



## **2011 FRIENDS OF NIÑOS ADELANTE SUMMER NEWSLETTER**

### **Hola to all our Friends of Niños Adelante sponsors,**

We enjoyed an incredible February, 2011 in Ixtapa/Zihuatanejo. Our breakfast this year with the students and sponsors was excellent. We had outstanding attendance from students, their families and sponsors alike. Thank you to Jose Bustos, the staff of the Hotel Fontan and all of the volunteers for their help with pulling this event together. My wife Stefanie, daughter Madeline, son Noah and I always enjoy the one on one with our students and their families. We all enjoyed the musical program after the breakfast. If you have not had the opportunity to attend the breakfast, I highly recommend traveling to Ixtapa/Zihua in January or February to join us. Getting to meet your student and their family one on one can make such an impact on their lives and your own.

There was a change in venue for the Benefit Dinner this year, the Suspiro Restaurant at the Pacifica Grand and it was perfect; great company, location and dinner. Again, we need to thank Jose Bustos for his efforts in finding the location. Jose and Janie Robins had to make some last minute decisions to pull this off and it went without a hitch, Thank you!

Thank you to all of the board members for your continued support in making Friends of Niños Adelante the great organization it is.

On behalf of all of our students; Thank you sponsors for everything you do.

Chris D. Rose, President, Friends of Niños Adelante

### **In Memory**

On behalf of the Board of Directors of Friends of Niños Adelante and the students who received dental care, we would like to express our condolences to John Cook at the loss of his wife Liz. For many years they volunteered their talents and the required materials needed to provide dental services to the Ninos. Liz will be missed by all who had the pleasure of knowing her.

John Schmiedel, a Friend of Niños, long time sponsor and member of the college scholarship fund committee passed away in early February. John's soft handed input to the organization will be sadly missed.

### **Friends of Niños Adelante Board elects new officers and directors**

At the February 12 annual meeting the Board elected two new directors, Tim Ellis of Bloomington IN and Bob Neal of Bloomington MN (two Bloomingtons but very far apart). They fill the posts of retiring directors Barb Neal and John Cook. Janie Robins current board member was elected to serve one additional year.

A slate of new officers was also elected. Chris Rose of St. Bonifacius MN was elected to a two year term as President, Jani Moe of Edina MN to a two year term as Past President and Janie Robins of Weaverville NC to a one year term as Secretary.

We are always on the lookout for new board members. The task of board membership is far from pressing. We meet four times a year (one in-person meeting held in Ixtapa each February and three telephone conference meetings spaced throughout the year). Attendance at the Ixtapa meeting is helpful but not a necessity. Of course there are the usual secretary, treasurer and president positions but in addition we have some fun stuff like newsletter, English classes, events and scholarships if one prefers something other than direct management.

Please let us know if you have an interest in helping guide this wonderful organization by joining our Board. You may contact Bob Albright [bobalb@comcast.net](mailto:bobalb@comcast.net) or Steve Leighton at [leightonconsult@earthlink.com](mailto:leightonconsult@earthlink.com)

Also please visit our website at [www.friendsofninosadelante.org](http://www.friendsofninosadelante.org) for more information about our organization

## **Sponsorship Joy - Everlasting**

By Pat Hill Carberry Canada

Eneireida Pascacio Valdovinos

When my husband and I decided to sponsor a child through Niños Adelante, we were assigned a petite, pretty little girl named Eneireida. She was 13 years old, a timid, quiet child with a large smile. She had shiny black hair which fell past her shoulders in a toss of tight, ringlet-like curls.

Eneireida lived with her mother and six siblings in San Jose Ixtapa. Her father was absent from the home most of the time, and non-supportive of the children. Her mother had suffered ill-health for a number of years.

Despite our lack of Spanish, and Eneireida's inability in English, we managed to communicate with our hands, our faces, and a few simple words. When our relationship began, we spent one month each winter in Zihuatanejo. Eneireida visited us every week.

My husband and I, along with my sister and brother-in-law (also Niños sponsors) were invited to Eneireida's home in San Jose Ixtapa, and there spent a rather awkward afternoon. The language gap made it difficult, we were uncertain what to do, and Eneireida's mother appeared nervous. She scurried around the kitchen preparing food for us. The two youngest children sat at the outside table doing their homework. One of the sisters did the laundry with a rutted washboard at an outside tub. We were served lunch while their activities carried on around us. No one else ate. Mother served us, very ill-at-ease, and far too anxious to please us.

We appreciated the invitation and the fact that they wanted us to visit their home, but it was an uncomfortable afternoon. Perhaps it was part of the necessary "growing pains" in a new relationship.

Several years later, we spent a wonderful evening in the Pascacio Valdovinos home. We attended the marriage of Eneireida's sister, Erica to her handsome husband Francisco. After the ceremony in the church, we were transported in the back of a truck to the house, where the reception was held. It was a happy affair, and we were thrilled to be part of it.

In 1996, I retired and extended our stay in Zihuatanejo to three months each year. Our relationship with Eneireida continued and blossomed. She visited us frequently, often with her younger sister, Diani, in tow. We shared many pleasant lunches and dinners together.

At this time, Enereida was in high school, and working part time at a shoe store in town for a little extra money to help out her family.

Enereida went to Chilpancingo to study after high school. We continued to support her, independently of Niños. (It was not possible to do so through Niños Adelante at that time) She began to study in the faculty of education, eventually transferring to economics.

Enereida remains in Chilpancingo where she works, using her university education in a meaningful career. She is now 28 years old, and is married to her boyfriend of long standing.

What a joy for me to visit Zihuatanejo last winter, after a five year absence due to my husband's health, and to see Enereida again. She traveled from Chilpancingo several times to visit me, bringing her lovely baby daughter, Cynthia.

Our Niños Adelante student, Enereida Pascacio Valdovinos , has added so much to our enjoyment of Zihuatanejo over the years.

\*\*Her younger brother, Jesus, now lives with Enereida and her family in Chilpancingo, where he attends university. He is a Niños student, sponsored by Steve and Donna Leighton.

### **Friends of Niños Board establishes the Irene Sheahen Memorial College Scholarship program.**

Thanks in great part to Frank Sheahen's generous donation, a grant will be awarded each year to the outstanding Niños Adelante high school senior who has been accepted to attend a major university in Mexico.

All students meeting our eligibility criteria who are planning to go away to a major university or college in Mexico to earn a Bachelor's degree are encouraged to submit an application. High School seniors are eligible to apply and all applications must be received by April 1st. The winning applicant will be selected from the applicants by the Niños Adelante Scholarship Committee.

#### Eligibility Criteria:

1. Strong moral character
2. High School senior graduates of Niños Adelante Program (3 years minimum in the program)
3. Committed to earning a four-year college degree at a significant university outside of Guerrero (excepting Chilpancingo)
4. Willing to share their personal story.
5. G.P.A. of 9.5 at end of Junior year (to be maintained during Senior year)

#### Grant:

A grant of \$1500 per year for four years will be administered beginning with acceptance to university and continue annually for a total of four years upon successful completion of each year with a minimum G.P.A. of 8.0. Payment of the grant during each year will be as follows: One half at the beginning of each year and one half in January of each year.

Times are changing in Zihuatanejo. Our high school graduates are looking beyond the vocationally oriented opportunities offered by local colleges. In the past several years we have had a half dozen or so kids leave home in pursuit of professional degrees in Medicine, Law, Chemistry, Architecture, etc. This has raised the bar and the sights of all our students. This scholarship has the potential to be a major motivator for all students in our program.

IN ADDITION TO THE GENEROUS GIFT FROM THE SHEAHEN FAMILY, A SPECIAL COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP FUND HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED TO SUPPORT THIS PROGRAM. **YOUR TAX DEDUCTABLE GIFTS TO THIS FUND** WILL BE VERY MUCH APPRECIATED AND CAN BE SENT TO FRIENDS OF NIÑOS ADELANTE PO BOX 1624 SONOMA, CA 95476.

### **Recipient of the first Irene Sheahen Scholarship award – A letter of thanks**

Letter from Maria de Jesus Ruiz Peñolozza to Mr. Sheahen: Septiembre 2010

My name is Maria de Jesus. I am 18 years old. I was born on a ranch in Coahuayutla in the state of Guerrero, into a humble but beautiful family. I am the 5th amongst my siblings [four older boys and a younger sister.]

Six years ago, I left for the city of Zihuatanejo to continue studying [of course with the support of my parents] to the home of an aunt and uncle with whom I lived almost three years.

Actually, my parents live with us now, although my father [Sr. Toribio] still plants corn on the ranch in the season. My mother [Sra. Guillermina] takes care of the house and all of us. My oldest brother, Jose, is an electromechanical engineer [my example to follow] The second brother is Santiago. He loves the country and works there. My other brother is an electromechanical technician and works in related activities. My youngest brother, although now he is twenty, went to the U.S.A.

My little sister is Agostina. This year she is studying in the third year of preparatoria. We are all single.

A few days ago, I finished my prepa. My grades have always been very good. I graduated in first place. It was very emotional for me and for my whole family ..... thanks to God.

In a week I will enter university and so on Monday I am going to Mexico City where the National University is located. I will study in the faculty of advanced studies of Acatlan of the UNAM. It was always my dream to study there. I confess that it was very difficult to get in. I had to do extra preparation. I will study for a degree in international relations.

The university is one of the best in the country. It is a government institution and so it is not very expensive.....although for my career I will have to study at a language school as well..... and the requirements like attending a conference of ambassadors and related things such as consulting materials are the things that I see as being a little costly.

I will live with two of my best friends who are also going to study in Mexico City, although at different universities.

I am very happy, and a little uncertain about what's to come. But I know that with God's help, and certainly with this scholarship, it will be more comfortable for me to study.

A million thanks ....

You can be sure that God will not disappoint us.

See you soon.

Maria de Jesus Ruiz Penalozza

Maria is the student of Jack and Adrienne Baldwin.

## **A Book Report**

*By Steve Leighton*

JOURNEY TO ZIHUATANEJO;

FROM VISITOR TO VOLUNTEER

*By Bill "Memo" Bradley*

Some times things happen that you do not expect. In this case, Bill Bradley thought he was going on a nice vacation to an area he had not been to before. After a few trips, he got "hooked" on what many of us already know...it was a small piece of paradise. Like many of us involved in the Niños Adelante Organization, Bill soon found himself in love with the area and people. He simply could not turn his back and walk away from some of it...or them. In his book, Bill talks about the love of the kids and how he eventually became a volunteer and teacher. He learned some lessons along the way and implemented them into a working strategy for the kids of Zihua. He is an active sponsor of three kids in the Niños Adelante program because he knows how important it is for these kids to get an education and a chance at a better life.

The book is a good read for anyone that volunteers or is interested in doing so. You can find the book at: <http://zihuabill.wordpress.com/>

P.S. Bill claims if he ever makes any money on this book, he will donate the proceeds to the Niños Adelante Organization.

## **Azucena Torres Peñaloza (Suzie), A Story of Struggle and Success**

She speaks with her eyes. They are dark, and at times brooding. They sparkle with mischief, or they cloud over with concern. They twinkle with humour. They tear up with emotion. Azucena's lovely eyes, shadowed by long sweeping lashes, speak volumes.

Azucena [Suzie] has been sponsored through Ninos Adelante by Doug and Pat Lehrmann. She has also attended Niños Adelante English classes. As her teacher, I loved Suzie's humour immediately. In her low, well-modulated voice, she popped off one liners, quick and very funny. Suzie can be quick-witted in Spanish, but it is hard for her to get her tongue around the English words. Azucena is not a linguist!

She is a good student, however. She has drive and ambition and has succeeded in school despite a challenging home life. Suzie's father lost his legs to diabetes, and was wheelchair bound and unable to work. He died this past winter [2010]. Azucena's mother is not well, and has difficulty walking. As the only one of seven siblings still living at home, Suzie took on the responsibility of running the household. She still lives with her mother and takes care of her.

As well as attending to her responsibilities at home, Azucena was teaching an early morning computer class to seniors while she attended classes at the Tecnológico. In this way, she earned a little "extra" money to help the family .

Azucena used to come to English class wearing a backwards cap, with her glorious curls tucked up into a tight bun. Never did she wear make-up or jewellery. She had the appearance of an endearing, little-bit-chubby tom-boy.

But a butterfly has emerged from its cocoon. We barely recognized Suzie when we recently attended her "titulacion" ceremony and her graduation from the technical college.

A beautiful young woman [she's 25] presented herself before the titulación panel. Wearing a well-fitted black dress and high-heeled shoes which showed off the pretty legs we had never seen before [jeans and pants are her usual style], Azucena looked every inch a smart young professional.

The "titulación" ceremony ---- I use the Spanish word, as I don't believe there is an English counterpart to this ceremony ---- took place several days in advance of the graduation at the technical college. We attended in a small room, along with Suzie's sister. We three were her only supporters in a room that provided 15 chairs for family and friends.

At the back of the room, behind a table bedecked in a royal blue cloth trimmed with gold braid, sat three school officials. Seated at the front, behind a similarly covered, but smaller table, sat a very nervous Suzie. We three guests sat to the side. The door was closed and silence ensued. The atmosphere was somber. Then each official in turn read a long and serious document. Azucena's turn was next. With arm outstretched in a "heil Hitler" kind of salute, she read a lengthy document vowing to uphold the standards of her profession and to conduct herself in honourable fashion throughout her career. Each staff person then spoke to Azucena on a more personal level, congratulating her and wishing her well in the future.

Then Suzie rose to speak. Her eyes locked with her sister's, and they filled with emotion. She stood, wordless, and the eyes spoke. There was utter silence in the room, and the love between the two young women was almost palpable. Suzie began to speak to her sister, and the tears flowed. She crumbled, so strong was the emotion. Long moments passed, the silence in the room heavy, until, in quavering voice, and with her eyes again locked on her sister's, she thanked Luz for her support and encouragement and told her how much she loved her. Those moments were electric.

Azucena thanked Ross and me for our friendship and our help [we really had given none!] Finally, Luz, Ross and I were given the opportunity to speak. We left the room with hugs and handshakes all around.

In order to earn the "titulación" ceremony, a student must either write a special exam or present a thesis. This qualifies her to be recognized nationally as a professional in her chosen field. Otherwise, a student graduates from the technical college and is labeled not as a professional, but as a technician.

Suzie clutched her title and posed for pictures. She seemed enormously relieved that the ceremony was over. Azucena doesn't like to be the focus of attention. Yet we could feel her pride in her accomplishment.

The graduation ceremony took place several days later. In the ballroom at the Krystal Hotel sat about 598 Mexicans, and Ross and I. It was a grand affair, with everyone dressed in their best, and many carrying gorgeous bouquets to present to the grads later. The graduates themselves were such a handsome group. The young men wore smart suits [each faculty wore its colour of choice --- blue or black or grey] The young women wore chic pant suits or elegant dresses and spike heeled shoes.

Our Suzie was gowned in a black satin, low-cut dress in which she looked lovely. She wore make-up, beautifully applied, and her hair was done in a smooth, chic "do", which transformed her into the most beautiful of butterflies.

As her name was called to receive her diploma, Azucena crossed the stage with great presence and dignity. Again, her supporters were her sister Luz, Ross and I, and this time her 18 year old brother Fernando, as well.

The graduation was similar in format to a graduation at a Canadian university. This one, however, began with a presentation of folkloric dance, performed by students of the technical college. It was a colourful, vibrant spectacle.

Next followed the march past with the flag. Half a dozen female students garbed in white military-like

uniforms marched proudly before the gathered assembly, their leader holding high the Mexican flag. The National Anthem was sung as all stood respectfully at attention with hands over their hearts.

The air was filled with excitement throughout the evening, and happiness in abundance.

Azucena, Luz, Fernando, Ross and I went out for a celebratory dinner afterwards. We felt so honoured to be included with Suzie's family on her special day, and we enjoyed every moment.

With her schooling behind, and her business administration degree in hand, Azucena is employed by Banco Azteca in Zihuatanejo. She works long hours, from 9 a.m. until noon, then again from 3p.m. until 9. There is little time for a social life, but she likes her work and sees it as a stepping stone to a career in business.

Azucena is a delightful young woman of whom we in Niños Adelante can all be proud. She is indeed a story of success  
March 2011

Shelagh Yarnell

### **Upcoming Events and General Information**

The 2012 Sponsor / Student breakfasts are at the Hotel Fontan in Ixtapa on January 15 and February 12. This is a special occasion for the students and their families.

The 2012 Benefit Dinner, in Zihuatanejo, will again be held this year on February 16 at Suspiro restaurant which is situated on a high bluff overlooking beautiful LaRopa beach. Attendance is limited so you are urged to make arrangements as soon as possible. See you there!

APPLICATIONS for both events are found on the [www.friendsofninosadelante.org](http://www.friendsofninosadelante.org) web site under Niños news.

A number of your students are hoping to move on to college. Before being admitted, the students must take and pass a test by the government at a cost of around \$80 to \$100 U.S. Any amount that you would be willing to contribute to this required fee would be greatly appreciated. PLEASE SEND CONTRIBUTIONS TO Friends of Niños Adelante PO Box 1624 Sonoma, CA 95476.

If it isn't possible for you to continue as a sponsor please contact Bob Albright at [bobalb@comcast.net](mailto:bobalb@comcast.net) or the address above as soon as possible so that a replacement can be found.

Should any of you desire more sponsor information, it can be found at the Friends of Niños web site [www.friendsofninosadelante.org](http://www.friendsofninosadelante.org) or contact Bob Neal at [RNEAL65@gmail.com](mailto:RNEAL65@gmail.com)

### **A Request for Stories**

Our newsletter is always looking for articles about you and your student to share with others. If you have a story please contact Leif or Lois Lindblom at [leif@lindblomfamily.com](mailto:leif@lindblomfamily.com) or at P.O. box 677 Oscoda Mi, 48750. We are very grateful to Shelagh Yarnell for the interesting articles she has written for several newsletters. In this issue we are also happy to publish Pat Hill's story of her years of joy with visits to Zihuatanejo and her student Enereida. Many thanks to all, who have contributed articles and information over the years.