

## **CONDITIONS OF THE ORPHANAGES AND CHILDREN**

Many volunteers are surprised by how good of conditions the orphanages and kids are in and how much they really have. A key factor to keep in mind about this though is that we've been helping them for many years now (in Cuenca since 1999 and in Quito since 2001). We've had volunteers in the orphanages all that time helping improve the care for the children, and we've helped all of the orphanages financially by varying degrees to improve the quality and conditions of the orphanages and the care the children receive. Also during that time, donations of supplies have continuously flowed in, and we've distributed those items where needed and best used.

Before OSSO began in Ecuador, the orphanages were doing the best they could with the resources they had and unfortunately the resources weren't much and the orphanages really struggled to make ends meet and care for the children. Conditions in the orphanages and the welfare of the children were much worse off, including quite a few children dying because there's just wasn't "enough" to prevent that from happening.

The commercials you see on TV for destitute children living in poverty and covered in flies while starving to death is not what you will find in the orphanages we serve in in Ecuador. Conditions were never to that extent since we first visited them, but seeing babies lying in their cribs for 24 hours a day except to be put through an assembly line of being fed and changed and occasionally bathed was still heartbreaking. Thankfully, we've been able to effect huge changes. If you were to talk to a volunteer from 1999 in Cuenca and from 2001 in Quito, you'd hear very different and much more sad stories than what you'll hear talking to a volunteer from now, and while conditions still aren't optimum (they *are* orphanages still), we've seen improvements by leaps and bounds over the years, and we're very proud of that, because it shows how much service and help we've been able to provide over the years to all the orphanages through the love of volunteers and donors.

If OSSO were to quit providing volunteers and financial support and donations of supplies to the orphanages, conditions in the orphanages and for the children would dramatically and drastically be worse off and, thankfully again, because of those who care, we're still able to support these orphanages and continue to improve conditions, because it's still needed.