



Ismael with Maritza

**“Why do you love me?”**

9-year-old Ismael asked Maritza, his Rancho Del Rey house mom.

Ismael wonders how it’s possible for Maritza and Elias, his house parents, to keep loving him, despite his rude, rebellious and violent behavior. Ismael’s increasingly aggressive and unpredictable behavior reveals a deep anger that bubbles to the surface more and more often.

One day during a heart-to-heart chat after a really bad day, they asked him, “Why are you here at Rancho Del Rey?” After a few minutes Ismael answered, “Because I do not have parents.”

Most Rancho Del Rey boys have at least one living biological relative, but they are orphaned by difficult family circumstances. Our mission is to “heal hurts with hope” in the context of a loving family trained in caring for children who have experienced chronic trauma. Maritza and Elias have five boys in their care this year—Ismael, Cesar, Raúl, Jesús and Axel, plus their two biological children, Zoe and Adrian.

Maritza said that Ismael’s question took her aback, really

made her think. She and Elias admit that the **feeling** of love can’t withstand the exhaustion that comes and goes throughout the day. Love as a feeling can’t always triumph over a boy’s rudeness, aggression, ingratitude, rebelliousness, or violence.

As believers, we look to Christ’s example. He shows us that love is **action** rather than feeling. That we can “do” love even when we are not “feeling it.” We can love children who hurt us even when we are too emotionally depleted to feel loving. It is the undeserved, unconditional love of our heavenly Father that makes it possible. We love children like Ismael because they are Jesus’ precious creations for whom He gave His life.

Through your support and the entire devoted RDR team, Ismael is being cared for now in a place where he is loved. We ask for your prayers. Together, we hope in God, who is *making a way* for the Rancho Del Rey staff to help heal Ismael’s hurts. Rancho Del Rey is a place where God has, for decades, *made a way* in boys’ “hopeless” situations.

As we greet another day at the Rancho, our boys are safe and well cared for. They’ll go to school—bathed, hair combed with lots of hair gel, and smelling great. They’ll play on the swings and the monkey bars. They’ll go to soccer practice. They’ll eat well, and go to sleep in clean, warm beds after prayers and goodnight kisses. They’ll learn even more today what love means and the many ways it is expressed.

**You express your love for children like Ismael with your prayers, your giving and your encouraging messages. You open doors for them to be loved and to learn to love. You help make a way in “hopeless” situations.** As the boys experience love from adults around them, they learn, too, about the love of their heavenly Father, the perfect parent who will always be “the God who is there.”

Thank you for your partnership in love. ~~~ Susan Mino



Ismael with “Sister” Olivia, who found him and took him to Rancho Del Rey

**“Love is a blessing because some families don’t have it.” (Axel)**



The boys pray for rain at our local reservoir. As of Friday the city will cease to use it as a water source. Praise God we have well water. Please pray for rain!



Dear Danny,

Thank you for everything you have done for me and my Rancho Del Rey brothers. More than anything I want to thank you for everything you have done for me, for allowing me to continue on despite some bad things I've done.

Thank you for the food, for all things you pay for—light, gas, water, and much more. I don't know how to pay you back. There are not many people like you in the world. For this reason I love you very much, and also because of how you help our families, especially with food staples. I love you. May you have a happy Valentine's Day.

*"...Help me to be an able guide. In the change and turmoil, cause me not be overwhelmed with the greatness of the task and the many failures. Help me not to be dismayed and alarmed, but to look to Thee and trust. Inspire me to know that is not I but Christ.*

*...Remind me to give thanks for their triumphs and their joys..."*

(Excerpt from Anne Moller's poem, "A Mother's Prayer")



Heivi, Rafael, Alexis, Javy, Derik, Cristian, Yahir, Jose Angel

# Ways To give

**Hola Amigos**—with just \$20,000 we'll reach our goal of fully funding staff in 2022. You are "way makers" with your prayers and support.

—**Danny Moller** [director@elranchodelrey.org](mailto:director@elranchodelrey.org)

THROUGH OUR WEBSITE: [www.elranchodelrey.org](http://www.elranchodelrey.org)

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