



Misión México NEWSLETTER

JAN
APR
2012

Hola de México!

Reflections

The festive season is just a faint memory now that we are in the fourth month, but we hope you all had a very memorable time with family and friends.

Misión México celebrated with a lovely concert of traditional dance. For the three weeks prior to the big event, Rebecca and Memo Gomez, from the Mexican Dance School in Sydney, Australia, painstakingly taught Misión México's youth/children a variety of traditional dance movements, with the end result being a wonderful presentation of Mexican culture. Most of the costumes for the big event were supplied by Rebecca and Memo. Well done and 'Thank You' so much, for taking the time to teach our children some of their heritage.

While dance classes were being practiced, other members of the Gomez family, as well as our wonderful volunteers, managed the children and organized an assortment of craft classes and activities that kept the younger children occupied and content.

This time of year is always a challenge, but thankfully we were helped by donations from the congregation of St Marks Church in Sydney, who sent a number of boxes of gifts and also, items for the household; and Julian Wilson who sent T/shirts and caps; and there was also a fundraising effort by volunteers, Claire and Aaron, who bought some incredible instruments for the music program. The celebration was an amazing time and thoroughly enjoyed by all.

Thank You All So Much, including our wonderful volunteers, who helped to make our festive season a memorable one. Your dedication, kindness and thoughtfulness are greatly appreciated. And, that also includes our, behind the scenes 'life support'; that is, our board members, administration support and graphic designers. Without the support of all of you, the celebrations would have indeed, been very meager... New Year was celebrated in the usual fashion with a 'fiesta' complete with fireworks at midnight. Everybody bought or made masks for the fun event. What a wonderful night we had.



www.lovelifehope.com

Education Update

All the children are in school and most are doing well.

José 1 is excelling in University and has received quite high grades for his first semester. José was originally from the streets of Tapachula and prior to that, suffered terrible abuse and was abandoned. José's success is an example of what can happen when someone finds love and is given a chance in life.

Griselda and Yuri continue to be top students in the private school they attend through scholarships. Griselda is in secondary school and Yuri in senior. Both girls have very good behavior and are well liked amongst the teachers and students. Griselda is now doing an additional course in beauty care.

Sammy still has a few problems this year that hopefully we can sort out soon, (he was the one who was starved as a baby and nearly died). María 1 and María 2 are doing well in this school also. We have a 40% discount for four of the five students and a 50% scholarship for the 5th, for which we are very thankful for. The other part of their fees is paid for by sponsors.

The children in the public system don't receive an equal education compared to that of the west. Unfortunately most of our children attend public schools, and we believe that they are seriously deprived of receiving a quality education. Compared to the children in the private schools here, the attention to education is definitely less. There are no relief teachers, so when a teacher is sick, there are no classes, or there are no classes when they have meetings. In some schools they even cease classes if there is rain!! In the public primary school system they virtually don't experience any of the arts.

But, thanks to our greatly appreciated volunteers and tutors, our children are receiving extra attention at home to help them along.

Volunteer Update

We are very fortunate to have a Chaplain and Color Puncture Therapist staying long term at Misión México at the moment to help the children in two very important areas of their wellbeing. There is a great need for more long term volunteers at Misión México, so that there is stability in the children's formation and education. If you think that you could volunteer for six months or more, to tutor or share a particular talent, such as, music or art, woodwork or pottery, sewing etc. please write to; volunteer@lovelifehope.com for more details.

We could also do with a resident librarian, who could take charge of the library, and reading programs, as well as initiate writing skills. This position could also include, looking for grants for books etc.

We are always looking for volunteers, but it needs to be understood that we are small organization and cannot afford to pay anyone unfortunately!! Though, if you think you could handle living in a community type environment with lots of children, (basic food and lodging provided), then please write to the volunteer address mentioned above.

There is always the possibility that could find sponsorship opportunities, for example, through your local place of worship, sport or community organisation or workplace. Our daughter Brooke first came to Mexico with the sponsorship of five different people for a small amount each, per month.

We received some very sad news earlier this year about one of our lovely volunteers Hannelore Kraus who passed away after a long battle. Hannelore spent a month with us here in Mexico and was amazing with the children. She also fundraised for us prior to visiting and continued to support us after returning home to New Zealand.

We'd like to thank Hannelore's family for supporting us and our prayers and thoughts are with you.



Surf Project Update

For a few weeks before the end-of-year, Alan and a number of our older boys and girls began preparing the footings for a massive fence at Villa del Sol, (Village of the Sun) in Puerto Madero, on the 'beach project' property. They worked hard every day, digging the 1 meter holes, organizing the metal reinforcing and the cementing of all the foundations. Our young adults were amazing and showed us what they can do when they have a cause.



Then in mid-January, Jacob Shields from Compound Boardshop in Florida U.S., after raising funds, organized a team from the Mennonite Church to come and do the block laying for the huge fence. Joining the team also, was a couple from Australia.



This amazing team of hard-workers labored from early morning to late afternoon to complete the fence in just four days, covering the boundary of the entire one hectare property. It was an incredible accomplishment, and to see the workmanship and dedication of these amazing people was inspiring. Well done everyone and thank you so much for your wonderful example of love. We are looking forward to Jacob returning in July with some more people to help us on the land again.



After the team left, Paul from Australia stayed on to help Alan finish the project which entailed doing all the posts, 140 of them, ready for the mesh on top of the blocks, which is now complete.



While the block laying was going on at the beach, a carpenter and a team of women were working on renovating and decorating the younger girl's bedroom. The finished result was a beautiful pink and fuchsia painted room, with a new wall, cupboard doors, and beautiful hand-made sheets. The girls were in awe and couldn't wait to sleep in their bright room.



The next stage of the beach project, is to build a 'Palapa', kitchen and bathrooms, and also, to plant trees and grass. There is not one tree on the whole piece of land and it looks like a desert. Eventually we plan to have a building to support the surf camp idea, but right now, we have enough work in front of us with what I have already mentioned.



Surf lessons have already begun with Moacir teaching some of the local kids to surf. He has received a fair bit of interest and José is planning to assist with the lessons whilst also attending his university course.



Money to buy the land for this surf project was donated to us by Steven Marks, of Guzman y Gomez Mexican Restaurants in Australia. The Glennon Property Group from Australia have also donated money for our surf project as well as Jacob Shields, who runs Compound Surf in Florida, who has been fundraising recently to raise money for us.



Many thanks to you all for your contribution. If you would like to support us with this project please let us know.

Fundraising Update

To support on-going projects, which are essential to the life of the refuge, and to keep the everyday running of the refuge functioning efficiently, requires a lot of effort and financial backing. This is done through monthly donations, fundraising efforts, and looking for grants. With between 40 and 50 children to care for, it is difficult to keep on top of everything. Thankfully we have some amazing people who work tirelessly to help Misión México, to provide for the children what they need to enable them to reach their full potential. Obviously, it is a continuous effort, so we at 'Misión México' are always looking for ideas and dedicated people to support and organize events to help the refuge continue doing this vital work.

Moacir recently arrived back from the US after touring for almost a month raising awareness and funds for our home in Mexico and the surf project. A huge thank you to everyone who helped organise the trip and put on fundraising events for Moacir to attend. Special thanks to John Mather, Jacob Shields, Jonno Durant and Laurie de Ghetaldi and all their family and friends who supported Moacir during his tour. He attended many events to share his story and encourage people with a strong message of love, life and hope. Moacir had a great time and came back with some fantastic stories and memories.

Misión México (UK)

This charitable arm of Misión México was recently registered by Deborah Grossman in Scotland and will help us to raise awareness in the UK and also support our fundraising efforts. Deborah and her Board members have already started talking to organisations and individuals about us and people are keen to find out more and get involved. Deborah is coming to Mexico in April for a couple of weeks to do some planning with us and catch up with the children.

Very exciting times ahead for Misión México! If you live in the UK and would like to get involved in any capacity such as fundraising or in-kind donation of your skills or expertise please contact Deborah at Deborah@lovelifehope.com

Gracias and good luck to the team in the UK!

Alex Joyce, a young man from Ireland who came to volunteer with us in 2011 premiered his documentary 'Together we Surf' in Cork earlier this year. The event held at the Triskel Arts Centre was attended by 100 people who enjoyed wine sponsored by Wavecation, one of our business sponsors in the US, a raffle where prizes were generously donated by local businesses in Cork and live music performed by Tony McLoughlin and Lynda Cullen.

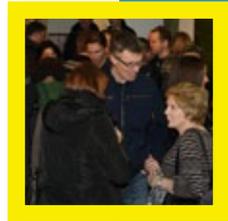
You can read more about this inspirational documentary here

<http://togetherwesurf.blog.com/>

and watch the trailer here

<http://vimeo.com/24765227>

Please contact **Deborah** at info@lovelifehope.com if you are keen to get involved with any aspect of support and fundraising, in the UK or anywhere else in the world.



Children's Backgrounds

Over the recent months we have received three young girls, 13- 14 years.

The first girl to arrive had been sexually abused by her uncle when she was eleven or twelve. When this young girl was a mere thirteen, she already had a baby. Because of her immaturity, and how this baby came to be, she had a 'love-hate' relationship with her, so the welfare department took the baby and put her up for adoption.

The second girl lived in poverty and her parents died of AIDS. Her grandparents looked after her but when she was just 13 1/2 years, they began 'doing her up' and then would sell her to 'clients' when they visited the shack that they lived in.

The third girl was abandoned by her mother and was left with a step-father. The step-father found a new partner who sexually exploited the young girl when she was just thirteen by selling her into prostitution. The poor girl ended up with a very severe STD but has been healed of the disease.

Two of the three girls had not had any form of education and are now in primary school in grades 5 and 6. Both are bright and are doing well in their studies. The other is in secondary and is also a very bright student. I believe we will see amazing changes in all three girls within six months. All the girls have been robbed of their childhood/youth but gradually they are learning to laugh again. Please keep them in your prayers.

Mision Mexico is getting all the high risk children tested for AIDS and fortunately, so far, all tests have come back negative.

Publicity for Misión México - MTV/UNICEF

Not too long ago, we had a visit from a MTV crew and UNICEF, who filmed a short documentary about exploitation, called 'INVISIBLE SLAVES'. Featured in the story are two of Misión México's young adults, José and María, who both were exploited when they were much younger. The story, which is in Spanish with English subtitles, is to help other young people who are trapped in similar situations, with a message of hope. We recommend you pass this on to your family, friends and schools, so that we can all help to educate and fight this type of crime in today's society.

The link to this story is <http://vimeo.com/33017206>

Once again we thank you for your wonderful support.
We ask God to bless you and your families,
and we ask you to pray for ours.

With love from Pam and Alan Skuse
and all at Misión México

