



Misión México NEWSLETTER

OCT
2014

¡Hola de México! Chiapas, Mexico. May 2014

These past seven months have been a huge challenge. At Misión México you often hear: 'There is never a dull moment!' How true this is! There is always something going on, with some or other problem to address.

We are very excited however about one particular dream that is coming true, Misión Surf!

Many years ago, after we managed to buy our first vehicle, and with a couple of donated surf boards, we introduced the children to the 'stoke' of surfing, and these kids have never looked back!

Not long after the kids took to the water, we started to dream about establishing a surf club in the future! It was a far-fetched dream at the time, as surfing wasn't even heard of in the state of Chiapas, Mexico. Well, thank heavens we didn't listen to the negative statements thrown at us back then, as it is happening. How exciting to see this dream come to fruition.

Alan has had the responsibility of overseeing and working at the building project, 'Misión Surf', for a few years now. The project is moving forward and the actual building is taking shape. More funds are needed to complete the project but we are hoping we can open the doors and start business in 2015.

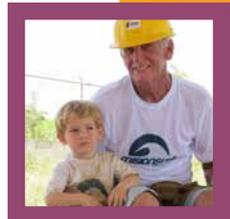
This project is of huge importance for the next stage of Misión México's development. Misión Surf will be a work training program to equip our kids with the necessary skills needed to advance their lives. It will also help Misión México to work towards sustainability, something that is imperative if we are to continue to help those less fortunate. Another angle of this project is that through the tourism it will create, it will help the local impoverished community economically.

Obviously, as with any building site there are always difficulties and unexpected problems, but take into consideration the fact that we are living in a developing country, and all the added problems that this would conjure up! Though regardless of all the struggles, Misión Surf is evolving.

If you would like to get involved through donating to the project or volunteering your time to help build please get in touch!

With so much else going on, that is, with the children, schools, additional classes, meetings, administration, etc, life can be very exhausting, difficult, demanding and incredibly stressful, but on the other hand, there have been some wonderfully exciting, stimulating and thought provoking moments.

With every challenge there is an opportunity to learn something; an opportunity to grow, therefore that is something that we are thankful for.



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Misión Surf Sponsors

A huge thank you to our two main sponsors for this project, Compound Board Shop (Florida USA) and Guzman y Gomez (Australia), for their belief in the Dream!

We would also like to thank all the other supporters who have come onboard to support this project, including Veronica and Norm Innes of Ocean Investments and Mark Kelly of Global Surf Industries. Every bit counts! No matter how large or small the support, the act of getting involved speaks a thousand words!

Alone, we can do only so much, but as a team, we can turn a dream into a reality!

Florida USA April 2014

This year Alan, Maria and I went to Florida to attend the annual events sponsored by Compound Board Shop (Jacob and Rachel Shields). What a fantastic weekend it was with so many people coming out to support Misión México for the Misión Surf Project. We were overwhelmed with the kind hospitality and wonderful generosity of the Sarasota community.

A huge Thank You to Rachel and Jacob Shields, and all the Compound team, who worked tirelessly for this year's events; you are an awesome team and we can't thank you enough.

Because of the incredible success of the events, we are now in the process of building the managers' house on the land at the beach.

An event took place on 24-25-26 July at Misión Surf, where we saw the construction of the sustainable home for the manager of the beach camp that was built in 5 days!! Everything else related to the home, that is, foundations, fittings, painting, etc. will be completed in less than a month! Fox TV filmed this event for a reality show!

Thank you James and Diana Bryant of Duratherm Sips for your incredible support for this project.

Australia 2014

Steven Marks and GYG Mexican Restaurants continue to support Misión México and Misión Surf through sponsorships (student for University, volunteer coordinator, full time administrator in the UK and two house cleaners for Misión México), and also, an incredible amount of fundraising for the new Misión Surf Camp facilities, through their very popular Burrito Days throughout Australia. A big thank you to Steven and all the GYG staff, including our very own Moacir Zeledon, who is now working at a GYG restaurant gaining incredible work experience!!

If you get the chance to visit a GYG Restaurant for authentic Mexican food, we guarantee that you won't be disappointed.



Youth Transition Program

Misión México has now established a youth transition program which is a continuation of Misión México's vision for the children and young adults in their care having the opportunity to grow and reach their full potential, through a loving, caring family environment with a focus on education.

A vital aspect of what Misión México has been working towards is the young adults in their care becoming independent and self-sufficient. A number of the young adults are now at a stage in their lives where they need to establish life skills that are difficult to develop in the current Misión México system.

20% of the Misión México household are now adults; 41% are 12-18 years old and by 2019 (next 5 years) there will be an additional 15 young people entering adulthood (this figure does not include any additional youths that may come to live at Misión México over the next 5 years).

This program is to assist in creating a vision for them of what they can achieve, and who they can become. The focus is to empower these young people in a bid to break the cycle of poverty and abuse, and further create confident, competent young adults and positive role models who can successfully live independently. This program is imperative for the positive transition of Misión México's youth to the outside world.

Part of this program includes a transition house for our young adults to prepare them to live independently. Currently we have four young ladies living in the transition house, supported by an on-site house supervisor and mentor. This was established in February this year and already we are starting to see huge changes in the young adults' confidence and independence.

We have yet to establish a youth transition home for our male residents but there is a critical need to set this up as we have young men in need of this.

Sponsorship is essential to the continuation and success of this project. For more information on this project and how you can help please contact us at info@lovelifehope.com or donate via our website www.lovelifehope.com/donate.

Welcome to the Misión México Team

I don't know if we ever formally welcomed Jackson Gilmore (USA), who has taken on the responsibility of volunteer coordinator for at least a two year period; welcome Jackson.

A big welcome to Tara Murphy (Australia) who has taken on the responsibility of the Youth Transition Program and living with the young ladies for this year.

Also to Luanne Ingram (Australia/UK), who has spent the last six months helping with our social media, administration and fundraising at Misión México and Maddy Guerrini (Australia) who has taken on some of the work that Luanne was doing.

Ana Maria Jeatz (Guatemala) has also joined the team of Misión México as the chaplain for the children. Welcome Ana Maria.

Merric Stevenson (Australia) has come back to Misión México for the 4th time! This time, long term to help establish the gardens at Misión Surf and to also give piano lessons to a few of the children and help out at the refuge. Welcome back Merric.

A big welcome to Brooke and Francisco (Paco) Chavez (Mexico), who have accepted the responsibility of managing Misión Surf full time, and also living on site at the beach camp at Villa del Sol, Pt. Madero, with their two young children.



We welcome Deborah Grossman (Scotland), who has been working with Misión México for approx. 7 years as a volunteer and of late, part time employee, and who has now accepted a position working full time for Misión México!

Finally to Darren Jones, who has devoted many months of service to help Misión México in any way possible.

To all the volunteers out there who have supported Misión México in any way, and to all those who have worked tirelessly and continuously for Misión México over the years; thank you so much!!

Together we can make a difference and we are!

We urgently need more volunteers to come and help our kids - with more children living here now we need more hands on deck. If you, or someone you know, would like to volunteer with us in Tapachula or can share their skills locally to fundraise for our Misión México family please contact volunteer@lovelifehope.com.

“Misión México is one in a million. Volunteers should expect heat and hard work but also an unforgettable experience that you will talk about forever!” Kyrie & Alice, UK.

Sport, Music, Dance and Art

Misión México's youth continue to excel in their sports, music, dance and art activities.

Skateboarding

Delmar, who came to us when he was 13 years, after a life of hardship, and also time on the streets, continues to amaze us with his incredible talents. Delmar is now sponsored by Compound Board Shop in Florida USA, for his skateboarding. He has won, or placed second, in numerous competitions in the Tapachula area and constantly improves with practice each day.

Many of our other children are developing in their skateboarding skills also, both girls and boys. Thankfully, we have a small wooden skate ramp at the house that was built a couple of years ago by Andrew Carrier and his team from California, USA. This has helped tremendously with their skills and confidence. Often, our yard resembles a skate park, along with all the noise that goes with it!

In June we had a team visit from California, led by Kirk Lantz. This amazing group organized the 2nd Tapachula Skate Classico Competition which was well attended by the locals and an incredible day was had by all. Delmar placed 1st for his division, and Ricky 1st for his division, with Hector getting second place. Thanks guys for coming and sharing.

Surf

All the children love our days at the beach and all are becoming more confident in the water. Even Jenifer and Cesar have overcome their fear of water and enjoy playing in the small waves close to the shore.

The older kids; Leo, Isaac, Delmar, Griselda, Maria, Dulce and Yuri, along with Cristian, Mario and Lalo, continue to impress us all with their advancement in the surf, and I never tire of photographing their progress. It has been such a joy to see their development over the years.

Many of our young men are not only becoming confident surfers and skaters; they are also learning the building trade and are becoming very competent tradesmen, working on the Misión Surf Project.



Music

In our music program we have 10 children involved in the Orchestra Esperanza Azteca; 8 in choir and two learning the violin. These kids love the fact that they are developing their musical talent and their voices. Recently there have been a couple of concerts, with one being at the City Theatre in front of a packed audience! We are looking forward to when we have a Misión México choir!!

Misión México is fortunate to often have volunteers who can play an instrument and are willing to share their skills with the kids. There have been a number who have taught the guitar and have helped the kids advance in this area. At the moment Merric Stevenson is giving piano classes at the refuge.

The children have been receiving guitar classes since we received a donation of 5 new guitars from Adrian Betanzos. Many thanks Adrian for your donation. Also, thank you to our neighbor Gerardo Pinto who, when he has time, comes and gives lessons to the kids.

Ballet

Our five young ballet dancers are also moving forward. Not too long ago, the five had their first ballet exam. They were so very nervous dancing in front of international examiners, but all did really well with Ali getting a 'Distinction', and the other four receiving 'Merits'.

Recently, the five children were involved in the Gala Ballet Performance at the city theatre where they performed in front of a few hundred people! So proud of them!

Misión México's five ballet students being recognized for the incredible effort in just one year.

Maria, who is studying dance, also danced and acted in a play about the migration problem in Central America and Mexico, at the City Theatre in front of a full house.

Art/Mosiacs

Many volunteers come and share their talents with the children of Misión México which we are so thankful for. Recently, Dominic Attard from Australia came and instructed the children on how to make a mosaic. We were seriously 'blown away' at how quickly the children learned this art and were equally amazed at their workmanship. We now have some great pieces of art for the new building.

I also managed to do my very own 'second' mosaic while Dom was here which was an incredible achievement for me, obviously due to my limited free time.



Health

The children continue to be in good health most of the time, Praise God!

Antonio broke his arm while skateboarding and had to have it re-broken as it was not set correctly!! Cesar, our little mischievous 'Leprechaun', had to have his tongue sewn together as he almost cut it completely off when he fell not too long ago. Candy's hip continues to give her discomfort but thanks to Tom Hill, Chiropractor from Pt. Escondido, who came and spent a week at Misión México recently adjusting everyone numerous times, Candy and all the rest of us are feeling much more comfortable and Candy is without pain. Thanks so much Tom, it was truly a blessing.

Eye Examinations

In December 2013, Catherine and Jeremy Vallance from Australia, visited Misión México to do eye examinations on each of the children, as well as myself and Alan. It was detected that 13 children were in need of glasses, some for reading and some for distance.

During the examinations, it was also discovered that Jenifer, who has a learning disability, had very limited peripheral vision due to a bump on the head, most likely at her birth. This would explain why Jenifer had difficulty concentrating in her studies.

The glasses arrived last month and now all the children who were in need, are happily wearing them and are also enjoying the reading sessions. There has also been a notable improvement in the behavior and attitude of a few of the younger children.

Thank you Catherine and Jeremy for taking the time to come to Misión México to share your gift with us. God bless!

Education

I will focus on education in the next newsletter due to the length of this one. And also, we should have some results to share from the end of year reports.

Support and Sponsorship

Providing for Misión México's every need is a challenge to say the least. There are so many facets in the daily life of the refuge. Above, I have mentioned some of these, but behind every project and activity, there are countless additional needs. Because of the wonderful backing that we receive, we are able to continue to help these children on their journey through life.

These children are growing and developing due to that support for which we are eternally grateful.

Thank you so much for caring and sharing.

With love to all,
from Pam and Alan Skuse and
all the family at Misión México.

