

SOL AZTECA

ISSUE 47 MAY 2011

PROJECTS ABROAD MEXICO NEWSLETTER

ProjectsAbroad

14^o Festival Cultural de Mayo

JALISCO • MÉXICO • 2011

discover

zacatecas

PAIS INVITADO

ESTADOS UNIDOS

VOLUNTEER STORY BY
LAUREN HALLDORSON
CARE

5 de Mayo batalla de Puebla

**Get together
B-Day Party**

Editor's Notes

Hello!

May has arrived bringing 40 degrees to the city! The hottest month of the year and we are getting an amazing sun tan! There is no way to escape from it!

During May we had the chance to celebrate quite a lot of stuff in Mexico! First we had May 5th (Cinco de Mayo), the day in which the Mexican army defeated the French army back in 1862. This date is mistakenly attributed to the Mexican Independence Day.

Secondly, we celebrated Mothers' Day on May 10th. As you can imagine, it is a huge celebration too in Mexico. This date was followed by May 15th, the day in which teachers are celebrated.

Throughout this month we also had our traditional salsa class, a great gathering with Mexican food and music to celebrate two birthdays; Laura's and Catherine's. We finished our May celebrations with the wedding of a member of one of our host families!

This month was an interesting one and I am pretty sure the next one will be too!

I want to let you know that we are already on Twitter! If you are a user then I invite you to follow us: @Proj_AbroadMEXI

I hope you enjoy our May edition!

Special thanks for this newsletter go to:

- Lauren Halldorson for the story about her experience in the Care Project.
- Oliver Garcia for his update on the Turtle Conservation Project.

I also want to invite you to join our Facebook community where we share our pictures, happenings and news. The name of our network is: Projects Abroad Mexico-The Official Group

We also encourage everyone to write their stories for us to publish in our newsletters. If you want to write something about your current, past or future experience with us please do not hesitate to send it to me along with your pictures to jonatanarriaga@projects-abroad.org

Contents

VOLUNTEER STORY

Lauren Halldorson-Canada

MAY CELEBRATIONS

5 de Mayo

Dia de las Madres

Dia del Maestro

Festival Cultural de Mayo

PROJECTS ABROAD MEXICO NEWS

Donation

Get Together-Birthday Party

Host Family-Wedding

DESTINATION

Zacatecas

MEXICAN KITCHEN

Chilaquiles

CONSERVATION PROJECT UPDATE



Jonatan Arriaga

Social Manager

Projects Abroad Mexico

Volunteer Story



When parents send children to summer camp for a week they will usually tell them, “You’re scared to leave now, but you won’t want to come back when it’s over!” This was certainly the case for me. Leaving Vancouver, Canada, for 6 weeks, to me, seemed terrifying. Within the first day however, I fell in love with Guadalajara and knew it would be heartbreaking to return home.

What makes all the anxiety and hard work involved in getting to Projects Abroad Mexico worth it? I could write a novel, but I’ll try to condense it to a few paragraphs.

The possibilities of living life in another country for an open minded traveler are limitless. The most amazing people can be met and the most amazing, sometimes “colourful”, experiences can be had by embracing your new surroundings with a sense of wonder and a smile. The food in Mexico was life changing. Especially if you have a host mother like Carmen! The Nightlife was fabulous. I cannot recommend the Guadalajara drag scene enough. Making friends here can feel like you have known the person your whole life, even though it’s only been weeks. When they make fun of your accent, you will let it slide. The Mexican people I have met have been so warm, welcoming and vivacious. They’re easy on the eyes too, which certainly doesn’t hurt!





I think that one of the most important things a traveler from a “developed” Nation, like Canada or United Kingdom, can learn from traveling to a country such as Mexico is that there is so much our culture can and should learn. This is something I have seen very clearly in my Care Placement at Casa Hogar Para Los Angeles. I can safely say that every day I am astounded by

what the four (yes *four*) staff do, and do joyfully, every day with forty (yes *fourty*) children. It has been such a privilege to be allowed into the lives of the kids in the orphanage. They are so sweet, so funny, and, of course, a hell of a lot of fun. What amazes me most about the orphanage and its staff is that it is a *real* family. The kids are cared for very deeply – and in turn they care for one another. While some of the Angeles come from unimaginable circumstances – they learn what it is to love and be loved, care and be cared for.

If I were to offer any words of advice for future volunteers at the Care projects here in Guadalajara it would be these. Learn - never stop absorbing everything around you.



Be humble and recognize you are one incredibly lucky human being to be able to be a part of something that affects the lives of people here. Laugh – laugh at the joyful moments at your placement, laugh at the fun you will have with the people you meet, and laugh when things don't go your way – when you feel like you're going to throw up on the bus. Most of all, Love. Love. Love. Love.

The greatest of these is love. Allow your heart and mind to be open, and the more you give the more you will receive.



XOXO Darlings,
Lauren

By Lauren Halldorson
Canada - Care in Mexico

5 de Mayo

One of the most important celebrations in Mexican history is the one held in Puebla, Mexico in 1862.



The French Army was considered the greatest military force on the globe. For nearly 50 years—since the defeat of Napoleon I's army at the hands of allied forces at Waterloo, Belgium in 1815—it had not known defeat and had recently won victories in Europe and Asia. In 1862, the French landed in Veracruz along with forces from Queen Isabella II of Spain and Queen Victoria of Great Britain. They had come to collect the debt owed to them by Mexico—debts that Mexican President Benito Juarez had officially suspended because the country was essentially bankrupt.

Refusing Juarez' proposed compromise to repay the debts two years later, the collaboration of the three countries' militaries seized the customhouse at Veracruz. They intended to intercept the customs payments in exchange for their debt. After some time, the diplomats for Spain and Great Britain reached an agreement with Juarez and the armies from those two countries departed from Mexico. The French, on the other hand, stayed and headed for Mexico City.





France had significant interest in halting the growth of the United States. The North American country's rate of expansion and power was threatening to the other world powers. If Napoleon was successful in conquering Mexico, the possibility of marching north to aid the Confederates in dividing the United States into two less powerful and less threatening countries was real.

The United States was a major cause of France's attack on Mexico. The war America recently won over Mexico leveled the Mexican treasury and led to financial disaster. Thus, Juarez suspended payment to France and incited Napoleon III, ruler of France, to act. Lincoln and the United States were dependent on Mexico staving off the French troops until the Confederacy could be defeated and Lincoln could deploy troops south to aid Juarez.

Early on May 5, 1862, General Laurencez led 6,000 French troops toward Puebla, Mexico, just 100 miles from Mexico City. Expecting the attack was General Ignacio Zaragoza, a Texas-born Mexican who was ordered to defend Juarez with a force of 4,000 troops, many of them agricultural workers armed with antiquated rifles and machetes. The battle would take place in a muddy, uneven field.



To show his contempt for the Mexicans, Gen. Laurencez ordered his troops to attack through the middle of the foes' defenses, their strongest position. The French cavalry went through ditches, over adobe ruins and toward the slope of Guadalupe Hill. By then, the cavalry, exhausted and nearly disbanded, failed to achieve its goal. The Mexican army stood its ground. Gen. Zaragoza, who had no experience in military tactics but was a veteran in guerrilla warfare, ordered his troops to go after the French, who fled to Orizaba, where Zaragoza attacked the French again, forcing them to flee to the coast.

Dia de las Madres



In the North American country of Mexico, Mothers Day is celebrated on a fixed day of May 10th. Mothers Day in Mexico is celebrated in a colorful fashion. Children honor their mothers and thank them for their efforts in bringing them up and according to a custom in Mexico.

Mothers Day celebration in Mexico takes place on May 10th as the day is special for the people of Mexico. The day is celebrated in a great way as churches in Mexico organise special mass. The highpoint of the event is the orchestra which plays "las mañanitas" and distributes of 'tamales' and 'atole', the traditional early-morning meal to all local mothers.

On Mother's Day people in Mexico gift flowers and cards to their mothers. There is also a tradition of giving gifts on Mothers Day. While the older children buy gifts from the store the younger ones prepare handmade gifts to honor their mothers. In several schools Mothers Day functions are organised where little ones present skits and songs to express their gratitude for their mothers and to entertain them.

If you are around Mexico during this day, you will see how folkloric this is! Congratulations to all the mothers around the world!

Teachers' Day.

The Mexico Teacher's Day is one of the vibrant celebrations in the world. The teacher appreciation day in the country every May 15th is filled with much fun fare. As to significance it said that the said date is also the commemoration of the capture of Queretaro.

Here are some of the vibrant teacher appreciation activities across the country.



University parties

Many of the big colleges and universities in Mexico are sponsoring special parties for their professors. Since the system of education in big universities in the country is excellent the celebration of Mexico Teacher's Day is also something that many educators are always happy to be associated with. There are the usual award ceremonies of teachers that excel in their field of expertise. Usually the big and classy parties are held in hotels and famous restaurants in the country. In fact, some of the universities also give out cash awards as well as a plaque of appreciation.

School activities

The majority of the public schools in the country also prefer to conduct school activities only. The students entertain the teachers through dances, songs, dramatization, comical skits, declamations and all forms of entertainment. The usual giving of love cards to their favourite teachers is also among the traditional activities in regional schools. However, many teachers said they also love to read messages from their students.

Stay in touch with



Projects Abroad Mexico – The Official Group

<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=2256656038>



Projects Abroad Blog - Mexico

<http://www.mytripblog.org/pg/groups/255/mexico>

SOLE AZTECA Read our monthly newsletter

<http://www.projects-abroad.co.uk/volunteerdestinations/mexico/newsletters-from-mexico/>

twitter



Follow us on Twitter!

http://twitter.com/Proj_AbroadMEXI

May Cultural Festival



This festival includes cultural events such as concerts, exhibits, film screenings, dance performances and gastronomic tastings. Many of the events had free admission. Events took place at many locations in the state of Jalisco, including many in Guadalajara's Teatro Degollado.

The May 14th Cultural Festival opened with a bang on Friday, May 13 as crowds flocked to see American jazz legend Kenny Garrett and his band at the city's Teatro Degollado.

What follows from now on is a veritable feast of non-stop artistic sustenance spread over 16 days, encompassing not only the Guadalajara metropolitan area, but also branching out to the provinces, to nearby and far-flung outposts such as Chapala, Lagos

de Moreno, Mazamitla and Ciudad Guzman.

The United States is the invited country for this edition of the festival and while “household” names may not appear on the program, the quality and variety of the performers is unquestioned.

On the Mexican side of things, performances were scheduled by the Jalisco State Choir, the San Juan Project, the Coro de Camara Juvenil de Mexico, pianist Antonio Manzo D’nes, flautist Perdo Velasquez and guitarist Pedro Guadalupe Lopez, among others.

In a special concert on May 24, nine artists will perform songs composed especially for October’s Pam American Games by Ricardo Rodriguez. Among other artists on the bill are Alex Lora (of the famed rock band El Tri), Jose Fors and the Jalisco State Choir.

The festival also includes several important art and photographic exhibits, as well as a range of other cultural and gastronomic events.

Visit www.festivaldemayo.org for more info.

Projects Abroad Donation



The visit to Brayan in the hospital has changed to Fridays now. His mother got a new job which only allows her to have a free day on a Friday.

Her mom told me that her work schedule is from 7 P.M. to 7 A.M. and after she finishes work she picks Brayan up and takes him to Guadalajara on a 1 and 1/2 hour journey at 7 30 am! I have to say that I was shocked at what she said, she is such a brave and caring woman!

Brayan was really happy in this last visit as he received presents and also because he knew he would be going to the beach the next day! It was so cool to see him with that smile in his face!

We are so happy to know we can carry on contributing to Brayan and his family!

Get together – Birthday Party!



May was full of celebrations as you can see, probably the month in which we have the highest number of bank holidays. But despite that we added another reason to celebrate...our monthly event in which we celebrated two different birthdays of volunteers as well!

The gathering started at 7 pm. Some quiet music to start the delivery of refreshments to the guests and at around 8.30 pm we served dinner which was Mexican style dinner. All the new volunteers got to know everybody and there was a fantastic atmosphere.

The birthday cake showed up and we sang Happy Birthday to Catherine and Laura. After that, Pinata time!!! Like the tradition says, we broke it and we got some sweets as rewards!

After a few minutes, salsa music started and everybody was keen on practicing what they have learned in the classes!

It was a great night, thanks to everyone who joined us!



Host Family- Wedding!

This month we had the chance to be invited to a big celebration, the wedding of Esbeidi and Salvador. Esbeidi is part of one of our host families; Fam. Aceves.

The celebration commenced in the church, and then we headed off to a very nice hall where the party took place. The party started straight away with some salsa music! The traditional Waltz arrived afterwards!



After all the traditional Mexican-wedding stuff, a great dinner was served.

Staff and volunteers were present in the wedding. We want to congratulate Esbeidi and Salvador in this new chapter of their life.

Destination- Zacatecas



It could be said that the Cerro de la Bufa Hill was the origin of the birth of Zacatecas. Important silver deposits were found in its base, which led to the city being founded on September 8, 1546 by Juan de Tolosa, Diego de Ibarra, Cristóbal Oñate and Baltazar Temiño de Bañuelos. By 1585, King Phillip II granted the title of "City of Our Lady of Zacatecas,"

and three years later, he ennobled the city with a coat of arms.

Zacatecas would then become one of the most brilliant developments of New Spain, as bright as the silver it contained. This coveted natural resource, while developing a notable industry, brought with it various religious orders such as the Franciscans, Agustins, Dominicans, Jesuits, Juanins and the Our Lady of Mercy order, who, when finding in Zacatecas a prominent community willing to receive the Christian faith, erected magnificent temples and sumptuous rich monasteries similar to the lavish mansions of the so called "silver aristocrats". The name of Zacatecas is derived from the Nahuatl words "zacatl", meaning grass, and "co", meaning place.

La Bufa Hill

The Cerro de la Bufa is the perfect place to admire the city and its surroundings, and is located east of the historic center of Zacatecas reaching an altitude of 2657 meters (8,717 ft). The name "Bufa" comes from a word of Aragonese origin that means "pig's bladder" and was so named by Juan de Tolosa, one of the first Spaniards who arrived in



the region. There were several tribes of Zacatecas settled here, who gave name to this city. Upon ennobling the city on June 20, 1588, King Philip II of Spain granted a coat of arms in which, among other things, you see the iconic Cerro de La Bufa, upon whose base, the City of Zacatecas, was founded on September 8, 1546.

In 1914, it was the scene of the last and the bloodiest battle of the Mexican Revolution. Notably, on the Cerro de la Bufa, is the Cable Car Terminal of Zacatecas, which connects the Cerro de la Bufa with the Cerro del Grillo and the Mina "El Edén". In addition to the hill's own appeal, you can tour a number of attractions located here: the Plaza de la Revolucion Mexicana, the Santuario del Patrocinio, the Toma de Zacatecas Museum, the Meteorological Observatory and the Mausoleum of Illustrious Men.

It is recommended you use comfortable walking shoes, a hat and sunscreen on hot days, and if possible binoculars which are great to have aside from the coin-operated binoculars that are found.

Teleferico



This attractive sightseeing ride has been operating since 1979, and is one of the most visited attractions in the city. In its course of 650 meters (711 yards), the Teleferico de Zacatecas crosses the city in just 7 minutes and offers one of the most spectacular panoramic views. There are two stations that operate the cable car, one at the bottom of the Cerro del Grillo, and the other in the far northwest of the Cerro de la Bufa. The technology and safety standards

are of Swiss origin. Cable Car Features: Capacity of 10-14 people, Route Length: 102 meters (335 ft), Height: 76 meters (249 ft)

Mina El Eden

Exploration of the mine, Mina El Eden, began in 1586, forty years after the founding of the city. Its heyday occurred from the 16th to 18th centuries, when production consisted mainly of silver, gold, copper, zinc, iron and lead. Work stopped in the mine in 1960, due mainly to urbanization, flooding and its proximity to the city. This original tourist attraction opened to the public in the early part of 1975, with some adaptations such as bridges, railway access, stairs, balconies, lighting, re-enactments of the mining, myths and legends, and even a nightclub called "La Mina Club" which is the only club in the world located inside a mine. Open all year long from 10:00 to 6:00 - Cost is \$ 70 pesos, children and seniors \$ 35 pesos, and students \$ 55 pesos.



Great place to visit while you are in the Guadalajara area as it only takes 4 hours by coach to get there! It is a perfect weekend getaway!

Mexican Kitchen-Chilaquiles



It is breakfast time and the first thing that is in our mind is to enjoy of a crispy dish of Chilaquiles!

The most traditional dish for breakfast in Mexico for sure! Here the easy instructions to enjoy of it.

Ingredients:

- 8 corn tortillas (preferably bought the day before and left out to go stale)
- 1 or 2 serrano peppers (depending on how hot you like it)
- 3/4 C. oil
- 2 tomatoes, cooked (boiled or roasted)
- 1 pinch dried oregano (Mexican)
- 1/2 C. manchego cheese or Monterey Jack
- 2 Tbsp. chopped onion
- 1/2 C cream
- salt to taste
- Water

Directions:



Cut the tortillas into 1" x 1" squares and, if possible, let them sit out a day before making this dish so they can get a bit stale.

Grind the tomatoes in a blender with the oregano, peppers, salt and water as needed to loosen the blades (about 1/3 cup) until smooth. Or you may use a salsa rojo in place of the above.

It is quite common for this recipe to be made using a variety of left-over ingredients.

Heat the oil in a large skillet and fry the tortilla chips until crisp and golden (I recommend doing this in batches), then remove and drain on paper toweling. Drain the oil, reserving 2 Tbsp., and save the remainder for another occasion.

In the same skillet heat the reserved 2 Tbsp. oil and add the tomato or rojo sauce. Simmer for 5 minutes, add the tortilla chips and remove from the heat. Add the cheese and allow it to melt.

Serve hot, topped with onions and cream and accompanied with well-fried beans.

Conservation in Mexico

Conservation in Mexico – Monthly Update May 2011

A surprise visitor at the camp

It doesn't happen very often, but a few weeks ago the PROFEPA (Federal agency for environmental protection) brought to camp an adult Olive Ridley specimen that had several injuries to its shell. It had been found lying on a northern beach barely moving so was brought to the camp to be kept under observation. Unfortunately after a few days with no signs of improvement the turtle sadly passed away. In the past we have had cases where, after a bit of rest and recuperation, we have successfully released injured turtles back into the sea. Unfortunately it wasn't the case for this Olive Ridley.



In this particular case, the reason for the death could have been due to any number of things, but the most likely cause was due to carelessness by either a fisherman or a tourist in a recreational boat. There are, however, other factors that endanger the presence of the sea turtles in our oceans.

Volunteers Measuring an Olive Ridley

Moving the turtles in captivity



Pollution of the seas and beaches destroys the sea turtles habitat and nesting areas; plastic articles, nets, ropes and chemical waste released into the ocean represent a massive threat to the turtle population. By ingesting this rubbish they suffer potentially fatal respiratory complications.

There must be a way in which we can co-exist with these incredible animals in which we don't represent such a major threat to their existence. Creating a consciousness in the mind of our children will eventually pay off by giving them a clear understanding of the reasons for protection and conservation of these habitats. Right now we have the opportunity to make a difference, so we need to do all we can to help raise awareness of the importance of protecting and preserving our environment.

Nesting at the Crocodile farm.



During the last couple of weeks we had the opportunity to take part in some very interesting and satisfying work at the Crocodile farm. As some of you might know, we keep a small breeding crocodile population in captivity, where they live in a series of pools. We have now reached a point where the female crocodiles need to lay their eggs. The Moreletti crocodile needs a certain amount of foliage and

debris in order to be able to create their nesting area, and since they are in a confined area we had to provide them with the material they needed in order to be able to lay their eggs.

From a nearby irrigation channel we were able to collect the sand that would become the foundation for their nests. From the surrounding areas in the crocodile farm we collected foliage and branches, essential for the nest as it helps to keep heat and humidity in the eggs, ensuring the survival of the hatchlings. This involved a lot of hard work, but immediately after we brought the materials to their areas the female crocodiles started to build their nest, leaving us with the satisfaction of a job well done!

Oliver Garcia
Conservation Director
May 2011
Projects Abroad