



God's Word for Kids with Cancer

Overview

Since 2009, the Bible Society of Nicaragua (BSN) has run the Hope and Smile for Children with Cancer project in the Manuel de Jesus Rivera Children's Hospital, or "La Mascota", the only hospital in the country to offer specialised care for children with cancer. Through trained pastors and volunteers, BSN provides regular and ongoing spiritual support to families through Bible distribution and devotional classes, plus practical assistance to cover costs associated with transport, medicine, nutrition and coffins when needed.



+/-25%

of families in Nicaragua live in poverty and over 8% struggle in extreme poverty (World Food Programme)

11.6%

of all deaths among children and adolescents in Nicaragua (1-19 years) are due to Cancer with 284 new cases per year (2021 PAHO Childhood Cancer Profile)

The Need

In Nicaragua, families often struggle to bridge the care gaps caused by inadequate resources in the country's hospital system. This impacts the children's recovery chances, especially those from remote areas lacking basic services, and facing issues like poverty and malnutrition, compounded by transport challenges leading to incomplete treatments. This project offers the children of the La Mascota hospital and their families spiritual assistance four times a week to strengthen them and point them to the faith and comfort found in God's word.

"God is our shelter and strength, always ready to help in times of trouble."

Psalms 46:1, GNB

Goals

Bible Society Nicaragua works to offer a comprehensive support service to many disadvantaged families who struggle financially to help their child fully recover, working to address existing inequalities that are further exacerbated by ill health. Spiritual and emotional support is needed to give strength to the children undergoing treatment, as well as to their parents. Doctors at the hospital particularly depend on the project to offer pastoral support to families when their child enters palliative care, and especially as family members come to terms with the tragic early death of a child.

In 2024, the goals of the project are to:

- Train 110 pastors and volunteers in pastoral care for children, child psychology and hand hygiene. They will also receive a free Bible, to help provide spiritual support.
 - Support 2,368 children and along with their parents, giving them free Bibles, and teaching them about God's love, comfort and hope through his word.
 - Distribute 80,000 Bible portions to children and families.
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Impact

By engaging children and parents in prayer, reading, and studying the Bible, children and their families can build up spiritual resilience. The project's effectiveness is annually assessed through consultations with hospital staff and parents. The director of the La Mascota hospital commended the positive impact of the project, noting improvements in patients who engage with prayer and Scripture, as well as recognising the positive influence on medical staff and their patient care approach.

The volunteers are highly regarded by parents and children for the invaluable daily spiritual support they offer during challenging times. Monthly food aid plays a vital role in bolstering the children's health, aiding their resistance to treatment side effects. Additionally, it eases concerns for parents who live far from the hospital, ensuring their children's essential nutritional needs are met.

Testimonies

"Having my own Bible makes me feel happy. The Bible gives me hope because I am going to be healthy. In the future, I hope to be with my friends."
— Cristoffer, 9-year-old

"I like to have my Bible to learn more of the Bible verses and to know Jesus more. The Bible gives me hope to learn something new and hope that Jesus will heal me completely. In my future, I hope to be going home and going back to school. In my future I hope to be a doctor."
— Grace, 7-year-old

"I feel glad to have my own Bible. It gives me hope because I know that God heals me. I hope to get out of the hospital and go home soon. In the future I want to be a doctor and read the Bible to children." — Michel, 14-year-old

Prayer Needs

- Pray for God's provision of health and protection to the hospital patients and their families.
- Pray that the families reached through this project will continue seeking God in prayer and grow in confidence in their faith.
- Pray for God's blessing on the pastors and volunteers who serve patients and their families in this project.would be addressed by the project.