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Saving the
Disposable Ones

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ISSUE 11

“When a child closes his eyes and begins to meditate they open themselves to the field of all possibilities, as Maharishi says. The world opens for the child. And then the child discovers their essential nature, which is love.”—Father Gabriel Mejia

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Saving the Disposable Ones TM Practice Offers a New Life to the Street Children of Colombia

By Linda Egenes

It's hard to imagine a single child living on the streets. Still harder to imagine thousands of children, abandoned by their impoverished parents—unwanted, forgotten, falling prey to prostitution, drug use, and other abuses. Yet that is the reality in cities throughout Colombia, where cocaine drug trafficking has spawned social problems so deep that no ordinary person could figure out a way to help.



The David Lynch
Foundation's video
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Fortunately, one extraordinary man, Father Gabriel Mejia, a Catholic priest who has been called the “Saint of Colombia,” reached out to the street children that others call “the disposable ones.” In 1984 in Medellín, Colombia, he opened a single home, a sanctuary where children could come for a good meal and a safe place to sleep. As word of his successful Fundacion Hogares Claret spread, the number of orphan shelters under Father Mejia's care grew.

While Father Mejia traveled the globe raising funds for his centers, he was introduced to the Transcendental Meditation technique and began its practice in the late 1980s. He immediately recognized that this technique could empower the children who were the most powerless in the world—helping them to overcome the stress and trauma of the street and begin new lives.

Father Mejia has now incorporated the Transcendental



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former owner and partner of Radiance Films, New Image Films, and Millenium Films, all of which produced and distributed many successful movies worldwide.

Meditation technique into his 60 foundation homes, which are spread throughout Columbia and South America and serve 5,000 orphans and young offenders at one time.

To tell the world the story of Father Mejia and these remarkable children, David Lynch Foundation Television (DLF.TV), recently produced a documentary called *Saving the Disposable Ones*. Thousands of people from around the world attended the film's openings in cities throughout Colombia. The film's professional quality and emotionally moving story have inspired and galvanized audiences at TM® Centers and other venues throughout the U.S.

"*Saving the Disposable Ones* is a great documentary showing the genius, love, and unbounded humanity of Father Gabriel Mejia of Colombia and how he uses his beautiful gifts to save the children," says David Lynch.

Behind the Scenes with Father Mejia

The David Lynch Foundation's video production team included producer Joanna Plafsky, a former owner and partner of Radiance Films, New Image Films, and Millenium Films, all of which produced and distributed many successful movies worldwide. The director was Stuart Tanner, an acclaimed producer and director of documentary films for the BBC, *National Geographic*, and the Discovery Channel and professor at Maharishi University of Management's Media and Communications department. Together with assistant producers Amine Kouider and Cullen Thomas, they traveled through the streets of Medellín and visited several of Father Mejia's centers to document this remarkable story.



"I feel good here. It's a very special experience because you feel good and happy when you meditate. It's helped me realize that I don't deserve that former life, that I deserve to have a job, to have a family, to get ahead in life, and to be a good person."

—A child at Father Mejia's homeless shelter

Saving the Disposable Ones draws a powerful contrast between the life of the children on the streets and their transformation as they begin to live at the centers and are taught the Transcendental Meditation technique, Maharishi YogaSM asanas, and the advanced TM-Sidhi[®] program. More than 24,000 children have received a traditional education through these centers, have graduated, and are now living productive lives.

"It was amazing to see children off the street who were hungry and lost and abused, and two years later to see those same children one-hundred percent transformed to light and joy and hope for the future," says Plafsky.

In the film, the children themselves describe how their lives have changed as a result of practicing the TM technique. One child says, "It feels good. Your body feels relaxed. It gets rid of negativity and anger. You forgive people. I have changed a lot. I haven't stolen again. I haven't got into trouble."

Another child relates, "I'm discovering what I didn't know about myself, who I really am. I feel good here. It's a very special experience because you feel good and happy when you meditate. It's helped me realize that I don't deserve that former life, that I deserve to have a job, to have a family, to get ahead in life, and to be a good person."

Tanner says that it's heartening to see that the children recognize the benefits they receive from practicing the TM technique. "They once felt hopeless and lost, and now they express positivity about their futures and have ambitions," he says. "This is such a great achievement when one considers the very tough circumstances they have been through."

The Therapy of Love

For Tanner, the highlight of directing the film was witnessing Father Mejia's compassion as he interacted with the children at his foundation centers. "These children have lost their trust in adults completely. Yet it was quite remarkable how they responded when Father Mejia walked into a room. You could see an instant bond of trust and joy in his presence. The children would be very open with him and there was a

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deep level of communication.”

As the film points out, Father Mejia has learned through his work that the desire for the children to move away from their life of the streets must come from within the children themselves. Yet, he himself is part of that awakening, because he radiates pure compassion and love.

“To rebuild that trust with a child takes a man like Father Mejia, and all the other great people around him, who do such loving and wise work with the children,” says Tanner.

“Father Gabriel Mejia is a living example of what one man can do to transform millions,” says Plafsky.

“He’s very connected to Maharishi and has blessed Colombia with this powerful knowledge.”

“I’m convinced that a child is not a problem. A child is an opportunity. A child has infinite potential. A child is like a shrine. A child is like a dance of creation.”

—Father Gabriel Mejia

In the film, Father Mejia explains his philosophy for rehabilitating the children. “The basic therapy is love,” says Father Mejia. “Love is the imperial medicine for any illness or disorder. When a child closes his eyes and begins to meditate they open themselves to the field of all possibilities, as Maharishi says. The world opens for the child. And then the child discovers their essential nature, which is love.”

For Father Mejia, every child is precious, and no child is “disposable.”

“I’m convinced that a child is not a problem,” he says. “A child is an opportunity. A child has infinite potential. A child is like a shrine. A child is like a dance of creation. We know a child

accepts help because of what we call resilience, the capacity of man to be reborn, continuously.”

A Life-Changing Experience

The filming itself was a life-changing experience. “Just being around Father Mejia was life-transforming because he is so full of love and giving,” says Plafsky. “You don’t want to leave—you feel a divine love, you feel protected and happy to be around him.”

Plafsky says that producing this film has changed her own career direction. “I realized that I wanted to be producing films about people who, like Father Mejia, are changing the world for the better.”

As Father Mejia says in the film, it is up to each of us to transform the world that we live in. “We have to leave a better world than the one we found. I believe the solution is within every person. Within each one of us there is a sanctuary. Whenever we need to we can enter it. We must globalize love.”

Linda Egenes is a writer, blogger and author of five books, including [Super Healthy Kids: A Parent’s Guide to Maharishi Ayurveda](#), co-authored with Kumuda Reddy, M.D.

RELATED LINKS

- *Saving the Disposable Ones* is available to purchase at [Amazon.com](#) ►
- To find out more about the film and to host a screening contact ► ideas@dlf.tv ► or visit [savingthedisposableones.com](#) ►
- If you know professionals involved in the rehabilitation of victims of child abuse, drug abuse, or homelessness and would like to show them the film, contact your local *TM* Center or the David Lynch Foundation ►

Comments (4) 

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written by a guest

Father Mejia is a living saint! He is a force for good on this planet. Joanna Plafsky and Stuart Tanner captured his love in action. Thanks to DLF for helping to make this wonderful film happen.

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written by a guest

"Disposable Ones" is a correct description for those children; no other group in society had anything to offer them. But Padre Gabriel and his Hogares Claret Foundation sends vans out every day to invite them in where they can be rehabilitated. He really is a saint.

...

written by a guest

Very inspiring. I'll be sharing this with friends involved in helping children in Central and South America

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written by a guest

Superb video. Not just one man or a few centres to help but a philosophy & real practical technique to move from suffering to hope.

Many thanks for making the film. Share this & Transcendental Meditation wherever you can

Robert

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