

HOME OF SANTA MARIA, FOUNDED IN 1996

CELEBRATES 25 Th. ANNIVERSARY November 2021

HISTORY..

The Home of Santa Maria, is a social assistance project for mothers with their children in Japan. THE STORY BEGINS WITH A DREAM.

We had a dream, born from the experience of the Shelter, Micaela Ryo. This early welcome project was closed on March 31 st, of this year.

Dreaming of hope, we got the opportunity to carry out a project to care for women with children. 28 years ago the Yokohama City Council offered us the opportunity, and the dream came true. It was not exactly as we had planned, but it opened the possibility for us to begin a journey of approaching young women with their young children.

We are talking about a dream that came true, it was born through the encounters with the girls in Micaela Ryo: The girls who came to Micaela Ryo were young people who became pregnant in adolescence, and gave birth without receiving help and necessary accompaniment from anyone. In the foster home the girls could live with their babies, but only for a short period of three months, at the end of it, they had to leave our Center and move to the next establishment.

In this situation of such a short time of support, it was very difficult for these young women to take care of and care for the child on their own, without the possibility of teaching for mothering and specialized care that could accompany it in the period of life of evolutionary development of the babies, a postnatal period up to 12 months.

The final result was a logical consequence of the lack of specialized care for the mother and her baby: In the new Center where they were transferred, the family unit was broken and the child had to go to a charity and the mother to a reception centre for women, motivated by the mother's inability to care for the baby properly. They could not act the role of MOTHER as the people wanted.

This situation gave us a lot of sadness and from the reflection and listening to our environment and ourselves a dream of HOPE emerged for our women: To open a maternal and child home as the next step to shelter for them. Create a process in which the person can calmly heal and free herself.

ORIGIN OF THE MATERNAL-CHILD HOME.

Throughout the history of Japan, the Maternity and Children's Home began with the goal of sheltering women and children who had lost their husbands to World War II. They were mothers and children without a home or food.

Almost 40 years later, the Yokohama community realized their dream and founded Santa Maria's Home in 1986 to expand the support provided by Micaela Ryo.

The following year, 1987, the Law and the name were changed to the establishment of Support to obtain the independence of life to the mothers and their children. This also changed the way of developing the objectives of the same. The tasks became clearer and the objectives were increased,

on autonomous life, professional independence, financial independence and support for raising their children independently with a view to their social insertion in the future.

ESTABLISHMENT OF SUPPORT TO THE LIFE OF MOTHERS AND CHILDREN.

The development of the Social Work in Japan is carried out within the framework of the Law of Minors and Social Services of the Country. Thus, the Casa de Santa María has to apply and conform within the Law of Social Welfare of Minors, or Law of Protection of Minors. The Casa de Santa María project is organized in such a way that the role of the staff is defined according to the target group.

- Personnel specialized in supporting mothers.
- Personnel specialized in supporting children.
- Staff involved in the development of raising infants and toddlers.

In order to respond to the new need that has arisen due to the situation of migrant women, the number of personnel in charge of assisting and supporting foreign mothers and children and their follow-up has also been increased.

TRAINING ACTIONS.

The training of workers is carried out by psychologists and professionals from other social organizations who support us in training actions for our staff. The opportunity is offered for a supervisory accompaniment in order to reflect periodically on the development of their activity and to be able to provide better support to women.

New problems have also been addressed: We have been working on various initiatives to help children heal from the trauma they have suffered, through training programs and actions. Mothers have been supported to grow as human beings and to be the protagonist of their lives.

PUBLICATION OF THE BOOK IN COMMEMORATION OF THE 25 ANNIVERSARY.

In 2021, when La Casa de Santa María turns 25 years old. On the occasion of the date we wrote and published a documentary book on the history of the Home of Santa Maria.

The idea was born from a sister, (Sr. María Eulalia Miyashita) who, although she has already retired from the direction of the Project, continues to accompany the Casa de Santa María as president of the Civil Association of adorers that we call OBRA SOCIAL DE ADORATRICES. She expresses this wish:

"I want to write down EVERYTHING WE HAVE DEVELOPED SO FAR. But not as a historical perspective only. We have a role to play in raising issues with society now and for the future."

All our experience in the development of the processes of accompanying women and their children, we have put it in the published book (on the occasion of the celebration of the 25 years), on the HISTORY AND THE FUTURE OF THE HOUSE OF SANTA MARÍA, In it, we have tried to convey to the reader the fundamental values and attitudes with which we develop our DOING: Warm welcome, responsibility, patience, listening skills, empathy ... all with a great deal of professionalism, in order to ensure recovery and growth, as well as the social insertion of women and their children. We cannot fill the void in their hearts, but we can accompany mothers and their children on the path to

a better future. Perhaps thus, perhaps, also, to the achievement of Happiness. This is the Adorer Pedagogy.

THE REASON FOR THE ISSUES RAISED.

The question arose because 111 charities for mothers and children were at the limit of their temporary capacity. On the other hand, some charitable establishments have closed temporarily due to lack of recipients and funding, therefore, they could not continue. There are 224 charities for mothers and children in total in Japan. 45% of these can maintain the degree of occupancy, 90% or more. Casa de Santa María has made an effort to maintain the number of places available each year. If fewer than 90% of users decrease, the Government subsidizes less the following year. But, you cannot lay off the workers or leave the maintenance of the building, this means that you have to maintain the same expense with less income. This system gives a lot of suffering to all the charities for mothers and children. The laity of Santa María House are aware that the decrease in social assistance placement costs due to the number of users and management difficulties, does not represent the main problem, but rather, the women who are the object of our attention do not accept the reception centre system currently supported by the government. They are aware of the social and human crisis in Japan. There is, therefore, a gap between the way in which maternal and child life support centers are managed and the reality of today's Japanese society.

DISCONNECTION WITH REALITY.

For example, the government prohibits women, victims of domestic violence and who are in the process of divorce mediation, from having mobile phones due to the dangers of persecution. This may be natural, but even in other situations, the ban continues regarding the use of mobile phones. Lay people who know about the current situation believe that they should act more flexibly. Not being able to use your own mobile phone can cause difficulties in finding social resources for employment and contact with children's work and school. However, the government is inflexible. "The Internet is dangerous" they say. Some women who have been victims of domestic violence refuse to enter a charity for mothers and children, saying that they do not want to live a life without freedom. This is one of the reasons for the decline in the number of users.

THE TWO LAGS WITH REALITY

As for the gap with reality, in the 25th anniversary book, the teachers wrote the articles leaving two significant words. First, "mothering" This requires women to be "mothers." A charitable establishment for mothers and children, of course, is included in the law on the Social Welfare of Minors. However, the difference with other charity establishments for children, they have the advantage that they can live together. The downside is that the person raising the child must be the true and righteous mother, but in reality some people do not have the capacity to be mothers. Many women who are mothers have not experienced the love and care of their mother when they were small. So we adorers accompany women accepting this reality. But the workers have another vision and sometimes they demand their responsibility from the mothers. The second phase is "**Social work from a feminist perspective**" It is not just about doing social work, but about supporting women with a feminist perspective. The principles are described in the writings of Lena Dominelli. Some of which are: "recognizing the diversity of women", "respecting the power of women" and

"seeing women as active agents with the power to make their own decisions in all aspects of their lives".

Our goal, TOGETHER ON THE WAY.

These principles coincide with the Adorer Charism and the way of supporting and accompanying women. Even if a charitable establishment to support mothers and children falls under the category of the Protection of Minors Act, we want to find a woman as a person. And we want them to receive Love while freeing themselves. That dynamism is at the heart of our Charism. It is the great challenge for Adorers: transmit this treasure to the laity and share with them mutually in the context of interculturality and intergenerationality.