

# Mexico Child Link

DEC.  
2011

www.mexico-child-link.org 80 Locksley Park, Belfast BT10 0AS. Tel (028) 90622239

## Dear Supporter:

I am writing to you on behalf of Mexico Child Link to give you a project update and ask for your continued support.

### Project visits

Colette Mc Ginnity made a trip to Mexico during September and was able to spend a considerable amount of time with the project residents. September is the months of '*Fiestas Patrias*' when Mexicans celebrate their Independence as a nation. This year Atlixco also hosted a parade with '*Mojiganga*' a type of pantomime and street theatre which is associated with a medieval form of Spanish entertainment. It mixes theatre dance and music. Chroniclers, like Father Bartolomé de las Casas, referred to the *Mojiganga* as 'missionary theatre' which had an objective was to evangelize. In this case the objective was to reclaim local traditions which have been lost. It is related to the Spanish 'Carnival' which often involves people dressing up as animals. Esteban, Lucero and Marisol went along to the parade with Colette and thoroughly enjoyed it. These three are all in employment and they are independent enough to organise their own entertainment on Sundays without the involvement of project staff.

A formal project evaluation visit took place at the start of 2011 and as always a detailed set of recommendations was left



with the project director and management committee.

### Report on Residents

The young people who are in employment have saved significant sums of money in their personal bank accounts. There are currently seven of them working outside of the project, six of them in full time work. A job outside of the project has benefits on many different levels. They develop friendships with people from different walks of life, and acquire the skills associated with the work of work, using public transport, and managing money. One of the young people is now living outside of the project and working

in the local Walmart. He still needs some supervision and support but he has achieved a great deal of independence. He makes regular visits to the project to keep in touch with friends. Lucero who is deaf and has been living in the project since she was four years old has found the perfect job in the CINIA factory which has a textile unit staffed exclusively by those who are deaf or hearing impaired. This has opened up another social world for her as she has many new friends who



At work in the textile factory

communicate via sign language. The fact that several of the young people are working also means that they can contribute something to the upkeep of their home.

Those who are unable to work outside of the project have a wide range of activities to participate in such as horse riding, and dance classes. One of the residents has seen a deterioration in his general health and he suffers a lot from epilepsy and migraine headaches. He has regular visits to the neurologist. This is a big responsibility for the project staff as his condition can deteriorate very quickly and he sometimes needs to be taken to a doctor at short notice.

The two youngest residents, Mario and Isra, attend the local school in San Juan and participate enthusiastically in the colourful events organised by their school.

Isra really enjoys helping out on the farm and one of his favourite jobs is searching high and low for eggs.



### Mencap event

The leading UK Learning Disability charity Mencap is involved in a European project to develop better support for people with a learning disability in developing countries. As part of the



project, people with a learning disability in Northern Ireland have been finding out more about development issues. Mexico Child link was asked to make a presentation at an event in Newry in 2010 which highlighted learning disability issues in developing countries such as Lesotho and Mexico. HRH Prince Seeiso of Lesotho paid a visit to Northern Ireland in August 2011 and he stopped off at Mencap Headquarters to help raise awareness about learning disability. He is patron of an international charity -

‘Sensebele’ and Jonathan Getty of Mexico Child Link met him to discuss differences and similarities in the treatment of people with learning disability in both Lesotho and Mexico. Lesotho is one of the world’s poorest countries with a life expectancy of under 40 years.

### **AGM June 2011**

Anne McMurray stood down as chairperson after ten years in the post and continues as a trustee. Thanks are extended to Anne for taking on the chairperson role for so long. The new chairperson is Peter Yarr and Nigel Mowbray was elected treasurer. Maria McGinnity continues as Trust Secretary. Mexico Child Link is actively looking for some new trustees.

### **NI Register of charities**

One of the questions most often asked by members of the public during a street collection is ‘are you a registered charity?’ Up to now N.I. charities have not been ‘registered’ or regulated by the Charities Aid Foundation (CAF) which governs charities on the UK mainland. N.I. charities gain their charitable status through registration with the charities division of HMRC. This has caused a great deal of confusion as many people are convinced that only ‘registered’ charities are bone fide. The situation should become clearer now that Northern Ireland is to have its own charity regulatory body. The newly established Charity Commission for Northern Ireland (CCNI) will be the independent regulator of charities in NI. It will be responsible for ensuring Northern Ireland has a well governed charities sector, in which the public can have confidence. CCHI has started to register all organisations that operate for charitable purposes and should be fully operational within the next two years.

### **Student involvement - UPAEP University Puebla**

We are looking at ways of generating income within Mexico which would supplement the support we give through funds raised at home. Volunteers from the Agronomy Department of a local university in Puebla (UPAEP) have been helping out with work on the farm. They have planted courgette and other crops. A proposal to erect a polytunnel to produce trays of plug cell seedlings has also been submitted to the Lloyds TSB foundation and if the proposal is successful we will involve the students in that.



A school parade in San Juan

### **Please give generously to help maintain our programmes.**

Mexico Child link relies on the support of a relatively small number of core donors and supporters. We don’t have huge cash reserves and the continuation of our project and programmes in Mexico is dependent upon the continued support of our regular donors. I would like to make a direct appeal to each and every one of our supporters to give as much as they feel they can as like many charities we are

feeling the pinch in these times of economic difficulty. The biggest single project expense is the wages of our dedicated staff team who are all locally recruited and trained. Donors can give

Retailers: Supervalu, Spar, Asda, Tesco, Bow St. Mall, Lisburn, Springisland, Coalisland

93 Monthly donors who give from £3 to £50



Colette & Rodolfo with Karina and Luciana, two of the staff team in Mexico.

support at any time via the website using either credit card or Paypal.

### Thanks

Corranny P.S., Roslea  
The Paget Trust.  
Ulster Bank  
Bertrand Pritchett Trust Fund  
Edgecombe TRC  
Moore Trust  
Newell Stores Dungannon  
Willy Brown  
MKB Russells  
Cookstown High School  
June Getty, May Blair and friends  
Bob and Pearl Mc Clean  
Dawson & Co, accountants  
The Teahouse group, CLFS  
Roslea Choir  
St Tierney's P.S., Roslea  
Finaghy W.I.  
Wallace High School, Lisburn  
Sperrinview Special School, Dungannon  
Loughrey College  
Benedictine Monks, Newry  
St. Vincent de Paul Soc. Roslea  
Pat Blake  
Dromore Beekeepers Association  
Ecoseeds  
Waterbeach Primary School

### What is Mexico Child Link?

The Mexico Child Link Trust is a UK based Charitable Trust, governed by a group of seven trustees with an interest in learning disability.

Mexico Child Link is an independent charitable organization, not linked with any religious or political group. UK donations are fully tax deductible through the Gift Aid programme and US donors can ensure their donations are fully tax deductible by supporting us through CAF-America.

Mexico Child Link was founded in 1992 by Jonathan Getty & Colette Mc Ginnity, in response to the needs of abandoned & orphan children with learning disability in Puebla State, Mexico. Mexico Child Link works in partnership with Fundación Trébol de Puebla A.C., an independent Mexican charitable foundation, which we helped to set up and now partially fund and advise. This close relationship allows the project in Puebla to be run efficiently by Mexican staff trained in the field of learning disability. Mexico Child Link provides a range of services for people with or affected by learning disability. The core project is a home for abandoned & orphan children with learning disabilities, near the town of Atlixco. Many of them are ex street children. The children live on a small farm in 2 specially built adobe houses where they are cared for in a family setting. The farm, based upon sustainable agriculture, provides a degree of self sufficiency for the project and allows the children to learn practical skills. The aim is to help them gain employment as adults. If you would like to get involved, or support our work, please get in touch. We are particularly interested in getting involved with local schools and making contact with individuals who have fundraising experience.

[www.mexico-child-link.org](http://www.mexico-child-link.org)

J Getty, December 2011