

Friends of Niños Adelante

SPRING-SUMMER NEWSLETTER 2007

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

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

Currently, we have 200 students in the program being supported by 199 sponsors. There are 23 in our new college program and 177 in junior high and high school. It has been two years since the Board elected to support kids in college. Visit the ROLE of SPONSORS page on the website at www.friendsofninosadelante for more about the college program.

We have completed the Zihua breakfast reunions for the year 2007. Both were very successful. At the February breakfast we had over 300 people. Our biggest ever! Many new sponsors attended and met their student (and family) for the first time. If you have never attended one of the breakfast meetings, I 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 is a very gratifying experience.

The organization has had several successful fundraisers in 2006. We had a dinner in Zihuatanejo in February, the golf outing in Minnesota in September, and a party in Sonoma Ca. in the fall. 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 Mexico operations. (Ninos Adelante)

If you have any questions or concerns, you may contact us through the Friends of Ninos Adelante webside at www.friendsofninosadelante.org We welcome your comments and suggestions.

For those of you that have communicated via e-mail with your student, thank you. Please be patient with the translation, which is sometimes difficult. It you want to communicate with your student or ask questions about your student, you can contact the Zihuatanejo office directly at ninosadelante@prodigy.net.mx Make sure you provide your name and the name of your student.

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.

On Behalf of your Board of Directors
Steve Leighton

FUNDRAISER 2007
SAVE THIS DATE –FRIDAY SEPTMEBER 21, 2007—6PM

Your planning committee is working hard on a different fundraiser for 2007. We will offer a light dinner, cash bar, and many valuable items at our live and silent auction. The event will be held at the Sheraton Ridgedale West in Minnetonka, Mn. at a cost of \$50 per person. Reservations should be directed to Steve or Donna Leighton, e-mail at leightonconsult@earthlink.net. or 8830 Point Vista Drive, Victoria Mn. 55386. Reservations for accommodations should be made directly with the hotel at 952-593-0000 by 8/31/07. Ask for the Friends of Ninos Adelante Fundraiser Block price of \$99

This is our biggest fundraiser of the year and we need and appreciate your support to make it a success. Please consider a generous donation. If you have a vacation home, boat for an outing or other significant donations we would like to hear from you. We are looking for items in the \$100 range or things we can group together to equal that amount. We are counting on you to make it the best ever. If you are willing to donate for either the silent or live auction please contact Stefanie Rose by phone at 612-386-4864 or e-mail at stefanie.rose@mchsi.com

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

February 2007 Annual Membership Meeting, Pacifica Club, Ixtapa

This past February at the Annual Membership meeting, two new members were elected to the Board of Directors and there were three retirements. Many thanks go out to the outgoing Board members for many years of service; Maria Vanderzanden, Vice President, Adrienne Baldwin, Events Chairperson, and Tyrone Bujold, Past President.

Steve Leighton, President	leightonconsult@earthlink.com
Ann Gebo, Treasurer	geeb2001@yahoo.com
Janie Robins, Recording Secretary	jrobins@moviemerchants.com
Barb Neal, Membership Secretary	rneal@usfamily.net
Bob Albright, Member at large	bobalb@comcast.net
Gary Nelson, Member at large	theothergarynelson@sbcglobal.net
Mabeth Sanderson, Events Chair	mabeth@vom.com
John Cook, Member at large	cookinn@comcast.net
Shelagh Yarnell, Member at large	shelaghross@shaw.ca
Jan Moe, Member at large (new)	jjmogul@att.net
Leif Lindblom, Newsletter Chair (new)	leif@lindblomfamily.com

BECA DONATIONS REMINDER NOTICE

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

Thank you to all who have responded to the May request letter. If your letter is still on the desk or in the drawer please give us a hand by sending it in.

COST OF EDUCATION FOR OUR STUDENTS

Those of us in the United States and Canada are fortunate to have our public school education without charge. This is not true in Mexico, but with our assistance many children now have or are getting an education. Below is an estimate of the cost of education in Zihuatanejo during the 2007 school year. (In U.S. dollars*)

ITEM	JUNIOR HIGH	HIGH SCHOOL
Tuition	\$30**	\$110
Uniforms	\$55	\$55
Books and Supplies	\$55	\$55
Activities	\$45	\$45
Transportation	\$165***	\$165***
Lunch	\$165***	\$165***

* Based on 2007 average exchange rate

** This is essentially a PTA dues

*** These costs represent average expenditures for those students who must use public transportation to attend school and purchase meals at the schools

SCHOOL VISIT ??

Some sponsors have expressed an interest in visiting a school in Zihuatanejo. The only cost involved would be our transportation and a guide. If you are interested please contact Leif or Lois Lindblom at leif@lindblomfamily.com or P.O. Box 677 Oscoda Mi. 48750. If there is enough interest we will plan a school visit for February 2008.

SUCCESS STORIES

Our newsletter is looking for stories of student's successes to share with others. If you have a story that you would like to share with others please contact Leif or Lois Lindblom at the address above.

FRIENDS OF NINOS ADELANTE UPCOMMING EVENTS 2008

January 13 & February 17, 2008-----Student-Sponsor Breakfast-Ixtapa
February 21, 2008-----Zihuatanejo dinner fundraiser

ENGLISH CLASSES FOR NINOS STUDENTS

During late January and February members of the Friends of Ninos Adelante offer classes in English to the Ninos Adelante students. We would like to thank the following for their time and talents to provide the students this opportunity.

Tyrone Bujold, Len Draving, Leif Lindblom, Anlee Schaye, and Shelagh Yarnell,

TEACHING ENGLISH CLASSES IN ZIHUATANEJO BY SHELAGH YARNELL

Let me set the stage. My classroom is a three-sided cement cubicle behind the church near the Plaza Kyoto in Zihuatanejo. The cement floor is dirty. It is often cluttered with garbage, especially on Monday mornings, after the weekend activities at the church. It is a cubicle into which no gentle breeze enters. The air is still. It is hot.

The very pregnant tabby cat that rubs against my legs as I teach will soon provide us the opportunity for not only an English Lesson, but a nature lesson as well.

Several paces from my classroom is a humble shack in which live the caretakers of the church, a lovely couple with three young children. Their other family member is what appears to be a very large Doberman/Rottweiler cross. He strains at his chain, lunging in my direction. He vocalizes in ear-shattering barks his disapproval of my presence. His barking often continues for the full two hours of the class.

The senora from the little shack does laundry, every day, a few meters from my classroom. The water pumps, the washing machine churns. First comes the news and then the Mariachi music, at full volume, blasts from her radio.

Yasmin, the four-year-old daughter, has a shower every morning in the church bathroom. Again, a few meters from where we study. Yasmin then joins our class, sometimes wrapped in a towel, sometimes not.

Traffic roars by, to the accompaniment of screeching brakes, impatiently honking horns, and often the blast of emergency sirens. We repeat the days of the week, the months of the year. We study the use of the verb "to be." "We sing "How Much is That Doggy in the Window" inspired and accompanied by the guard dog's vicious sounds.

Sometimes there is a Mass at the church in the morning, and the lovely strains of the parishioners singing accompany our studies. It is a sweet sound, blending gently with the other external noises.

Visitors come and often sit in our classroom. Sister Soccorro from the church, a local mother soothing her infant at her breast and an interested Ninos padrino. Ex-students drop by and an 80-year-old gentleman stops by each day. He doesn't know what we are doing, but he enjoys sitting amongst the children, and they accept him warmly. Sometimes a student brings her little brother to class as mother is working and she must baby-sit. She doesn't want to miss English Class. She comforts the crying toddler and sets him on the floor to change his diaper when needed.

Some mornings the children from the church primary school have their recreation period in our classroom area. Forty little ones sing and shout and laugh. They run, they jump, they march in lines, counting loudly in unison and clapping their hands as they go. It is raucous. It is wild.

So what do we do? Shouting above the din, I teach the words noise, noisy, and fun. We work on the verbs laugh, march, play, and shout. Finally we march ourselves-outside in search of a quieter spot.

So-is it hectic? Is a chaotic? Is it challenging? Indeed all of those. Why then do I teach a "Ninos Adelante"English Class in Zihuatanejo?

You need only to look into the shining eyes of 13 year old Jose to know the answer. You need to see 15-year-old Maria's' enthusiasm, her excitement, as she shares with me her latest soccer success. Erika's quiet eagerness, her intelligence, her beauty, would win you over. Rolando's sense of humor, Virginia's flirtatious eyes, Lizette's sweet shyness, Blanca's dimples, Alecenia's curiosity, Felix's brilliance. The child whose mother has recently died and who needs lots of hugs. The boy whose father has abandoned the family, and he is sad. The "cool" guy with the backward cap and the lopsided grin.

Why do I teach English in Zihuatanejo? I love them all. They are the world's future.

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