



## FALL 2012 FRIENDS OF NIÑOS ADELANTE NEWSLETTER

### President's Letter

Hola Friends of Niños Adelante sponsors,

Amazing how fast the summer has come and gone. I hope everyone has enjoyed the summer months. This morning it was 35 degrees in Minneapolis which is a good indicator that very soon it will be time to enjoy the warm weather and great people in Ixtapa/Zihua.

Our students have been very busy working on continuing their education in Ixtapa/Zihua. We currently have 131 Jr. and High school students and 88 College students enrolled in school. The graduating class will have 23 High school and 14 College graduates. We are seeing more and more of these kids graduating from High school and moving on to college. Friends of Niño's Adelante has truly changed these kids' lives, giving them and their families an opportunity to pursue their dreams. Thank you to all the sponsors for making their dreams become a reality. Without the sponsors, volunteers and dedicated board members this would not be possible.

If you are going to be in Ixtapa/Zihua January or February 2013 please remember to sign up for the following events:

#### **Breakfast with the Friends of Niño's Adelante students**

January 13<sup>th</sup> and February 10<sup>th</sup> @ the Fontan Hotel in Ixtapa

#### **Zihuatanejo benefit dinner**

February 14<sup>th</sup> @ the Pacifica Grand, Zihuatanejo

After the breakfast on February 10<sup>th</sup> we will have our annual board meeting at the Fontan Hotel. We are always looking for new people to help this organization continue to grow. If you are interested in attending the BOD meeting or becoming a member please contact me at: [mn.crose@yahoo.com](mailto:mn.crose@yahoo.com) or Bob Albright at: [bobalb@comcast.net](mailto:bobalb@comcast.net).

Over the next couple of weeks you will receive a letter from our fundraising committee. Your donations will help us cover all associated costs we incur over the year. Our mission is to always send 100% of your sponsorship dollars to your students. In order for us to do this, we need to have annual fundraising drives. Please donate any dollar amount you are comfortable with and ask some of your friends, co-workers, etc. if they would be interested in supporting our cause. Please remember that Friends of Niño's Adelante is a 501 (c) (3) charitable organization therefore all donations are tax deductible.

Thanks to everyone, for all you do to ensure these students get the best opportunities to change their lives, their family's lives and their community.

Chris D. Rose, President

## **GRADUATION DAY JUNE 2012**

Niños Adelante's June 2012 twenty five member graduating class from the four major high schools in Zihuatanejo included fifteen students who have gone on to further their education by enrolling in college. Seven have enrolled at Tecnologico, One at UNAM, four at Chilpancingo, two at Sor Juana and one at UPN . The remaining ten graduates either have or are seeking jobs. All are to be applauded for their accomplishments. What a difference our little program is making in the community of Zihuatanejo

There were nine College graduates this year with one from Sor Juana, one from UT Petatlan, one from Facultad, one from Chilpancingo and five from Tecnologico.

In addition three college students, two at Morelia and one at Politecnico DF completed their bachelor degrees this year and are pursuing advanced degrees. Who would have ever thought it would be possible?

### **Jesus Pascacio Valdovinos**

#### **"No Longer" Future Architect**

*By Steve Leighton, Padrino*

I have written about our student in the past, but I must give you an update on this young man. The last article I wrote was about a "future" Architect. Well, he is no longer a future Architect, he IS an Architect. His name is Jesus Pascacio Valdovinos and after many years in school, he has realized his dream. Having grown up in San Jose Ixtapa in a poor neighborhood, he only wanted a little help to get his education. He was always very driven to get that education and his persistence and drive were not to be denied. He has a lot of talent in drawing and now he has graduated from college in Chilpancingo (the Capital of the State of Guerrero). He worked full time all through high school, managing a GPA of better than 8.5 and then went on to 6 years of college. He was determined to be an Architect and now he is one. Not only did he graduate as one of the top in his class, but was given a job before he graduated. As with most first jobs, it will get him the "real world" experience he needs to go on to be very successful in his field. My wife Donna and I have supported him through the Niños Adelante program for 11 years and now we are as proud as his parents to have been a small part of his achievement. He is the kind of student that we hope to find and help achieve their goals. This guy is a prime example of what we are trying to accomplish with the program. He has become an immediate contributor to society and his family.

**WHAT A SUCCESS!**

I hope he will attend our breakfast meeting again in February (he may have to work), so many of you will have the opportunity to meet this young man. He is truly what we are all about.

## **SAFETY CONCERNS IN ZIHUATANEJO AND IXTAPA**

### **The Opinion of one of our sponsors**

There has been some concern expressed about the safety of visiting Ixtapa/zihuatanejo. Maryellen Jackson, a sponsor and volunteer at the Niños office and several other organizations in Zihuatanejo expressed her opinion in the following letter.

I feel compelled to write about my travel to and from Zihuatanejo in the last six months, because many sponsors and others ask me, "Is it safe?" In my opinion it is safe. I've had no problems, except with the hideous security inspections imposed by the US when traveling through LAX.

As you know, I've been in and out of Zihuatanejo for more than twenty years, staying from one month to five months at a time. This past year, I was in Zihuatanejo from January to April, again from June to August, and most recently for the month of October. I will be returning November 30, staying until the first of April. I do not stay at a hotel, nor do I own a house. I rent an apartment in one of the colonias. I travel frequently to Zihuatanejo to keep close contact with the students I sponsor. As you know, I currently have six in Niños Adelante, and I assist four more, who are not in Niños Adelante. Kids need the motivation from their respective sponsors, and it does make a difference when the sponsor keeps close contact with them and their families. The only difference that I've seen and/or experienced, is the devastating hit economically on the families due to the extreme drop in tourism. In three of my families, fathers are not working. Because of my contacts in Z, I was able to help one father get work.

Mexico is making a huge effort to change the perception of insecurity in Zihuatanejo. For that reason, you will see truck loads of Marines passing through town. I was told that the Marines monitor the outlying areas. I do read the local Z papers on a daily basis. The highlighted problems seem to be motorcycle accidents (daily basis) and petty theft. Yes, it does happen that some awful crime occurs that every one reads about in the papers. These are few in number and unfortunately linger on the internet for a very long time as if that sort of thing occurs on a daily basis. And, I have never read one article that has to do with tourists or with Ixtapa, other than drownings of tourists who don't understand that the Ixtapa beaches are open sea. I follow the same common sense precautions that I use here in Monte Rio, on the Pacific coast. I don't walk the state park beach at Jenner at night. I don't walk around Guerneville, etc. after nine in the evening. I lock my doors and windows at night in my house--and I live in a rural forest with no traffic. I use a purse with a strap that crosses my body, so that it is not easily snatched off my shoulder. These are the same precautions I use in Zihuatanejo.

The Mexican crime that everyone is reading about primarily occurs in Ciudad Juarez and the state of Chihuahua. It is a very sad situation for everyone concerned, and I certainly don't know what the solution is. That said, I've had several friends drive down from the states to Zihuatanejo with cars full of household belongings. All have stayed on the autopistas, never drove at night, and arrived with no problems.

The biggest problem in Zihuatanejo is the lack of tourism and the attendant problem of no work for the folks who live there. Prices for food have risen greatly. I find that I pay virtually the same amount for groceries purchased at Commercial that I pay at Safeway here in Guerneville. That makes it very tough for a family to live on \$1000 to \$1200 pesos (\$85 to \$100 US) every 15 days. This does affect our students. Depending on where the student lives, bus fare per day can cost from \$1.50 to \$2.50 (5 days \$7.50 to \$12.50). Lunch is usually \$1.50 per day at secondaries and prepas. It doesn't take a mathematical genius to calculate what one student's expenses are per month, just to go to school. If the father or single mom has no work then it is tough to make a go of life.

I take my safety concerns seriously whether I'm in Zihuatanejo or in the forests of Northern California. I can comfortably say that Peter and I have no concerns about being here or there. If anyone has concerns, they are welcome to contact me at [zihgirl@comcast.net](mailto:zihgirl@comcast.net)

Best regards,  
Maryellen Jackson

## 2013 SPONSOR/STUDENT REUNION BREAKFAST

### REGISTRATION FORM

Many padrinos have said that the becado breakfast is the highlight of their visit to Ixtapa/Zihuatanejo. This is the time to see your becado, hear about current Niños Adelante activities and experience the energy of a room full of kids and parents who appreciate the support they receive from Niños Adelante. Translators will be available to help you and your becado get the most out of this experience. We hope that you will be able to join us at one of the two breakfast gatherings. Please use these Breakfasts to meet and visit with your student and his or her family in place of having Jose arrange a private meeting. As you can well imagine, the months of January and February are very chaotic for Jose.

Breakfasts will be held at the Hotel Fontan in Ixtapa at 9:30 A.M. on **Sunday, January 13, 2013** and at 9:30 A.M. on **Sunday February 10, 2013**.

Register now! Jose must notify your becado to attend the breakfast. This notification takes place during beca payout day on the first Saturday/Sunday of the month in which the breakfast will be held. We therefore need to know your intentions to attend the January event by December 20, 2012. By the same token we need to know your intentions relative to the February event by January 25, 2013.

As in the past, padrinos are responsible for the breakfasts of their becados and their families. Cost of breakfast is expected to be about \$13 per person (not including gratuity) to be paid at the breakfast.

(Note: please include only yourself and your family and friends in the count of guests below. Jose will contact the students and their families to determine the number of students and family members attending)

Please reserve \_\_\_\_\_ places for me at the January 13 Breakfast

Please reserve \_\_\_\_\_ places for me at the February 10 Breakfast

I/we will be staying at \_\_\_\_\_ in Ixtapa/Zihua

from \_\_/\_\_/13 departing \_\_/\_\_/13. (this information helps Jose communicate with you if necessary).

My name is \_\_\_\_\_

**NOTE: If you wish to host the student of a friend who can not be at the Breakfast fill in the following: I would like to host the student(s) of the following sponsors**

\_\_\_\_\_

Please fill out the above form and return by email to [bobalb@comcast.net](mailto:bobalb@comcast.net) or mail to: Friends of Niños Adelante PO Box 1624 Sonoma, Ca 95476

## ANNUAL BENEFIT DINNER

### 2013 REGISTRATION FORM

The annual benefit dinner will again be held at the beautiful Suspiro restaurant at Pacificia Grand overlooking Zihuatanejo bay on THURSDAY FEBRUARY 14, 2013 AT 6PM.

The February 2012 event raised about \$2,800 for our Special Needs and College Scholarship funds. It is a wonderful way to enjoy a fabulous meal, complete with refreshments, at a very special place and help a great cause at the same time. The owners and operators of the Pacific Grand, through their extremely generous pricing policy, make this event the success it is and we are thankful for their support.

Please register early! The guest count is limited to 60 and this event fills up fast. Just complete this form and send it along with your check, payable to Friends of Niños Adelante to the address below.

Reserve \_\_\_\_\_ seats at \$85 each. Amount enclosed for dinner \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Names of Attendees \_\_\_\_\_

I am unable to attend the Benefit Dinner but enclosed is my tax-deductible donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Thank You, Janie Robins

Please mail form and check to: Friends of Niños Adelante P.O. Box 1624 Sonoma, Ca 95476

## ENGLISH CLASSES

For the past 12 years a number of sponsors have been offering English classes to the Niños students at the church near plaza Kyoto. This program, started by former president Ty Bujold, will be continued this year by Shelagh Yarnell and Leif Lindblom. Shelagh's classes will be offered MWF starting on Jan. 21 until Feb. 24<sup>th</sup>. Her morning classes will be from 9-11 and afternoon classes from 4-6. Leif's MWF afternoon classes will start on Feb. 4<sup>th</sup> until Feb 22 from 4-6.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

If you are unable to continue to support your student, please try to find a replacement. In any case please notify Bob Albright at [Bobalb@comcast.net](mailto:Bobalb@comcast.net)

### SPONSORSHIP FEES

100% of your sponsorship fee goes directly to your student. Junior high and high school students are paid monthly during the school year. College students receive their support in two payments, August and January. All are grateful for the financial aid that makes it possible for them to attend school. Thank You for providing the opportunity for a better life for them.

## SHARING INTERESTING EXPERIENCES

We are looking for stories of interest from those who would like to share an experience with other sponsors. Please contact Leif and Lois Lindblom at [leif@lindblomfamily.com](mailto:leif@lindblomfamily.com) or P.O. Box 677 Oscoda Mi 48750. We would like to thank Mary Ellen Jackson and Steve Leighton for their contributions.

## GET YOUR PASSPORT

The Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative now requires all passengers flying to or from Mexico to present a PASSPORT when leaving or entering the U.S. from Mexico. Please allow plenty of time to have your passport processed.

## STUDENT NEEDS

Many sponsors ask, what do the students need or want the most. We ask our students that question. Many times we find the niños are very reluctant to give us an honest answer. (By honest, we don't mean they would lie, but it is difficult for them to come out and ask for something.) So we put the question to Jose Bustos, and his response was as follows:

1. Back Packs: The kids use them for everything, especially for school supplies, books, etc...you can't go wrong with a back pack.
2. Clothes: New or gently used clothing is always appreciated.
3. Watches: They all like them but very few have them.
4. School supplies: Calculators, note books, paper, and pens: etc.
5. Personal hygiene items: We like to bring tooth brushes, tooth paste, deodorant, etc.
6. Electronics: This might be a bit much, but every kid in Mexico loves electronics.....especially computers. While some of them don't even have electricity, a computer is a real dream. CD players with re-chargeable batteries and a charger have been well received.

We hope this helps. These students are like kids all over the world, they want the same things, but many will never have them. Good luck and thanks for all you do for the niños.

## COMMUNICATION WITH YOUR STUDENT

Communication with your student has become much easier over the past few years as there are now a few volunteer interpreters in the Niños office to help students read and answer your e-mails. Students come to the office on the first Saturday or Sunday of the Month. Please address your message to [ninosadelante@prodigy.net.mx](mailto:ninosadelante@prodigy.net.mx) and include their full name under subject. Please remember college students are only at the Niños office August and January.