



March 2022 Newsletter



Celebrating Success

The leadership councils of San Carlos and La Gallina began the year with a joint assembly to report on past success, give a vision for the future and excite folks to continue participation. The celebration concluded with showing the video presented at PML's Fiesta. Residents eagerly watched their neighbors and friends star in the show.

We All Scream for Ice Cream

A young group of entrepreneurs from San Carlos have been working diligently and hope to open their ice cream parlor in the coming months. The business will be located in an unoccupied home, on loan from former YCE participant Yeimi Torrez. This convenient location is near the highway, and the youth improved accessibility by carving steps out of the embankment. They also spent an afternoon cleaning out the home.





Freezer Purchase

A small contingent of the group traveled to León to purchase a freezer with funds donated at last year's Fall Fiesta.

The teens recently completing construction of tables under the supervision of an adult volunteer with carpentry skills. The metal bases were donated by a Free Trade Zone automobile parts manufacturer in León. They are upcycling wood pallets for tabletops.

Teen Entrepreneurs Hard at Work



As part of their training, these entrepreneurs carried out a survey of community members to understand their potential market. They will start out with basic flavors and simple cones/cups at reasonable prices.



They also decided to include a play structure, like a child's trampoline, in order to attract children--and the adults who will buy treats! The youth will submit a budget request to PML to buy the play structure and utensils. The teens feel prepared to launch, having had two sessions with owner/operators of ice cream parlors in León.

18 Bakers Graduate

Eighteen Women in La Gallina received graduation certificates for completing second level baking classes. They held a good-bye party for the professor, who has restaurant training and taught commercial style recipes. The teacher praised them as his best class. One student joked, "I

bet you say that to every group.” He responded that sincerely, he was impressed by the effort they made to attend class, citing that in other classes he teaches, women blamed young children at home as an excuse to not show up; but in La Gallina only a truly serious situation kept students from attending class. Pregnant women came regularly, and young children were brought along and told to play just outside the classroom so their mothers wouldn’t miss instruction.



SMALL BUSINESS LOANS

A third round of small business loans went out **La Gallina** residents. To date these loans have been repaid 100%. Five new women joined the program which now has 25 participants. New rules set the loan limits at C\$3-10,000 (US\$ 85-283) as funds are available, with varying monthly repayment amounts. There is no rule prohibiting a participant from taking out a new loan if she has paid back a prior loan. The group considers the risk to be minimal since the majority of loans are only enough to buy a quintal of beans (about a 150-pound sack).

Loans are used for such activities as making tortillas, bakery items and *nacatamales*; and selling goods like kitchenware, beauty products and home-sewn items. Loans for raising pigs and chickens are no longer part of the fund as those participants have quit or transferred to a government program.

San Carlos women are in their second successful round of small business loans. They have approved some larger loans, and the repayment schedules vary according to the type of loan (e.g. a pig doesn’t produce every month, so payment is due when litter is sold). There are 12 pig owners.



Ruth Olson (in dress) and friends visit at the San Carlos Health Center with Ramón in 2012.

News Items

Our condolences to the family and friends of **Ramón Zavala**, who died February 24 of kidney failure. Ramón was a participant in the first youth group to visit Minnesota in the late 80's and stayed at the home of Ruth Olson, forging a tight bond and staying in contact ever since. Ramón was a passionate soul who earnestly voiced his commitments. He supported the work of PML as a former board member and spoke to many travel groups visiting Nicaragua.

We are sad to report the **Xuchialt Art School** is closing. The current government requirements are too difficult for this voluntary cooperative to manage.

We are grateful for all your support in these challenging pandemic years! As you can see, with your continued gift and encouragement, PML has made some real progress in Leon as partnerships continue to be formed, communities are strengthened, and people believe they can be successful in business with just a little capital and guidance.

If you would like to make a donation to keep us on track, please click the donate button below or send a check to the address at the end of this email. Thank you!

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THAT STRENGTHENS HUMAN AND
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
THROUGH THE EXCHANGE OF
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