



MISIÓN MÉXICO NEWSLETTER
www.lovelifehope.com

★ **GENERAL Misión México Update**

Saludos a todos;

How different we all are, each and every one of us. This individuality makes the world an interesting place. We all have something we can share with another, something that can help to better our world. Every volunteer who has come to Misión México has brought something special into the world of these children; any act of loving kindness, whether it be cleaning the refuge or cooking, teaching or playing or, disciplining these children, does make a difference in the lives of these amazing kids. We all have a special gift, a talent, and each talent we share with another is encouraging growth and, growth is what it is all about.

A volunteer may not see instant results and wonder if they have made any difference at all but, growth is happening, slowly but surely.

Over the past nine years Alan and I have seen many changes; changes in ourselves as well as those around us. Some changes are great and some are small.

Change encourages growth and there has definitely been growth in us and the children.

We started with six children and now we have 54! Bruno was one of our first children and he is still with us. He is a slow learner but he has developed into a fine young person, still in need of guidance but growing.





★*EDUCATION Update*

The children finished the school year with most of them passing the final exams, though unfortunately, a few did not. These children had to sit for a second chance exam and thankfully they passed, all except Ruben (7yrs).



Ruben failed grade 2 in the areas of Spanish with a 5.0 and Mathematics 5.6 and needed a 6.0 to pass. Now he has to repeat the whole year. I felt so frustrated with the system and the teachers for making a 7yr old repeat when he passed all other areas well.

Ruben definitely needs help, mainly in the area of reading so now he is being tutored.

Evelyn passed her third year secondary exam but had to sit for another to enter senior high, but unfortunately she didn't pass that exam so was not eligible to enter senior, the equivalent of grade 11. We had to find someone, who knew someone, to get her in.

Education is not straight forward here in Mexico and even though every child has the right to an education, it is not that easy, especially in the public system. Even if you pass and graduate from primary school you are not eligible to go to Secondary unless you pass an entrance exam and it's the same from Secondary to Senior.

I have mentioned Yesenia in past newsletters. She is a girl who has a mental block to learning. She spent three years in grade one but still could not read so could not advance. We pulled her out of school and with the help of a friend got her a private teacher who after a period of time, gave up on her. She was also attending psychology sessions but the psychologist eventually gave up on her also. What can you do when a psychologist gives up on you? Even though Yesenia wasn't advancing at a normal rate, she was advancing. She can actually read now, at a 6 year old level but, she is reading, that is the main thing. I personally don't think she is retarded but because of environmental factors and abuse she suffered in the past, she hasn't developed properly.

Education is the factor that is going to break the cycle of poverty. These children need a good education to give them a chance to improve their lives. Without it, in a third world country, they are destined to a life of poverty.

We now have some academic programs happening that were initiated by Jane Mulvihill and her cousin Kerryen Hennessy from Australia, to help these children advance. English and math are a priority and the children are advancing in these areas.

Having English as a second language will give these children an advantage in the workforce over others. Most of the children need extra help and with over 50 children going to school this is a problem as we do not have enough tutors. We desperately need more help in this area. If you could pass this newsletter on to anyone you know who may be interested in supporting the education fund we would greatly appreciate it. Contact info@lovelifehope.com for more information.

UPDATE ON MOACIR

As you would probably remember, our eldest child here at the refuge received a scholarship to a University in Australia to study for one year.

We would like to inform you that Moacir is doing really well at Southern Cross University on the Gold Coast where he is studying Sports Management, specializing in Surfing Studies.

Moacir is learning the 'ins-and-outs' of the surfing industry. It is a Diploma course for one year. With this knowledge it's our dream that Moacir will return to Tapachula and commence the surf school and retail outlet that will not only give Moacir a career, but provide job opportunities for the other young adults in this family and also, to help support the refuge.



Moacir & Merrill



★SPORTS Update

SWIMMING

At the moment we have a volunteer swimming coach helping at the refuge who is giving all of our newer children 'Learn to Swim' classes at a rundown 'Country Club' in the city.

All children are progressing well and gaining more confidence each day.

SURFING

The children are advancing really well in surfing and it is amazing to watch their progress. Now, some of our little ones are having a go. Sammy, Ali and Yimi couldn't take the smile off their faces after they managed to stand up and ride some tiny waves recently.

We have a girl named Candy who has had operations on her hips. She has a distinct limp. Candy won't join in most sports as it is too difficult for her but, last Sunday at the beach, she persevered and finally managed to stand up on a board and ride a small wave in. I don't think I have ever seen her so happy and proud of herself, it was just wonderful.

Surfing is giving these kids so much confidence. And, there is nobody else, other than our large family, who is surfing in this area so they also feel very special. At times the kids get the opportunity to surf at another beach not far from where we go on Sundays and they draw crowds of people who come to watch.



★TALENT Update

MUSIC

A number of children who attend the private school have been learning the recorder for some time now. This is to introduce them to music. After a few years the children move onto guitar and are doing well. Moacir, Jose and Merrill have virtually taught themselves guitar and have really come a long way in a short time.

Recently a volunteer, Adam Mumford bought the children a drum set!!! Hmmm is this a good idea??

I have to admit, I am amazed at the talent that is developing. You never know, maybe we will have a band in the future. Alan and Adam have more-or-less sound proofed a small room (that also serves as a sauna!!) for the children to practice. We have found that one of our older girls has an amazing voice but needs training. We will be looking into getting her classes soon.



DANCE

Maria 16 yrs is back in ballet classes and enjoying every minute of it. Yesenia, mentioned above, is attending Ballet classes and loves it. She was actually on stage not too long ago at the theater where she was involved in a delightful ballet. This was a huge step for Yesenia and she felt so proud of herself, which is just wonderful.

We have a number of girls who would love to dance but it all comes back to scholarships - currently we have just the 2 although it looks like we may have some salsa scholarships soon.





★FUNDRAISING Update

SPECIAL Thanks ★



Christmas cards designed by the children here are for sale in Australia. They come in packets of 10 (2 each of 5 designs) and cost \$10 per packet. Please email info@lovelifehope.com if you would like to purchase some.

Mission Mexico is registered with Everyday Hero, an online fundraising tool, which can be used very easily to do your own fundraising for Mission Mexico. Whether it be a sponsored bike ride or a read-a-thon, or even a local marathon go to <http://www.everydayhero.com.au/charity/view?charity=736> and start fundraising!

SOMEWHERE NEAR TAPACHULA

An upcoming event that we would like you to support is the film 'Somewhere Near Tapachula' by Stefan Hunt and Jonno Durant, that will be premiered in Sydney in February 2010 and then shown in 16 locations throughout Australia. There will be a U.S. tour later in the year.

Although the massive Australian fundraising tour does not kick off until February 2010, Director Stefan Hunt has teamed up with his father Vince Hunt to present a 'behind the scenes' art exhibition. Running from the 11th until the 13th of December, this debut exhibition for both artists will feature photography from the film, a sneak peak at the feature documentary, and a collection of acrylic based paintings by Vince. The most exciting part of the exhibition is that all proceeds from the artworks sold will go back to *Misión México*.

The official 'Somewhere Near Tapachula' shirts will also be available for \$25, and look amazing. For more information go to www.somewhereneartapachula.com

Many thanks to our sponsors and supporters, without you these children would not have the life and opportunities that they now have. Over the last year there have been a number of events and a lot of hard work by some incredible people.

To mention a few, St Michael's College in Qld raised over \$3400 through various activities which is just fantastic. Moacir visited the school after the events to thank the teachers and children and spoke about life at the refuge. We have recieved a number of beautiful emails from some of the children at the school saying what a wonderful speaker Moacir had been and how they would like to come and volunteer when they finish school. It is just amazing what transpires!

A new volunteer, Bree McKenzie, organised a fundraiser in Dunedin (NZ) and raised money to purchase items needed for the children including; rash shirts, board shorts and swimmers for girls and boys. Thank you so much – we can never have enough of these items!

Just a couple of weeks ago, Moacir visited Corpus Christi Parish (ACT) with Father Mark, President of Mission Mexico (Australia) Inc, and a couple of the other committee members to talk about the refuge and raise awareness of what we are doing. Many of the congregation were keen to talk to Moacir after the service and a number of people have become supporters which is just wonderful. They also sold Christmas cards at St Francis Xavier College and St. John Kippax which is fantastic. All your fundraising efforts are so appreciated - we cannot thank you enough. All the money raised contributes to the children's education, the general care and well being of the children and the running costs of the refuge.

Anyone interested in raising money for us should please contact info@lovelifehope.com.

Thank you too to *MAWAI, Ere Perez, Santos Wish, Guzman y Gomez* and *Tanya Gordon* who continue to support us financially through their businesses and activities.

And a warm welcome to *Use My Mind Pty. Ltd. and Left-Hand Presents* who are now on board and helping us with promoting Somewhere Near Tapachula.

To all our sponsors and supporters; "Alan and I and the children of *Misión México* say, **GRACIAS, MUCHAS GRACIAS!**"

PERSONAL NOTE Congratulations to our son Shannon and daughter-in-law Sarah, who were recently married, and also a big welcome to our newest grand-daughter Charlie Jean.

God Bless
Pam and Alan Skuse

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