



## SUMMER 2008 NEWSLETTER

### SPECIAL PEOPLE - THE HEART OF NIÑOS

Adrienne and Jack Baldwin are fine examples of the caring, outstanding people involved in Niños Adelante. Their generous involvement goes back years, into the 1980's.

It was Adrienne who was responsible for re-establishing the US connection to Niños Adelante when she and Liz Williams collaborated to have Adrienne take over sponsorship communications and the banking operations to Minneapolis. In the 1990's she and her friend Delia were busy accounting for revenue and expenses in what was known as Niños Adelante. Bob Albright (a tireless volunteer for Friends of Niños Adelante) tells us that "Adrienne managed the banking and communications with the aid of her "index file" for better than a dozen years prior to the advent of today's database."

It was in 1999 that Friends of Niños Adelante was created. Adrienne held a board position with FON from its inception until her retirement from the board in 2006. Adrienne is considered by Bob to be the "Mother" of the modern day Friends of Niños Adelante.

Adrienne and Jack have always been at the heart of Friends activities, not only as emotional supporters of the entire movement but financial backers of this cause. Adrienne and Jack, the professional at the Lafayette Club in Minneapolis, were the founding organizers of the Friends of Niños Minneapolis Golf Charity event. This was the first "state side" funds raiser for FON and carried on for 8 years, raising a substantial amount of funds for the organization. Each year, Jack contributed the use of Lafayette Country Club and the otherwise expensive golf carts (he owned them) for this fundraiser.

Adrienne, though not a golfer herself, was a "worker bee" in every possible respect.

Tyrone Bujold (another big contributor of time and resources to FON) remarks that "One cannot recall being in Ixtapa and Zihuatanejo without remembering Adrienne's universal presence. Adrienne it was who set up the Reunion Breakfasts. Adrienne it was who organized the delightful benefit dinner at LaRocca in Zihuatanejo, and Adrienne it was who did the hard work of approaching local Mexican businesses to secure gift certificates for the annual auctions held at our Golf Tournament each September."

Tyrone adds, "modest to a fault, these two lovely people never sought nor did they solicit praise. The welfare of our Niños was their sole motivation. Look up in your favorite dictionary the words "philanthropy" and "altruism" and if you don't find Jack and Adrienne's names throw away your dictionary. It's not complete.

## PRESIDENTS COLUMN SUMMER 2008

On behalf of the Board of Directors of Friends of Niños Adelante and especially the Ninos, thank you for your continuing support of this great organization. I would like to give you a brief update on your organization.

Currently, we have 223 students in the program being supported by a like number of sponsors. There are 36 in our college program and 187 in junior high and high school.

We completed the Zihua breakfast reunions for the year 2008. Both were very successful and at the February breakfast, we had about 330 people...our biggest ever. I was personally able to attend both the January and February meetings this year. It was great meeting new sponsors and students for the first time. If you have never attended one of the breakfast meetings, I would strongly encourage you to do so. It is very rewarding to get to know your student and his or her family. This type of meeting lets the student (and family) know how much you care about them and their education. It encourages the student to work hard at school and it is a very gratifying experience.

The organization has had several successful fundraisers in 2007. We had the dinner in Zihuatanejo in February and the Annual Fundraiser in Minneapolis in September. The Minneapolis fundraiser generated over \$20,000 this past year...a new record. Another successful dinner in Zihuatanejo was also held in 2008. These fundraisers provide the necessary capital to run the organization. ALL of the sponsor dollars donated go directly to the students, so it is important to raise operating funds from these events. We remain in excellent financial condition for our continued support of the Mexican Niños Adelante program.

If you have any questions or concerns, you may contact us through the Friends of Niños Adelante web site at [www.friendsofninosadelante.org](http://www.friendsofninosadelante.org). We welcome your comments and suggestions.

If you know of a good success story about a student in the program, we would love to share it with our sponsors. Please let us know. We always are looking for good stories to share.

THANK YOU for your continued support of this great organization. You are making a difference in the lives of the ninos, their families, and the community.

Oh behalf of your Board of Directors,

Steve Leighton  
President

## OUR VACATION FOSTERED CHANGE IN TWO FAMILYS

My name is Bill Baker and I would like to share with you our family's experience during our vacation to Zihuatanejo / Ixtapa Mexico. Myself, my wife Vicki, our 10 year old son Grant and our friend Denise, boarded the plane early in the morning for our 11 day trip. We scheduled our trip so we could go to the breakfast to meet our student and her family. We have sponsored Mercedes for 2 years.

Before we knew it Sunday breakfast was upon us, none of us spoke the language and we were nervous and excited at the same time. We had invited Mercedes and her entire family to the breakfast. Friends of Niños Adelante put out a great spread of food and a fantastic show, Mexican style. We all had enough food and the kids ate like they hadn't eaten before. Each table had a translator and we all talked and laughed and slowly got to know each other. After breakfast we invited the family to go swimming at our hotel. They graciously accepted and we had a blast. Roberto (Mercedes dad), Denise, and myself went to the swim up bar and Jose (bilingual bartender), helped us to translate. The kids played together all day. We soon learned that language wasn't that big of a problem. We ordered pizza pool side and called it a day. Before our guests left for home they invited us to their house for dinner the next evening, and of course we said yes.

The next day proved to be most interesting. In the morning we toured their school. Around 5:00 we left for their home. We met Mercedes at a local store because it was hard to find her house and I'm not sure they even have a postal address. It seemed like a long walk because we were walking up a 45 degree hill, going up, up, up. I'm not sure my 4x4 truck could make the trip. It was rough and steep. The view was spectacular over looking the bay with the cruise ships. When we arrived I was shocked, small tin roofed shack, slat board sides with 1 in. gaps all over, dirt floor, 1 light bulb (looks like they share it with their neighbors) no plumbing, no refrig, no stove, (camp fire style). Chickens, dogs, parrots, all free ranging. As we sat out on the make shift patio, mom prepared hand made tortillas. She rolled them in banana leaves, then boiled them. They were good and not too filling. Coming out of the house, we realized two things: 1. We are definitely sponsoring a child who needs help 2. We are very lucky. It was a quiet walk down that hill.

Later that night Grant and I were sitting by the beach and I told him, Roberto and I were going to trade houses for the winter. Grant said, "YA RIGHT that's not going to happen." "Ya know I don't get it: they don't have very much but they are always happy". I watched Grant grow that day –a lot!

Denise sponsored a student before we left Zihuatanejo. Mercedes saw us to the airport with some parting gifts. As for me, I know that I'm changing the life of an entire family. Maybe not right away, because education takes time but it's contagious when people see all the good this program helps make happen.

Friends of Niños Adelante made a good trip the best: I recommend everyone spend a day with their students.

### CRUISE HIGHLIGHT – MEETING OUR STUDENT!

Hi! We are Ron and Connie Anderson. We live in a small town in Northern Michigan. We first became acquainted with the Niños Adelante student sponsorship a few years ago from Leif and Lois Lindblom.

Last year we decided to sponsor a student. Our student's name is Luis Geraldo Diaz. At this same time we were planning a cruise down the Mexican Riviera coastline that would have a port stop in Zihuatanejo. We thought it would be nice if we could meet our student and Jose Bustos at our stop. The timing was pretty tight but it all came together.

We made arrangements to meet Jose and our student at 10:00 a.m. on the dock. We arrived at 9:30 and they were there to meet us. I had to go back to the ship because I forgot the gift, which we had for Luis. I left my wife with Jose and Luis on the dock for almost an hour. When I

returned Jose asked if we would like to see where Luis and his family lived. We were only there for a few hours so I suggested we just have lunch but he convinced us to visit Luis's home. We got into Jose's truck and within two blocks were stopped by the police. There was a lot of waving of hands and talking between the policia and Jose, which we didn't understand- however- Jose cleared it up. It seems that the taxi drivers on the dock called the police and told them there was an unauthorized tour guide taking us on a tour. Jose got quite a laugh over it.

We arrived at Luis's neighborhood in about five minutes but were not prepared for the climb up to his house. It was a very steep and rough climb for two seniors like us. We had to stop a couple of times to rest but did manage to make it to his house. It was very humbling to see how they lived, even though we did not go into the dwelling. He lives there with his mother and father, who were both at work, his aunt and a younger brother and sister whom we also met. He also has two older brothers who were at work. My wife looked at me with tears in her eyes and said, "this is a good thing we are doing."

We offered to take his younger brother and sister to lunch but she had to go to school. The younger brother Daniel, Luis, and Jose took us to a local place, which served very good food. The boys really enjoyed eating one of their favorites – ceviche.

Luis is quite shy but is a very good student carrying a 9.5 average out of 10. His younger brother Daniel is a little more outgoing. We told Daniel to keep up his grades, so he can qualify for the program, and we would also sponsor him. Then it was time to return to the ship.

This was truly the highlight of our cruise. We encourage those who have not participated to get involved. It is a worthy cause that touches many lives.

#### NIÑOS ADELANTE ALUMNI – ERIKA VENESSA PENALOZA CABRERA

She is 23 years old, and a graduate from the institute Tecnologico de la Costa Grande.

Erika has three sisters, one brother, loving and supportive parents. The family lives in Colonia Cauhetemoc. Their home is humble, but filled with love. The household includes a one-year baby, and two little girls, aged 3 and 7. The children are nieces of Erika.

In a single large room of the home, clothes strung from a rope line the walls: purses and shoes are piled here and there. Beds cover most of the floor space. A television set can be seen in one corner, and in another a treasured computer. The kitchen area is so tiny! Well-used pots and pans hang from the ceiling. Dishes are stacked on a small table. How does Mamma Teodora prepare such tasty meals? -chicken and tacos and flautas for more than 40 people on several occasions that I have attended. So little space, so few amenities! Such energy and excitement in the preparation! These fiestas take place outside the home on land that has been cleared and serves the surrounding community as a gathering place.

Paul and Sandy Franklin—Niños Adelante padrinos, supported Erika throughout secundaria. Erika has been a high achiever throughout her school years. She has represented the Technical College in various provincial academic competitions, always faring well. Her achievements have made her parents and her padrinos very proud.

Last August, Erika traveled to Portland, Oregon, to spend four months with her padrinos. In the United States, she completed the practicum required to graduate from the Tecnologico with a degree in business administration. She also vastly improved her skills in English, speaking now with fluency. Her stay in the U.S. was certainly of value to Erika.

One of Erika's greatest challenges in the U.S. was sleeping in a bed, in her own room. She had never enjoyed such luxury. At home, in Zihuatanejo, she sleeps on the floor alongside her parents, while 8 others surround them in beds.

As Erika's past Niños Adelante English teacher, I was pleased to be invited to her graduation ceremony. Erika finished at the top of her class with an average of 9.9(out of 10) Indeed, she was recognized as the top student in the Technical College. It was an emotional moment when Erika's parents, Theodora and Gregorio, joined their daughter on stage to be acknowledged and applauded.

Erika has a position in Cancun, starting just two weeks after her Feb. 2008 graduation, as a public relations officer. She will work there, until she has the financial resources to return to school – perhaps in Monterrey – to pursue a master's degree.

With her proven ability and her drive, we know Erika will succeed. Another happy and productive Niños Adelante graduate. Submitted by Shellagh Yarnell

DEAR FRIENDS AND SPONSORS OF NINOS ADLANTE AUGUST 2008

The annual Niños Adelante fundraiser dinner/auction is nearing-September 26<sup>th</sup>. As much as we would like all of you to be in attendance, we know that's not possible.

We would like to propose in the alternative for those not able to attend, a cash contribution of any amount, which we would add to donated auction items to enhance their value. As an example, a trip for a weekend retreat in the Colorado ski country might be paired with airfare derived from cash contributions. By making the auction items more attractive in this manner, the revenues raised for Niños should be higher. This would be a wonderful way to be a part of the auction in spirit, if not in person. Those contributing would be recognized in the auction brochure and Niños Newsletter.

Do hope this will catch your fancy and we look forward to hearing from you. Your continuing interest and involvement in Ninos is most appreciated.

Hope everyone is having a wonderful summer.

Your tax deductible contribution can be made out to and sent to;  
Friends of Niños Adelante  
C/O Steve Leighton  
8830 Pointe Vista Drive  
Victoria, MN 55386

Regards to all,  
Steve Leighton  
President

FUNDRAISER 2008 - SAVE THIS DATE – MAKE A DONATION

Your planing committee is working hard putting together our annual fundraiser for 2008. The event will be held on September 26, 2008 at 6:30 p.m. at the Sheraton Ridgedale West in

Minnetonka, MN. The Sheraton is located next to the Ridgedale Mall. We will offer a light dinner, cash bar, live auction, and silent auction.

Please consider a donation of a service or item. We are looking for items in the \$100 range or we can group things together for more value. If you have a vacation home, boat for an outing or other significant donations we would like to hear from you. Keep in mind this is our biggest fundraiser of the year and we need your support to make it a success. We are counting on you to make it our best ever.

WE ARE ASKING ALL ATTENDEES TO BRING A BOTTLE OF WINE.  
Last year, the wine raffle raised over \$1,000

REGARDING AUCTION DONATIONS –please contact Stephanie Rose at  
[Stefanie.rose@mchsi.com](mailto:Stefanie.rose@mchsi.com) or 612-386-4864

QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS –please contact Steve Leighton at  
[Leightonconsult@earthlink.net](mailto:Leightonconsult@earthlink.net) or at 952-443-3910

#### FRIENDS OF NIÑOS ADELANTE AUCTION DONATIONS AS OF 8/10/08

##### Silent auction items

- 1 Breakfast for 4 at Restaurante Nueva Zelanda, Ixtapa
- 2 Dinner for 2 and drinks at Restaurante Casa Morelos, Ixtapa
- 3 Dinner for 2 at Restaurante Kau Kan, Zihuatanejo
- 4 100 dollar gift certificate to Restaurante Villa de la Salva, Ixtapa
- 5 Dinner for 2 at Restaurant Beccofino, Ixtapa
- 6 Dinner for 2 including drinks at Restaurante Emilos, Ixtapa (good only until 12/08)
- 7 Dinner for 2 at Restaurante Italiano dal Toscano, Ixtapa
- 8 Dinner for 2 at 3 Amigo's Restaurante (\$60 value)
- 9 Dinner for 2 and a bottle of wine at Restaurante La Cala, Zihuatanejo
- 10 Dinner for 2 and a bottle of wine at Restaurante Mamma Norma & Deborah's or Debora's Chili Beans Restaurante, Ixtapa
- 11 \$100 gift certificate for Restaurante Zihuablue, Playa la Ropa
- 12 \$60 gift certificate to Restaurante Bandidos, Zihuatanejo
- 13 \$70 gift certificate to Soleiado, Ixtapa
- 14 Dinner for 2 at Restaurante El Mirador, Zihuatanejo
- 15 Dinner for 2 at Sr. Frogs, Ixtapa
- 16 Dinner for 2 at Rubin's Hamburgers, Ixtapa
- 17 Dinner for 2 and a bottle of wine at Bogart's, Ixtapa
- 18 Caterer Nipa Bhatt to make a Indian dinner for up to 6 persons. Plus \$100 Byerly's gift card for food and wine(\$300 value)
- 19 Silk flower arrangement made by Donna Leighton ( \$100 value)
- 20 7 homemade American Girl Doll outfits(\$100value)
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##### Live Auction Items

- 1 Leighton boat cruise (\$600 value)
- 2 Golf for 4 at Deer Run (\$208 value) plus Victoria House gift certificates (\$100 value)
- 3 Condo in Florida Keys for 1 week (\$1,000 value)
- 4 One day of deep sea fishing in Zihuatanejo for 4 or a sunset cruise for up to 10 on the

38 foot Eusturion II plus fishing Eusturion t-shirt (\$500 value  
5. Basket of Chiclets (priceless) donated by the children of Zihuatanejo

Should you wish to bid on any of the above items please e-mail your opening and maximum bid to Stefanie Rose at [stefanie.rose@mchsi.com](mailto:stefanie.rose@mchsi.com)

Should you have the opportunity to patronize any of the above donors please identify yourself as a Friends of Niños Adelante member, and thank them for their support.

### SPECIAL THANKS

We would like to thank Shelagh Yarnell for her wonderful Niños Adelante student success story. Also, a big thanks to Bill Baker and Ron and Connie Anderson for sharing their wonderful experience of meeting their student for the first time.

We are always looking for stories of interest from those who would like to share an experience with other sponsors. Please contact Leif or Lois Lindblom at [Leif@lindblomfamily.com](mailto:Leif@lindblomfamily.com) or at P.O. Box 677 Oscoda, Mi 48750

### UPCOMMING EVENTS

SEPTEMBER 26, 2008 fundraiser in Minnetonka (invitation in newsletter)

JANUARY 11 AND FEBRUARY 15 - Niños-Sponsor breakfasts in Ixtapa  
Registration forms can be found at [www.friendsofninosadelante.org](http://www.friendsofninosadelante.org) under News. Please have your registrations in as soon as possible.

FEBRUARY 19 - Niños Adelante Benefit Dinner- Zihuatanejo  
Registration forms are also at the Friends of Niños Adelante web site.

### MEDICAL ASSISTANCE

Should you need medical care when in the Ixtapa/Zihuatanejo area, the American Consular Agency suggests Dr. Rogelio Grayeb. He has been used by a number of Friends of Ninos Adelante members. His phone numbers are (755) 554-5041, 554-3334, 553-1711, and cell phone is 044-755-102-8066

### BECCA DONATIONS REMINDER NOTICE

Most of our sponsors have received their annual beca donation request letters. These were mailed in May, to all sponsors EXCEPT those with graduating seniors. This latter group will receive a donation request once we have determined whether or not their students have been admitted to college.