

2018



President's Message

We have come a long way.

When I think back to 1985, when IFC began, I am amazed the amount of work accomplished by the club.

The club started out as a social club with a handful of expats from Canada and the U.S. Very quickly they saw a need in Puerto Vallarta. A child of one of the staff at a member's condo needed cleft palate surgery. They raised funds to take the child to Guadalajara for the surgery. Word got around and more requests came in. To meet this need, Home Tours was started. At first one or two mini busses were hired and as the tours became more popular larger busses were needed. Today each of the club tours requires two to three or sometimes four large busses.

It became quite apparent, very early, that it was impractical to take all these children to Guadalajara for surgery so they brought the doctors and nurses to Puerto Vallarta and thus the clinics began. Today the club holds three to four clinics a year and the doctors operate on thirty to forty children.

Over the last thirty five years, the club has expanded to serve over twenty charities. The IFC provides: free medication; disaster relief aid; educational assistance; monthly financial assistance; a dental program and food to families. With the funds raised by Home Tours, special events, and donations, the club has been able to help other charities to hire teachers, supply food for children in orphanages, buy school supplies, feed the less fortunate in the outlying areas and provide medical needs to those that cannot afford the cost. The Education Committee helps to repair schools, provide musical instruments for children, reach out to outlying areas to provide libraries for schools that don't have any books and teach the community how to organize a library and create a community center around the library.

Through the Education Committee, the club has created the English Outreach Program. This program provides English classes for children and adults thus giving the participants more confidence in their daily work and encouragement to continue their education.

Social Services goes out into the community, seeks out needs of the families and provides help as needed.

Through this group, the club is able to provide nutritious food, clothing, medical help and school supplies.

We are not just a charity, we are also a social club. Many activities are provided during the week. If you like bridge, we have it. History lectures are given on many aspects of Mexico. Guest speakers are invited to lecture on a variety of topics, from art to books to artifacts. For those that want to learn Spanish, we have classes. Social Hour provides our members a chance to meet other members. Dine Around gives us the opportunity to sample

INTERNATIONAL FRIENDSHIP CLUB

Edificio Parian del Puente # 13 (upstairs)

Libertad corner of Miramar, El Centro,
Puerto Vallarta

Office Hours:

Oct-Apr: 9 am - 1:30 pm M-F

May-July: 9 am - 1:30 pm M-Th

Aug-Sept: 9 am - 1:30 pm M-W

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different restaurants. If you like classic movies then Monday night is a must.

The club is so many things to so many people, it is social, it is educational, but above all it is a charity that helps others.

Henry Golas, President



Home Tours

Home Tours last season saw almost 3,000 guests visiting beautiful homes. This season we expect to exceed that number.

Home Tours requires the help and support of a lot of people, all volunteers. The greeters and ticket sellers at the Sea Monkey and the guides on the buses are the visible aspect of Home Tours. Behind the scenes are: the people who solicit homes before the season begins and throughout the season; the people who schedule and check that homes are available for showing; and of course, someone to direct and manage all these activities and people.

This year we have openings for several volunteers.

The basic requirement is that you are willing to dedicate some time, every week during our 4 month season, to this very valuable and rewarding activity. People skills and management skills are a big plus. If you see yourself as a self-starter, or someone who can manage and direct the activities of others, or someone who can work without direct supervision, there can be a position for you with Home Tours.

Picture yourself as an important member of the highly successful IFC Home Tours team.

Contact the office for more information.

LEND A HAND AND KEEP THE IFC STRONG!

2018 will be another lively year for educational, community, cultural, personal enrichment and fundraising activities at the IFC. Please check the Activities Calendar online at ifcvallarta.com for the dates and times of all that follows. New activities are added all the time!

On the educational side, our popular Spanish classes continue apace, and we have a number of guest speakers on tap this winter, speaking on a variety of subjects, including The Banderas Bay Women's Shelter, Fundación Punta de Mita, and Your Healthcare Options in Puerto Vallarta.

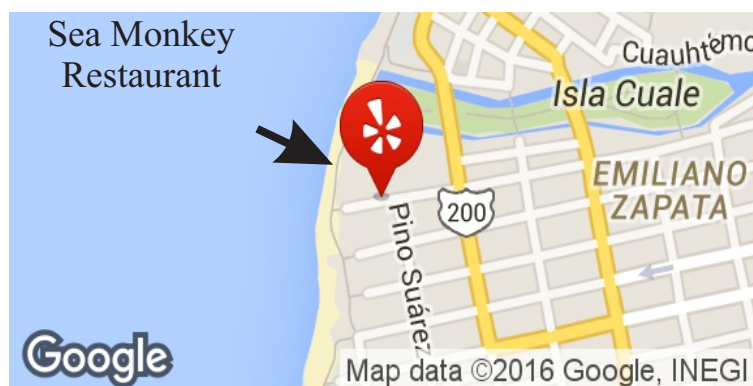
For all our history buffs, we have a Friday morning series on the History of Tourism in Mexico, as well as evening lectures on Pancho Villa, Emiliano Zapata, and other subjects of interest. For your spiritual side, we have Contemplative Dialogue some Wednesdays, Mindfulness Meditation and Gentle Yoga on Saturday mornings, a Mindfulness Urban Retreat in February, and a workshop on the ancient Chinese movement meditation called Qigong.

On the lighter side, the popular Monday night movie series continues this year (popcorn included!) and of course you have several opportunities to play Bridge as well as Bunco. Friday night social hour and Dine Around as well as special event brunches and dinners bring folks together for a good time and lively conversation.

IFC Home Tours are more popular than ever, raising funds for cleft palate surgeries and all sorts of other good causes and local charities. As well, your membership dues help pay the overhead and keep the lights on, and IFC's great restaurant and merchant discounts pays for your membership in no time. All of our activities are designed to contribute funds to the larger cause, so join in and be an active member.

None of this can happen without the volunteer efforts of countless individuals. Can we count on you to be one of them? Please start or renew your membership and then step up and lend a hand so that the IFC can continue serving so many folks in so many ways in the years to come!

Dan Grippo, Vice President



We would like to thank the Sea Monkey Restaurant for hosting the IFC Home Tours. Tours depart PROMPTLY at 10:30 AM every Tuesday and Wednesday. Tickets go on sale at 9 AM.

Events

Mandy MacLeay, Coordinator

I am happy to see that we have many new members this year. We need help from you to take on some of the activities we offer. They are not only our social activities, they also contribute funds to service our charities and administration costs and fulfill our mission in the community.

Areas you could help:

1. Host some of the Dine Around on Friday Nights.
2. Bring forth your creative ideas for fundraising events and take on an interesting project you create.
3. Solicit new businesses to further increase our Merchant discount list.
4. Solicit sponsor prizes to raffle at our fundraising events.

Also:

Taking part in any of these activities will add worth to your IFC membership and also help the community.

The Closing Brunch held at Oscar's in April, 2017 and hosted by Janie Blank raised over \$10,000 pesos.

The Opening Brunch held at the River Café in November 2017 and hosted by Ann Yusaitis also raised over \$10,000 pesos.

Our Christmas Dinner/Dance held at Coco Tropical, hosted by yours truly, raised \$7,000 pesos.

These funds are greatly needed in our community to better the lives of the less fortunate.

Every peso counts, so come and take part in serving our community.

We would love to see more events that support the Club's ultimate goal: to help and serve our community.

Thank you

Please contact me: mandylussier@yahoo.com



The International Friendship Club wishes to give special thanks to our donating hospitals. HOSPITAL CMQ provides operating rooms, anesthesia and nurses to attend to our patients. They are always professional and courteous.

The REGIONAL HOSPITAL serves by storing our supplies. The hospital staff prepares and sterilizes everything before each round of surgeries.

Without the effort of many, the help to the children would not exist. THANK YOU!!!



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Community Service

by Susan Harrie-Davalos, RN

Community Service is a broad category of service in Puerto Vallarta.

The International Friendship Club has volunteers available all year that serve the community in some fashion. For the most part, everything that IFC volunteers/members do, IS service to the community.

We have separate committees, functioning in different capacities. As for myself and the IFC designated Community Service Program, we help those in poverty and those who help those in poverty. For example, donated funds are used to buy 2 burner table top gas stoves, gas tanks, hoses, and regulators to help families have any easier life. Families without a stove, spend enormous amounts of time searching daily for scraps of wood to cook their pot of beans for the day. Besides the wood being very scarce in a town like Vallarta....the toll it takes on health is severe. Most scrap wood has been treated with some type of chemical. Asthma and bronchitis leads to a life with serious health complications. This smoke not only affects the moms but their children, their neighbors and the environment! Getting a family something as basic as a stove changes lives.

Groups that serve children are high on my list to assist. Some of the organizations are churches that offer after school child enrichment programs. Churches know their people and are trying to make a difference in their lives. They also know who is really in poverty and those just looking for a hand out.

The before/after school programs feed the kids and offer tutoring in math, reading, Spanish, etc. English classes are taught at some. Learning is encouraged and fun. Good

behavior is rewarded. Self worth is taught through kindness and caring. Children thrive in environments that offer compassion as part of the foundation of growth and learning. I, as part of the IFC support this!!!

We provide class room materials. Every August we have a big push and a budget for school supplies. School begins at the height of the low season. No tourism due to the heat. That means loss of jobs, right when kids return to school. They all need uniforms, supplies, socks and shoes. IFC focuses on supplying some of their needs. Students from kindergarten and up require the usual: colored pencils, pens, erasers, spiral notebooks, scissors, math kits, markers and sturdy backpacks. Some families need a little help with the 250-500 pesos tuition per child that must be paid for the child to attend school. Kids need to use an internet service to research their homework assignments daily. Poverty does not allow for this luxury.

Teachers are always in need of supplies, even just cleaning supplies for their classroom. As you can see the list of needs go on and on...This is where some of the IFC monies go! Donations are always accepted. Just bring them to the IFC Office. And....THANK YOU!!!!



These shoes were made for walking

by John Warren

If, when you woke up this morning, some mysterious virus had eaten all of the shoes in your house how would you get to work, to the beach or how would your kids get to school? There are over 300,000 children in the world that face that problem. They have no shoes.

No shoes, means no protection from sharp rocks, broken glass, parasites and filth on the streets which leads to sickness and the inability to attend school. To be a healthy human being everyone needs a pair of shoes and the shoes must fit properly, otherwise feet become gnarled and painful.

There's a company in Nampa, Idaho that has an answer to this problem. Its' name is Because International and it makes and distributes "The Shoe That Grows". See www.theshoethatgrows.org The shoes grow five sizes through a simple design that allows expansion and adjustment and come in sizes that fit small children (aged 5 – 9) and large ones (aged 9 – 14) and mature feet. They have a sole of compressed rubber and the upper part is Velcro, covered with a strong anti-bacterial synthetic and they'll last for years.

A few miles away from Nampa is the small town of Middleton and here lives an ordinary family with an extraordinary amount of love and respect for others who are not so fortunate. Ryan is a nurse, Ashley is a counsellor and they have a couple of small girls. Greta just had her fourth birthday but, instead of asking for presents, asked her mom and dad to use that money to buy shoes for kids who didn't have any. Ryan and Ashley put the word out to their

extended family and soon raised almost \$1500 with which they bought 90 pairs of small and medium sized "Shoes That Grow". A couple of weeks ago they lugged two duffle bags of the shoes to Puerto Vallarta to give away to kids that need them.

After researching the non-profit organizations in Puerto Vallarta they contacted Susan Davalos, the social services director of the International Friendship Club (IFC), for help in distributing the shoes and, in November, Susan, Ryan, Ashley and I piled into Susan's truck and headed for the community church, Iglesia Cristiana, in one of the poorer colonias of PV, Magisterio where some homes consist of old lumber, plastic sheeting and are roofed with scavenged plywood.

Within fifteen minutes after our arrival we had about thirty kids checking out the new shoes, and a dozen moms sitting patiently on the plastic chairs waiting for their children to be fitted, chatting together and breast-feeding their babies. It was mid-afternoon and very warm but Susan, Ashley and Ryan worked hard to make each pair of shoes fit the tiny feet and the kids were very patient. The smiles that lit their faces and those of their moms when the children walked across the floor in their new shoes were certainly the best reward for all the thought and work that the two strangers, and their daughter, Greta, had put into helping those less fortunate than themselves.

We took the second bag of shoes to Arroyos de Esperanza (Stream of Hope) in the colonia of Progreso. This is another community church, but one that has been supported by IFC and Susan for over fifteen years. The children seemed to be better dressed than those in Magisterio but were still very appreciative of being able to

have new shoes on their feet. Before we left Susan, a nurse who cares for sick kids when back in California, dispensed medicine and advice to some young moms.

Many people and organizations do what they can to help poor people in Mexico and around the world but sometimes they donate out-of-date drugs or old shoes that are quite worn. On that afternoon we were able to increase the effectiveness of the gifts by providing new shoes that will last for many years. Thanks to Greta, Ryan and Ashley.

The International Friendship Club was chosen by Ryan and Ashley because of the club's 32 year history of providing the best services available to the less fortunate Mexicans who live beside us.



Ashley, from Middletown, Idaho,
with children of Col. Magisterio
Photo by John Warren

Medical

by Susan Harrie-Davalos, RN

The International Friendship Club was created to raise funds to care for children who needed live saving surgeries to repair their disfiguring cleft lips and/or palates. Our surgical program has existed for over 30 years.

Surgeries are performed 4 times a year. Our Medical



Getting ready for surgery

Director and also a volunteer for the children is Dr. Eziquiel Fuentes. His surgical career is in Guadalajara. He has been the lead doctor since the first surgeries.

A few babies come to us soon after birth, usually by a neighbor who heard of our program. The majority just show up on consultation day. Consultations are the day before the scheduled surgeries. For the most part, the babies have received some medical attention. They come to us in varying degrees of health and sadly, some in a state of malnutrition, without adequate medical supervision.

The age for surgery in newborns is 3 to 6 months for lip closure. Infants must be brought to good health prior to risking anesthesia. The better the baby's health, the better the surgical outcome. Cleft palate children will have their palates closed between 2 and 3 years of age. In the meantime, our wonderful Dra. Luz fits each newborn with an artificial palate that she makes for each baby and remakes with each growth spurt. The palates are in place in the infant's mouth with an adhesive like Fixadent. Dra. Luz follows the children into adulthood, assessing and making recommendations for care. Our surgeons examine the kids several times a year advising families on the next plan of care for their child.

Our IFC Care Program is a comprehensive program. We care for the children from the moment they are brought to us until they no longer need care.

The IFC always needs help with consultations throughout the year. In particular, we need ideas for --easy to make crafts-- and the people to assist with it by arranging supplies. Children and families wait for several hours while

approximately 35 to 50 consults are accomplished. This is an ideal time to teach parents and children. Any Spanish Health teaching materials would be appreciated. We'll make the most of it. I Promise!!! THANK YOU!!!



Happy baby and happy parents