

SO LAZTECA

MEXICO NEWSLETTER
ISSUE 51 SEPT 2011

ProjectsAbroad

GUAYABITOS
BEACH

HISTORY:
THE CATHEDRAL
OF ZAPOPAN

*New Recipes
From Alejandro's
Kitchen Book!*

Editor's Notes

*A Word from the Editor
Hello!*

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 September edition!

Special thanks for this newsletter go to:

- Markus Trat and Sam Pichette for their Volunteer Story.

- Oliver Garcia for his update on the Turtle Conservation programme.

- Jorge Aguayo on his story about an experience as a stranger in a strange land.

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 along with your pictures to:

carlosochoa@projects-abroad.org

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*Carlos Ochoa
Social Manager
Projects Abroad Mexico*

Volunteer Story

4 words I am starting with: Best time in Mexico!!

Normally it is at the end of a story or report I know, but give me a chance. After 2 Projects in GDL I was talking with Marco from the office about what I plan to do next. We talked and the short decision was a project in Guzman, 2 hours away in a bus from GDL. The next Monday I was sitting in a bus heading to Guzman and with every mile I felt more and more excited because of the area I saw. It was getting greener; you see lakes, green mountains (the highest is 4500metres), fresh air, etc.

A nice change happened, after the normal procedure; I was picked up from Projects Abroad, went to meet the guest family, and drove to the project on the same day.

It was an old sports club area which is used now for a summer camp project from the Cambridge School for kids/teens every year. The first thing I saw was the Pool,.....ding..ding..ding..JACKPOT! Because I like to swim. The supervisor from the camp, Theresa, asked what we wanted to do, WE means me and Max, who was the 2nd volunteer doing this project and he was from Germany too.



"Two positions are open Swimming pool and....."

"POOL" I shouted like a gun.

"...so Max you are the group leader."

The next day we had the introductions. My work was to be a swimming teacher and lifeguard with 4 other persons. Alex was a Paramedic so he showed us how to rescue people in the water and first aid. On Wednesday the camp started; 4 weeks, 80-90 kids aged between 8-15 who were just as excited as us. There are stations for the kids where they had 1-hour program; Theatre/Dance, Art/Science, English, Climbing, Sport, Swimming.

You can say what you want, but the happiness in the eyes of the kids when they know the next lesson is swimming was like spotlights. So we had 4 groups, 20-25 kids each, with different ages in each group. The first thing was to separate the kids in to ability levels: beginners, advanced, and swimmers and non-swimmers. Our official swim teacher does that really fast, in a record time. He explained the exercises to the kids, what they have to do and how we can help and correct them.

The last 20 minutes of the lesson was playtime, which I had the most fun in because I was always the referee helping both teams a little bit.



In the afternoons the parents or family came to pick up their kids to take them home. That meant after the last kid was gone, for us and the staff members for the next 2 hours the pool is our own!!! Many of us try to stay every day longer because this is really the biggest pool in Guzman; I don't know about another pool there. Every day there was something to laugh about, there was NO boring time! After 5 hours working in the pool I was done for

the rest of the day, but I managed it sometimes have some energy left to do something in the evening. I tried new things and my friends explained what "leche caliente" is, but just try it yourself, I'm keeping the secret.

Every day it was surprising to see how the kids were doing better with their swimming. There was one special girl, her name was Sarah. She is afraid of deepwater and would panic when you just said that word. Jessica and I worked out some simple exercises and games; She got on my back, hugged me, we walked some lines in the pool and she paddled with her feet all the time. The first times she was really nervous, and hugged me like a wrestler pressing out the air of your body, but every day she gets more relaxed; I know because I can breathe more :-). She had not lost her fear, but she made awesome steps forward.

I was so proud of her. On the last day, her mother came to me and hugged me saying, "thank u". No more words to say! The kids don't want Max and I to go. One girl said to Max "We can hide you, no problem, your Mexican name will be Juan". I think I got in that 4 weeks so many more hugs, kisses and I love you's, than a mother can get in her whole life.

So for me it was an awesome experience, fun and everything. But to be honest:



It depends on you, what you make out of that time!
Greetings and hugs

Markus Trat
Care

Traveling to a foreign country to work in a new job is a frightening prospect, especially when that job is in an emergency hospital like the Cruz Verde. For someone who is only just starting out in medicine, arriving at work on my first day was a unique experience. The pace at which the doctors and nurses here work was very difficult to become accustomed to, and the constant stream of patients in need of serious care seemed overwhelming at first.

What was equally terrifying when I first arrived and started working in Guadalajara was the amount of responsibility I was entrusted with. I've been given the chance to observe and perform procedures that, were I working as a hospital volunteer in the United States or Europe, I would never be able to do. In the beginning this was scary. The first time you're told to suture a wound on someone's body shut, you aren't quite sure what to do, but after enough encouragement, observation, and learning I found I was quite prepared to do so. And now I do it every day!

After the initial shock that was presented by the differences between hospitals in the States and the Cruz Verde, I began to get to know different members of the staff. With these relationships came great conversations which did wonders for my Spanish as well as my medical education. What I began to realize is that the doctors and nurses who work here have a lot that they can teach volunteers like me, but it's up to the volunteers to engage them and be inquisitive, to ask the questions that are on their minds and to have the courage to participate in every aspect of the running of the hospital. Looking back, working up the nerve to take that initiative was probably the hardest part about starting out in the Cruz Verde.

After six weeks here, I'm as glad about the relationships and meaningful exchanges I've had as I am about the medical education I've received. All in all it's been an extremely worthwhile experience, and I feel lucky to have had it. I'd recommend Projects Abroad and my placement to anyone who's interested in learning more about medicine in general and emergency medicine in particular. There's really nothing like it.

Sam Pichette
Medical

OUTSIDE MEXICO

Jorge Aguayo

A few months ago I had the opportunity to travel to Africa to work with Projects Abroad for 6 months. To be honest, I've never been away from home for that long and this trip looked like an amazing way to start to travel around the globe. There's nothing better than doing this in a very different continent and culture like the African.



I must say that it wasn't easy in the beginning, you know, different time, ways of living, food...Several things that make you think about if you took the right decision. But once you get involved in the routine, once you meet people or start working, everything takes a new perspective and things become easier during your time in some place.

I never thought that it would be like back home, I knew that I was about to face some difficulties and go through a slow (and sometimes difficult) process of adaptation. But the thing is, reality is always different to our expectations. But at the end of the day

(weeks or months) it's great to know that you did it well and also learned something new about yourself in the process.

You learn that you are strong enough to deal with situations that you never had before, to know that you are more friendly than you thought or that you can push yourself way beyond the limits you knew before your travel.

Another of the good things are the memories that you get, the places that you have the chance to visit while you are abroad, and the people that you help. Remember, any simple and tinny action can change people's lives so put all your effort on it. The friends I made and the adventures I had with them, all made my experience way better.



I also experienced changes on a personal level. I can say that from now on I will always know how lucky I am and I appreciate things more, no matter how small or simple it might look (I guess we have to learn the difficult way sometimes).

Unfortunately once you are used to and confident with everything, it's time to go back home. While you are packing and checking your tickets, you realize how fast the time flew by. It's a very nice sensation, though, to be able to say 'I did it'.

I came back to Mexico a month ago and I must say that after this experience I felt more prepared, confident and strong, more than I was before I went to Africa.

THE CATHEDRAL OF ZAPOPAN

The Cathedral of Zapopan is one of the most important religious monuments in Guadalajara, located in the municipality of Zapopan, towards the west side of the city. It is the sanctuary for the virgin of Zapopan (hence the name), first proclaimed the patroness against storm and lightning and then, in 1821, proclaimed patroness of the state of Jalisco.

This cathedral is also a convent for Franciscan monks and it was built in the year of 1869, due to the Spanish religious influence in our culture. It also shelters a wooden Virgin that is considered a valuable relic of medieval origin, which originally came from Spain to New Galicia during the 16th Century.

This church is a beautiful display of several art styles that range from the 16th Century architectural styles to different paintings and sculptures from the 16th and 19th Century. Definitely a must see here in Zapopan, surrounded also by other classic buildings and plazas that make it a beautiful atmosphere for a day out in the city enjoying a traditional Mexican snack!



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Mexican Kitchen: Alejandro's Cooking Lessons

Papas con Chorizo

Hello everybody!

This time our cooking lesson drove us to one of the most typical foods that people use when we want to eat TACOS.

Papas con Chorizo is a pretty easy recipe and in personal experience, something quite useful when you don't have much money and you want to eat something delicious.

I hope you enjoy this recipe with all your family and friends.

Ingredients:

Potatoes: 6 pieces

Chorizo: 1kg

Oil: 3 tablespoon

Onion: 1 piece

Coriander: As much as you want

Salsa:

Tomato: 1/2kg.

Chili (jalapeño): 2 pieces



Preparation:

Chop the potatoes in to small squares and cook them in a frying pan with hot oil for around 20 minutes. Add the chorizo and stir continuously for another 20 minutes.

Once the chorizo is well done and the potatoes are softer, you can serve as it is or, if you rather, you can make tacos to go with this.

Salsa's preparation:

Burn the tomatoes and the chilies straight on the flame of the stove or use a fry pan if you'd prefer. Take the skin off the tomatoes and the chilies. Put the tomatoes and the chilies in a blender, add some salt and mix.

Chop the onion and the coriander and finally...

ENJOY IT!!

FRIED QUESADILLAS

Quesadillas are one of the most popular meals in Mexico. The art of mixing corn dough, cheese and vegetables, produce a unique experience in your mouth.

Ingredients (Portion for 4 people)

Dough:

Corn flour 1 kg (bag)

Water 2 cups (warm)

Salt 1 teaspoon

Plastic Bag 1 piece

Water As much as you need



PREPARATION

Put the corn flour in a recipient, add the water and the salt. By using your hands, move the mix until get a soft consistence. It's very important not to put to much water in the mix, because if you do, the dough will be useless.

Salsa:

Tomatoe 1/2 kg
Garlic 1 Clove
Dry Basil 2 grams
Salt 1 Teaspoon
Water 1 Cups

Preparation

Put the tomatoes in a pot with water. Boil them during 20 minutes. Put the tomatoes in the mixer with the garlic clove, the salt, and the basil. You can take the cup of water from the same one that you used for boiling the tomatos.

Quesadillas**Ingredients:**

Chesse 1kg (one that can melt)
Dough 1/2
Lettuce 1/2 piece
Oil 1/2 (as much as you need)
Cream 1/4



Cut the plastic bag in two. Take a dough ball and put it between the plastic bag. With a roller, make a tortilla. Put the chesse in the middle. Fold the tortilla, press the outside and put it in a pan with hot oil. Wait five minutes and turn it around.

In a plate, put the quesadilla, put some cream, lettuce and salsa and finally...Enjoy!

Destination- Guayabitos!

Let the magic begin in Rincón de Guayabitos Nayarit!

Rincon de Guayabitos is a very nice beach where plenty of people go to have a lovely and fun time.

Located in the coast of the Riviera Nayarita, 45 minutes from Puerto Vallarta, Jalisco, this place invites you to live great magical moments.

This is not a very touristic place but every winter we receive a lot of Canadian people that love this beach because of its quiet sea. You will see that Rincón de Guayabitos has everything you need to enjoy; the sun and a great atmosphere.



Conservation in Mexico

Conservation in Mexico – Monthly Update September 2011

Reaching now the last part of the year.

Can't believe how fast the time flew this year, reaching now the last quarter of 2011 eleven. We are proud to announce that the goals regarding the turtle conservation project are still looking good in order to surpass the achievements of last year, with over 1825 nests in the incubation areas.

Nowadays it has become a common activity the release of thousands of hatchings daily one of the favorite activities of our volunteers that make everything this possible.

With days when we can easily release over 8 thousand of them.



Rubbish collection.

Joining the local communities effort, our volunteers have become also part of a general beach cleaning that allow us to work hand in hand with people from the area collecting all the plastic waste that lays on the beach, this waste is later brought to camp for later classification for its recycle.



This activity though might sound not very cool is of crucial importance for the conservation of the ecosystem, clearing all the non degradable materials ensure a more clean environment for the species that inhabit the area.

Crocodile Farm.

As part of the activities that we conduct in the crocodile farm, every 1 or 2 months we make a census of the crocodiles that live in the lagoon El Alcu zahue, armed only with our paddles and a couple of flashlights, we enter the lagoon in order to count the eyes of the crocodiles that glow once you put the light on them. It is not unusual that they give a gentle knock to the bottom of the boat in order to warn you that you are trespassing into their territories.



Oliver Garcia
Conservation Director
September 2011
Projects Abroad Mexico