

## Maria's Story

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Six-year-old Maria and her three-year-old sister Lupe came to **Casa Pacifica** after being removed from their grandmother's home due to severe medical, social and emotional neglect. Their mother was an active substance abuser and had abandoned them; their father was an absent parent. "Maria had cerebral palsy and spastic quadriplegia and could barely walk," said Debbie, **Casa Pacifica's** Shelter Care Director. "Both girls were admitted with head lice and dirty clothing, able to communicate only in Spanish." The children were not toilet trained, nor were they capable of independent living skills such as washing their own hands, dressing or eating with utensils. **Casa Pacifica** staff quickly assessed the girls' needs and put a plan into action. In addition to Maria's medical needs, there also

were behavioral and emotional challenges. She was delayed in the areas of socialization, language, spatial concepts, counting, reading and object recognition. "Maria was easily frustrated and resorted to head banging and biting to try to get her way," said Debbie. Lupe's behaviors included frequent tantrums and poor impulse control. Doctors on campus examined the girls' teeth, eyes and overall health. Lupe was diagnosed with borderline anemia, and a special diet was prepared to increase her blood iron. With Maria, more intensive procedures were needed. "We needed to begin to straighten her legs through a medical program of serial casting," said Debbie. "We asked for a court order authorizing the procedure, and each week doctors would put new casts on both legs." Child care workers on campus assisted her in a daily exercise program, and she received off-campus physical therapy several times a week. Preschool activities enabled the children to learn new skills quickly. Both girls began toilet training and Maria learned to use scissors and button clothes. Playtime often included acting out daily living skills that would help them become more independent. With staff members speaking both Spanish and English, the children quickly began to feel safe in their environment and started to thrive. After three months, both Maria and Lupe were fluently bilingual, exhibited age-appropriate social skills, were toilet trained and were able to dress themselves and attend to their own hygiene needs. "The head banging and biting behaviors stopped completely," said Debbie. "And the daily tantrums diminished as the girls learned they could ask for what they needed." Maria's casting was successful, and she began to walk with much better balance and increased muscle strength. Through testing, the girls were found to be very bright. They learned colors, numbers, letters and age-appropriate skills. Maria transferred to the kindergarten class at **Casa Pacifica** during her last three weeks of shelter care. One month after Maria and Lupe had been removed from their grandmother's home, their social worker located a bilingual therapeutic foster home for them. The girls were visited often by the foster parents during their stay at **Casa Pacifica**, and were taken off campus to visit what would become their new home. Today, Maria and Lupe are doing well with their foster family. Their mother and grandmother visit occasionally, but are chronically inconsistent. Their court case is pending. Notes Debbie: "We are very proud of the immense progress both children made during their time at **Casa Pacifica**."

*Note: Maria and Lupe's names and photo have been changed to protect their privacy.*

## Our Mission, Vision, Values, Programs & Services

### MISSION STATEMENT

Casa Pacifica provides hope and help for abused, neglected or at-risk children and their families.

### VISION STATEMENT

Casa Pacifica will lead the services sector in promoting healthy outcomes for children and in strengthening families

### VALUES

Casa Pacifica practices the following values to role model for young people and to prepare them for choices during their lifetime.

- RESPECT
- INTEGRITY
- COURAGE
- COMPASSION

### PROGRAMS & SERVICES

MOBILE CRISIS RESPONSE

CAMPUS BASED SERVICES

FOSTER PARENTING

KINDLE FAMILY CONNECTIONS

EDUCATION SERVICES

COACHING INDEPENDENCE IN  
TRANSITIONAL YOUTH (CITY)

RESIDENTIAL TREATMENT SERVICES

PRACTICUM, INTERNSHIP &  
FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMS