



**JULY-
AUGUST
2010**

Dando Amor, vida y esperanza



MISIÓN MÉXICO NEWSLETTER

www.lovelifehope.com

★ *GENERAL Misión México Update*

Greeting to all,

I think I am getting 'slacker and slacker' (is that such a word?) at keeping you all up-to-date with the development of the children and life here in Mexico. Sorry, but it is just so difficult these days. You are all a big part of this 'mission' and it is important to keep you informed. Life behind these walls (and outside) is an 'experience' every day.

On the 16th August I was robbed at gunpoint while I was in a doctor's surgery having my blood pressure checked! What a horrible experience, and to know that I was followed from the bank to the surgery, (not far from the house) was very unsettling to say the least. I had just drawn out \$1500.00 AUD to finish buying all the clothes and shoes that were still needed to get the children back to school. Normally, I take an older boy with me to the bank as a body guard, but this day, everyone was occupied working to organize everything for the return to school; a mammoth task for 55 children.

The thieves were apparently looking for me in the pharmacy and then barged into the surgery waving the gun around, saying it was a 'hold-up' and then, as I looked down the barrel of the gun, a solid man wearing a Mexican football shirt and cap, took my bag off my shoulder, and with it, the money, key cards, license, Mission ID, cheque book, cell phone and business cards with all the info they would need to find me again. Thankfully, I wasn't hurt, nor anyone near me, though I must admit, I was living in fear for some time, uneasy knowing that they had so much information about me.

Well, so far, so good, though I do take an older teenager with me wherever I go now.

About the children

Even though at times the children have bad behavior, they are all growing into fine young people. Recently,

Moacir was trying to calm the children down for the night by playing his guitar and praying with the 'mafia' group as they have been nicknamed. Within a few minutes he had all the boys sitting in front of him sharing and praying. He mentioned how amazing the session was and how mature some of the children, aged between 8-12 years, were. During their prayer session, the children started thanking God for bringing them to Misión México and for discovering their talents that they didn't know they had. Hector remarked that he didn't know he could draw before he came to Misión México, but now he sees himself as quite a talented young artist. And, Angel mentioned that he would never have realized his fascination for insects and how he can further develop that interest. Toward the end of the session, the children started forgiving their parents for what had happened to them and asked God to protect their parents. How beautiful are the prayers of children!

Now, this has become a regular session, praying and singing while Moacir plays his guitar, and it is having an amazing, healing effect on the kids.

Every child here is carrying a lot of emotional baggage and we need to find ways to help them rid themselves of what is holding them back from being the best that they can be, and these beautiful, intimate moments are helping them on their journey.



We are so very thankful for all the volunteers that come to help out. Even though most people romanticize the idea of helping at an orphanage in an exotic country, in reality, it is a very challenging, exhausting time. Our children come from dysfunctional backgrounds so therefore they have many bad habits that take a long time to change. It is a very slow process.

Generally speaking, volunteers don't encounter too many 'little angels' at the refuge, rather, they are confronted with 'little monkeys' who test you to the limits. After saying all that though, I must admit that because of all the hard work by so many, we are seeing some wonderful results, especially in our older children.

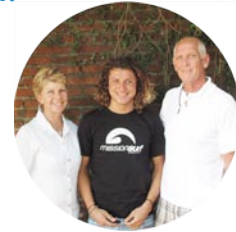
The children are dreaming of becoming professionals in a chosen career, wow, amazing stuff. Volunteers do learn a lot and learn things about themselves that they didn't know. They especially learn to have patience, something most of us need a little more of.

A big **THANK YOU** to all our wonderful and greatly appreciated volunteers. You are truly making a difference, even if you can't see it, it is slowly but surely happening. **God bless you all.**

If you or someone you know would like to volunteer please email volunteer@lovelifehope.com



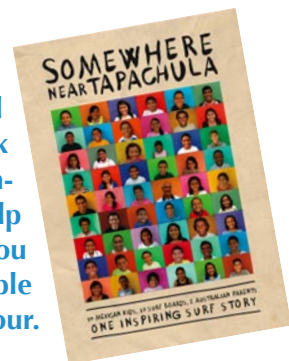
Moacir has been back for nearly 6 months now after completing his diploma course at Southern Cross University, Queensland, Australia; where he was studying Business Management, Surfing Studies. And, since his return he has commenced, and almost completed, a business plan for the new surf school that we hope to open in December.



The DVD '**Somewhere Near Tapachula**' had an amazing tour of Australia and the U.S. and continues to be shown in various places around the world with a recent showing in South Africa. 'SNT' gives people an insight into life here at the refuge and how surfing is helping to heal these kids.

Copies of the DVD can be purchased by visiting: <http://www.surfindustries.com/DVD/dvds.php>

Stefan Hunt and Jonno Durrant, two amazing young men, created a masterpiece and we can't thank them enough for what has been generated because of the movie, help and financial support. God bless you both and all the wonderful people who supported the DVD and Tour.



The proceeds raised from the tour are to help toward the education of the children at Misión México and also to help toward the evolving surf industry that will help support MM in the future.



A big '**THANK YOU**' to Steven Marks from **Guzman y Gomez Restaurants** for the support to purchase a piece of land at the beach for the new surf project! **FANTASTIC!!!**

Also, another big '**THANK YOU**' to an anonymous donor who supported with a grant to buy two new dryers; a new 15 seat van; funds to finish the house and put in a 'learn to swim' pool for the children!! **AWESOME!!!**

I think I have mentioned many times, that the educational system is very different here in Mexico. For me, it appears that even though the government says that every child has a right to an education, it's not the case; that it is not really a priority. In primary school the government supplies the text books needed but it becomes more difficult in secondary with having to buy many books, and senior, well, this would be impossible for so many Mexican families as books are very costly as well as uniforms etc. One book could cost almost half a week's wage. Many people only earn \$500.00 pesos a week (\$50.00AUD). One book can cost \$250.00 pesos! There are no opportunities to rent books as in Australia. There is also a huge environmental issue with this as there is such a lot of paper waste as many of the texts have to be written in, so no passing on of last year's books.

For us, keeping the children in school has been a battle. Not only has the buying of uniforms, shoes, sports shoes, books, etc. for the 55 children been a huge financial and occupational headache, keeping the children in classes has been a nightmare also. This year, we changed 21 children from a school that they had been in for years, to a school one and a half blocks from the house. There were a number of reasons for this. The afternoon school they previously attended was always cancelling school for the rain, or a meeting or a teacher who didn't show up for school. There was far too much time wasted. The rains always come in the afternoon so there were many days missed. There was also only four hours of school each day and that included their break for lunch. These children are all doing well in their new school.

In June I made the big mistake of saying that I felt that the senior school was discriminating against our young adults. I was constantly being called into the office for one lame reason or another; that they were playing football in the lunch hour (they are not permitted to play sport), or their shirts were not tucked in, or their hair was too long (their hair wasn't even touching their collar), or they forgot to take an ear-ring out.

Little problems that really frustrated me as I constantly had to go to the office and my irritation was obvious. I know they were not perfect but they were continually being labeled 'the refuge kids' whenever there was a problem.

When I went to re-enroll them in August, as you have to do each year, they were black listed and were refused permission to finish their studies, saying that they were 'bad' and that the school didn't want them there.

I was also scolded for accusing them of discriminating! We were told to find another school. To put students into another school you need a good conduct certificate, so we asked how that would be possible as he said that they had bad conduct. The director commented that he would give them a good conduct certificate to enter another school!?! In another school, at the finish of secondary, all the kids were told that they had to paint the school; our kids showed up late because of an event, so they were told that they were going to get a bad conduct certificate, though, if we paid \$50 pesos for each child, they would change it to a good conduct report!!!

We had a difficult time trying to get the seniors into school but after a lot of pleading they finally got accepted into a private school where they are doing really well. The director is very happy with their progress and behaviour.

We are so thankful to the educational sponsors for supporting the children with their education. Having all the children in school has been an incredible task but we are seeing some wonderful results. One case, an ex street kid featured on the 'SNT' documentary, who was involved in taking and selling drugs is now finishing his senior, and, has his eyes set on university. **Amazing!!**

Other teens are who are in senior are in the top five of the classes! Girls who have been sexually abused want to become doctors and lawyers, specializing in women's issues. It really is incredible!

If you know of someone who may like to sponsor a child please write to info@lovelifehope.com. The only way we are going to break the cycle of poverty is through education. We are still in need of many more sponsors and, we also need a Spanish speaking tutor in the afternoons to help the children with their homework. This tutor will need to receive a wage.



★FUNDRAISING Update

There have been some fantastic fundraising efforts by so many people this year, from all over the world. Thank you so much, it helps us tremendously. Here are some snapshots of some of the activities this year:



• **Year 7 of St. Francis Xavier College** in Canberra organized a feast day in November raising money for the children's education.

• **Cole Middle School** in Rhode island organized a Mexican dinner in October.



• **MAWAI** (www.mawai.org) in Sydney organized a Mexican Independence Day party in September.



• **Mt St Michael's College** in Brisbane ran some fundraising ventures including a movie night, lunch time 'cafes' and also a Misión México Raffle. The Year 8's learned and gained an appreciation about the valuable work that is being done at Misión México.



• **Kulcha and FOMEX** (Friends of Mexico in WA) in July organized a screening of 'SNT' in Fremantle, Western Australia.

One of our volunteers raised money by setting up a fundraising page on **Everyday Hero** prior to coming to volunteer in Mexico. She set up a fundraising page and sent it to all her friends and family telling them of her plans to volunteer and help support us through fundraising. Brilliant idea and everyone loved it! Thank you. For more information on using **Everyday Hero** please visit <http://www.everydayhero.com.au/charity/view?charity=736>



• A number of supporters in Sydney and Canberra ran the **City to Surf** race in Sydney.

• **The Love, Life, Hope Trivia Night** was held in Sydney in September. Around 200 guests attended and Alan was able to participate in the night's entertainment as he was visiting relatives in Australia at the time.



Our graphic designer Ana does all our beautiful work pro-bono. Ana is originally from Mexico and now lives with her husband in Perth, Australia.

Ana has been helping us with our newsletters, cards, letterheads, logos and any other design/promotional work we have needed over the past few years. Ana now has her own graphic design business '**Le Design Metro**' and will continue to support us. Thank you Ana and best of luck with the business, we love your work and appreciate everything you do for us.

If you are able to support us through fundraising then please contact Deborah at info@lovelifehope.com **GOD BLESS YOU ALL. We thank you from the depths of our hearts. Miracles are happening!!!**

Conclusion.....

I doubt I will have time to send another newsletter before the end of the year so will take this opportunity to wish you all a very **healthy and happy festive season** and all the best for a wonderful new year.

A big **THANK YOU** to all our supporters, without **you**, none of this work would be possible. Sending you much love and appreciation,

Pam and Alan

Below is a letter one of our boys wrote a while back. It gives a bit of an insight into the life of this young man.



★LETTER from José Delfino

Hello,

My name is Jose Delfino Monterrosa Rodas. I'm 18 years old; I hope you read this letter. Well, I'm going to begin to write something about my life. I don't have anything to do at the moment and I felt like writing to the people who are supporting me in my life. And, also I want to let you know what I want to become in the future.

I came to the orphanage, Misión México, with the help of my two sisters, Joselin and Yuri; they have been here for quite some time now, because they had family problems.

Well, I'm new at the house. At the beginning I felt strange to be in the house, but I got a nice welcome from the kids and then I felt ok. Well, Mama Pamela and Papa Alan are teaching me English and surfing. I never thought I would stand up on a surf board; It's like a dream all that I am living at Misión México's house. I'm very happy to have come to this house, because the parents (Pam and Alan) are concerned for us, the teenagers.

We are a very large family, I now have 54 brothers and sisters and two loving parents, who are concerned for our future and take care of us. I thank all the people that support us and that travel from very far away just to help us and to be with us, and those who spend their money so that we have enough food, shoes, clothes, etc.

My dream right now is to write a book about my life, and about all the people who are supporting me, especially Mama Pamela and Papa Alan, I love you, both of you. I also have a lot of fun with the volunteers.

I've never celebrated my birthday before in my life, and now that I'm 18 years old, they gave us a party, for all the 18 year olds, five of us. I felt so happy, because I never thought this could happen to me. I had a great time, especially when we cut the birthday cake, my brothers and me. Thank you Mama and Papa, and thank you volunteers for making us feel very special that day.

I would also like to go to Australia one day. Mama says that if I study hard and learn very good English and behave well, then maybe I will have a chance of going to Australia. Well, I'm doing everything she says so my dream can come true.

Sometimes I'm a little badly behaved and sometimes I curse but I consider myself a respectful person and I am becoming educated, so all I ask from you is that I can have your trust, well, I know that I have to deserve it.

I wrote you this because I'm very happy to have come to this very nice family, I send my love to you, it's what my heart feels for you all.

Bye,
Jose Delfino

