

## Visit to El Sembrador Day Care and Community Center Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chile (IELCH)



Christmas mural at the center's entrance (left) and children playing in the center's yard (right).



The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chile (IELCH) is deeply rooted in the struggle for human rights, social justice and a life of dignity for all women, men and children. A living example of this commitment is the IELCH's work in a Santiago shantytown named Campamento Peñalolén which started as a land take-over in 1999 by hundreds of homeless families. Nineteen hundred families (approximately 15,000 people) now live on these 22 hectares of land which were once a garbage dump. The community is currently in the midst of a major transition as many families will move out in 2006 to new locations that the Chilean government has designated for their resettlement. Unfortunately, it is estimated that 25% of the families will not have the required down payment of approximately \$US700 because their informal work as housekeepers, street vendors, and trash collectors only provides subsistence income, leaving them without savings and unable to qualify for a loan. In her voice of passion and solidarity, Soledad Puebla (pictured below), director of El Sembrador ("The Sower"), the IELCH's community and day care center in Campamento Peñalolén, stated "the IELCH will be here until the last family leaves."



A street in Campamento Peñalolén with the majestic Andes Mountains as a contrasting backdrop.



*"As a church, we cannot be closed up in our temple. We must be addressing the material and spiritual needs of our people. Jesus taught in the streets. The best pulpit is to be with the people, living out Luther's call to the 'priesthood of all believers.'"*

Soledad Puebla, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chile (IELCH)



Moving Day: A family moving out of Campamento Peñalolén — on their way to a new life.