



Misión México is a refuge for abused, abandoned and neglected children from extreme poverty

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## Kids from impoverished backgrounds get back on their feet through surfing International Surfing Day

As surfers and travellers, and coming from reasonably affluent and fortunate societies, we are increasingly aware of the immense human need in many countries. Surfers who travel the globe in search of waves are in a unique position to observe and experience this need in poorer communities first hand.

As in most cases of humanitarian efforts and causes, responses to the obvious problems of some international communities are generated in the first instance by very special individuals – those amongst us who experience something on their travels that touch them profoundly - so profoundly in fact that after that experience, life for them takes on a different and deeper meaning, and ultimately remain changed forever.

This is the story of Alan and Pam Skuse who established Misión México in November 2000 and have become adoptive parents for children who have been abused, neglected, abandoned and from extreme poverty.

Misión México refuge has established a unique surfing community which they have pioneered in Tapachula, a coastal city in Mexico's Pacific Ocean. Misión México' surfing programme is called Misión Surf and its aim is to become a surf identity in the area, using the surf potential of the local beach for positive community outcomes.

Alan Skuse commented further on Misión Surf; "The aim of the Misión México' surfing programme is to introduce disadvantaged kids to surfing as a lifestyle in an effort to keep them away from drugs and from the streets. It will focus on giving them a second chance to enjoy their childhood along with the opportunities to live in a safe family environment and to attend school. The ultimate goal is to restore them back into society as a leading new generation."

Most of the children had never seen the ocean or knew how to swim before living at Misión México; thanks to the Skuses' commitment to teach them about water safety and lifesaving skills, the ocean is not just a place of fun to these children, but also an escape from what life used to be.

In recognition of **International Surfing Day, Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> June**, Misión México invites surfers and non-surfers alike to raise funds for the children at the refuge who are learning to overcome their pasts and develop critical life skills through surfing. Go to <https://mydonate.bt.com/events/mexicanwave>

If you've ever wondered what impact surfing has on a person, especially a child, read what some of the kids have written about their experiences below. You can almost FEEL the lifeline that this activity has created for the kids – helping to promote confidence, improving their sense of self worth and self esteem, a vehicle to have fun and to learn how to laugh again, to encourage them to strive for something, to know they are capable and talented, and to enjoy their improvements and successes!

**Isaac-15:** *With my new donated board I am improving my technique and I feel I am surfing better now. We go out when there's waves around and we always have a lot of fun. It's like 10 big kids that are keen at surfing. When I see one of the others catching a good wave, it makes want to catch a better one and I think that's what helps me improve my surfing.*

**Maria-14:** *At this moment I am the only girl that surfs with the boys, I'm still getting confident out there. But there are other girls who are showing interest and giving it a try. They like it*





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*and I like that. Hopefully soon we'll have our own group of girls and finally get to show the boys how it's done!!!*



Supporting kids in surfing as a means of restoring self esteem, hope for all the possibilities that life has to offer them, and the chance of a better life is worthy of our interest and time. Misión México actually relies solely on individuals like you for support, donations, sponsorship; volunteering and other forms of assistance are always needed and gratefully received.

Supporting the programme Misión Surf will benefit the children with opportunities for work experience and employment. It will further benefit the community of Tapachula through teaching them about water safety, surfing skills and environmental awareness.

**To find out more about Misión Surf go to <http://lovelifehope.com/programmes/surf-programme.htm>**



Misión México (UK) is a Registered Charity in UK (SC042838) Address 2/1, 33 Tassie Street, Glasgow G41 3QG