one to fourteen years old. They have all been at risk in their own homes and have been taken out by the Belo Horizonte social services.

Amauri Pimental, General Manager of Happy Child, says "This expansion is a step of faith for our Ministry but a step that we know God is calling us to take. We felt that with our expertise and knowledge of working with street children and children at risk that we could be part of changing the future for these children and their families. It will be a challenge but we are determined to make a difference and to bring the love and hope of Jesus into these young lives"

For our three new homes - that God will fill them with His peace; that he will bless and guide our new "house mothers and fathers" as they get to know the children and their individual needs; that each child may feel secure in their new environment and that they may experience Jesus' love and healing; that sufficient income will be received for the smooth running of each of these homes.

## “They Are So Beautiful”

**Sarah de Carvalho, founder of Happy Child, has recently returned from a trip to Brazil. Here she describes her time with the children, the Mission and her plans for the future.**

“My recent trip to Brazil was a great success. I was thrilled to see how Happy Child Mission continues to grow, with a wonderful calibre of workers and leadership, each one called to the ministry with committed hearts for the original vision. There was such a strong sense, once again, that this work is built on the 'rock'. The houses were full of happy children and teenagers. Some of the children who had been cared for by Happy Child in the beginning came back to visit while I was there. They are now in their 20's. Some are still studying and even have plans to go to University! Needless to say I spent a lot of time in tears - they are so beautiful.

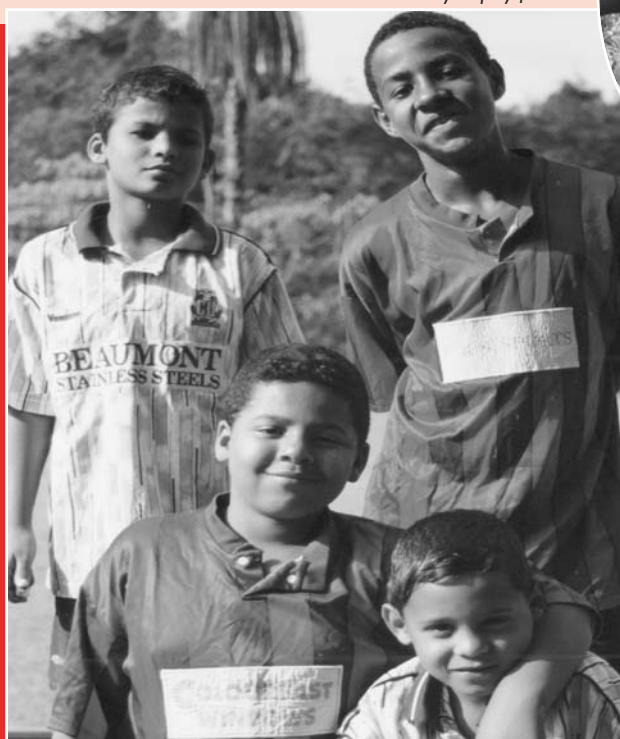
Why Recife? When asking this very same question during a talk I gave at a church in London some years ago, a teacher approached me afterwards with an explanation. Apparently in the 17th Century, the British had a monopoly on selling African slaves to South America. The slave ships would arrive in the port at Recife, and many were sent down south to Belo Horizonte to work in the mines and cane/coffee plantations. Of course a lot of these children and teenagers suffering in the slums and on the streets today are descendants of these slaves. So perhaps there is a sense that this would be a small part of God's bigger plan for restitution.

Happy Child is looking for more partners in prayer - it's what makes things move. Thank you for your support at this time.”

*Chilling out on the farm*



*Ready to play football*



## New Hostel for over 16's

**PRAYER POINT**

For Lili, Patricia and Telma: three lovely girls from the pre existing Ministry who already live in the Republica. Please pray for them as they make the transition from coming out of the care of one Ministry to coming under our guardianship. For our plans for the “Republica” – that God will provide the resources to finance this.

Since Happy Child began we have always had a vision to open a house for teenagers over 16 who are unable to return home to their families or who are orphans. In December we were given the use of a fantastic complex near the centre of the City to fulfil part of this vision.

The building will be used as a hostel or “republica” for girls aged 16 plus. Caroline Taylor writes, “Once the girls in Casa Lar das Meninas (the Girls' House) reach the age of 16, there are very few facilities for them to move into. It is vitally important for girls of this age to continue to have our love and support as they start work or train in a profession. It can be so easy for a teenager to go back on the streets if something goes wrong”.

The complex is large enough to house our administrative offices as well, thus freeing up the rather small space in Casa Emaus that we have been using up to now. We really see this as a gift from God and are so grateful to Him for his faithfulness to us.

**PRAYER POINT**

For Happy Child's plans for planting a street children project in Recife; for God's confirmation, timing, resources, workers and for Sarah's part in this venture.

It was encouraging to meet some of the 41 students who came to do Happy Child's training course and to see them returning to their cities and countries rejuvenated and recalled to their own ministries with the poor.

Caroline Taylor and I flew up to Recife in the north east of Brazil for three days before I returned to

England. There is a general sense amongst the leadership and board of council that the time for expansion is near. Recife was always a city where we believed Happy Child would one day be planted. Over the years teams were sent to the city with a view to this happening. There is a wonderful church there, Igreja do Espirito Santo pastored by Rev. Miguel Uchoa, that would like to help Happy Child. The local government is also very open to the possibility of giving support in any way they can, as there is a great need for a programme, like the one Happy Child runs, in that region.

When we were in Recife I felt God speaking through I Chronicles 22:11-16, that He will provide all the resources and people - but prayer is what brings God's will on earth from heaven!



*Making mosaic in the craft workshop*



## Training the Workers for the Harvest Field

Happy Child's ninth Annual Training Course will take place in July 2004 in Belo Horizonte, Brazil. The aim of the course is to equip Christians called to work with children at risk as well as providing an opportunity for people to experience the work of Happy Child and to give them a taster for missions.

As in previous years, the course will focus on the diverse physical, psychological and emotional problems facing children at risk. The curriculum also covers topics such as 'what is my calling?', 'what are my gifts?' and 'what is cross cultural mission?'

Last year's course hosted 41 participants from various states in Brazil (Recife, Sao Paulo, Goiania) and other countries (England and Zimbabwe). The remainder were from in and around Belo Horizonte.

Cecilia Sakatira from Zimbabwe who attended the course in 2003, writes;

“The course was extremely well organised and the content was excellent. I so enjoyed being in Brazil and wished I'd done this training years before. The Lord spoke to me so clearly during this time. He confirmed His calling on my life to work with Muslim street children. I knew that no matter what happened I would never be the same again. When I looked at the girls house, the farm and the shelter I knew in my heart that when the Lord speaks and we obey Him, His plans will be brought into being.”

Cecilia is now working with street children in Morocco.

We are thankful for all those who were with us on the Course. We were blessed to have two participants join the Mission: Anderson, who is now a social educator at the farm and Jaqueline who is an educator at Casa Emaus. We glorify God for their lives and pray that many others can join this Ministry.

**PRAYER POINT**

For more workers to be sent into the harvest field – in Brazil and across the world, wherever children are in need.