



La Escuela Cooperativa

DE SAYULITA

Issue Four - July 2018

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Quarterly Newsletter

Escuela Cooperativa completed its first year on June 21st. We were thrilled to be part of the year-end celebration at Don Pedro's where all the families gathered to say thank you and goodbye for the summer. They are all returning in the fall along with a few new ones.

It has been an inspiring and fulfilling year for us as we have watched the families of Sayulita actively come together for a new kind of school. The idea of a cooperative preschool was a different one for them, but they all eagerly embraced it through their volunteer efforts that ranged from bringing lunch every morning, cleaning up after school hours, painting the interior walls, building a sink outside and attending regular parent meetings to ensure that the school continued to run smoothly.

This tuition-free opportunity for the local families of Sayulita would not have been possible without the support of our wonderful donors. We were able to hire two excellent teachers, rent a space in a very accessible part of town, and provide instructional materials that are up to date and consistent with our Montessori-based approach.

We hope the educational foundation we are providing through this preschool will facilitate a lifelong love of learning for the children of Sayulita. We want them to experience the joy of learning and stay in school. This will contribute to the economic health of the town and to their own opportunity for jobs and personal fulfillment in the future.



Year End Celebration

On June 21st we celebrated the final day of our first year! The children and their families came together at Don Pedro's to reflect on the year and say goodbye until August when the next school year begins. The theme of the evening was LOVE, and it was evident just how much love was present in the room. Families congratulated their students with small gifts and cameras were flashing everywhere. One grandfather told us that he never knew that school could be like this!



The children arrived in their best clothes and sang to their families in English. Our English volunteers had taught them: "I love you a bushel and a peck. A bushel and a peck and a hug around the neck, a hug around the neck." Their parents, who are very excited about the English language learning, were thrilled. Dulce and Nayeli, our two teachers, had created a video of the children and their engagement in the classroom, and the yoga teacher had the children do a demonstration of their new skills.

This was such a special evening as we talked to the families and heard how much the year had meant to them. They are all returning in the fall and are so appreciative of this opportunity.

Each family took a turn to describe, in Spanish, what the school has meant to them. Some of their comments follow:

"I never knew school could be like this!"

"I have seen my son develop so much this year."

"My daughter is starting to speak English. I am so proud."

"My child wants to come to school every day."

"The teachers have been wonderful."



Food Donation

Escuela was fortunate to be one of the local schools selected to receive food donations from a community-based coalition. Luca, owner of Miravino in town, organized a concert in Tepic. The cost of admission was nonperishable items. Once they were delivered to Sayulita, it was distributed by Centro Creativo to local schools. Dulce, Bryon and I picked it up on a very hot day and brought packages of beans, rice, flour, canned tuna and much more to the school where the parents picked it up. The families were very appreciative of this generosity.



Yoga Lessons

The children started taking yoga lessons from a teacher who came twice a week from San Pancho. They had a chance to stretch, balance and work as a team as she led them through a series of yoga routines each week. They loved it, and she will be back next year!



Donors' Corner

We were honored to welcome our first volunteers who traveled from Chicago to teach at Escuela. Ellie and Elaine Kurczewski arrived in Sayulita in May to teach English for a week. Elaine made a blanket for each child, and they brought puppets and videos to reinforce the English letters and words.



Ellie is entering her sophomore year at Maine South High School in Park Ridge, Illinois. She is fluent in Spanish and wanted the opportunity to practice her Spanish while teaching English. Her first reaction to Escuela was, "Everyone seems so happy here."



She didn't know what to expect and says she was a little nervous when she arrived. That ended when she received a hug from Gethsemane, one of the little girls. Ellie said the children were SO affectionate. She described them as "wonderful, warm and inviting." She was surprised at how comfortable they felt with her from the start.

Ellie's advice for other volunteers is to build a connection with the children first and get to know them personally before any real teaching can begin. She wants to come back and see how the children grow through the school.

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With your continued support, we hope to sustain the quality education we currently offer and continuously increase services for the children.

Please visit our website at <http://www.escuelasayulita.org/> and contribute to the children of Sayulita.

Muchas gracias!

