

## **CUENCA PROGRAM**

OSSO began in Cuenca, and we've had volunteers there year-round since May 1999. We work with over 150 children housed within five orphanages and a daycare in and about Cuenca. There are 15 long-term volunteers and the Project Directors (and their family) living in two adjacent and connected houses referred to as the OSSO House.

Rodrigo and Lorena Rosero, from Ecuador, are the Project Directors. They are wonderful people who have worked with OSSO since 2001 and are LDS. They have two children, Samantha who was born in 1993 and Ismael who was born in 2000. They're involved on a daily basis with the program and the volunteers. Click here to view a picture of them:

[www.orphanagesupport.org/information/Roseros.JPG](http://www.orphanagesupport.org/information/Roseros.JPG).

**ORPHANAGE DESCRIPTIONS** (the real orphanage names are not put here for privacy reasons)

**Orphanage "A":** We've been working in this orphanage since 1999. This orphanage has 25-50 infants and toddlers and is run by Catholic nuns. Our volunteers provide care here seven days a week in two shifts; 7 am to noon and 2-6 pm.

**Orphanage "B":** This orphanage is our own orphanage, and we began caring for five children in 2006! It's called Los Pequeñitos de OSSO (OSSO's Little Ones). We have childcare workers, therapists and an administrative staff, and we accept new placements of healthy infants and young severely handicapped children. However, we have received quite a few older handicapped children from a couple other orphanages in Cuenca that we've helped take care of since we first had volunteers in Cuenca, so since 1999, so we always felt they were "our children," and now, legally, they are! We currently have between 23-27 children, and our capacity is for 48 overall. Our volunteers provide care here seven days a week in two shifts; 7 am to noon and 2-6 pm.

Many of our volunteers find that their first day working with the severely handicapped kids is really hard, sometimes their first week as well (usually because they haven't had much exposure to severely handicapped children/people). After they've gone through the initial shock or uncomfortable feelings they may have had they find that they love these kids just like they'd love their brother or sister. These children are true angels and hundreds of past volunteers hold a very special place for them in their hearts.

**Orphanage "C":** We've been working in this orphanage since 1999. This orphanage is run by Catholic nuns and cares for approximately 45-50 girls ages 4-20. All attend school and help around the orphanage by doing chores and taking care of the younger ones. Some of the older girls are able to still live here while they're starting out in college in order to help them keep their feet under them. Our volunteers go here a couple evenings a week to do activities with them. There is also a section of this home for older women (kind of like a nursing home) and we try to do things for them as well.

**Orphanage "D":** We began working in this orphanage in 2001 for a few months and began working here again in 2004. This orphanage of 40-50 children (toddlers up to teenagers), is run by a Christian group, and many of the children living here are there because of alcoholic or drug-

addicted parents (some whose parents are in jail), and many of the children are siblings due to this. Our volunteers go here once or twice a week to do activities with the children.

**Orphanage “E”:** This is a daycare facility outside the city limits of Cuenca where we’ve been working since 1999. These children come from very poor families and have little to nothing for possessions. Life is much simpler here (just 15 minutes from the city center) and you get a different perspective on things and happiness. Our volunteers go once or twice a week to help these children learn English as well as doing preschool-type activities with them.

**Orphanage “F”:** This orphanage has 20-35 young boys (school-aged up to young teenagers) and is run by Catholic nuns. We don’t send volunteers here to work shifts, but we’ve provided support to this orphanage in other ways since 1999.

In addition to the volunteer support described above, OSSO also provides varying levels of monetary support and physical donations to each of these orphanages. Physical donations are things such as food, clothes, educational supplies, diapers, etc., and monetary support goes toward things like paying for extra childcare workers; social workers to get the children’s paperwork done (so they can hopefully be adopted sooner), orphanage building improvements/repairs, teachers/tutors, etc. Items purchased or collected by OSSO are distributed by OSSO to the orphanages based on first-hand evaluation of need and first-hand accounting of appropriate usage, which is also applicable in evaluating the need for monetary support.