



NEWSLETTER | LAS ALAS

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Our Mission

Casa de los Angeles is a community of caring people who gather to nurture children, serving the needs of the less fortunate, treating each person with dignity and respect as they work to make a better life for themselves. It is located in San Miguel de Allende, Guanajuato, Mexico, and was founded on September 18, 2000.

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Join us on FACEBOOK.

Angels

by volunteer Refugio

Reprint from Economic Project Refugee

In the spirit of giving and good will and in the tradition of **Project Economic Refugee's** ongoing work to put the spotlight back on what often gets lost in the immigration debate: the oppressive poverty that displaces people from their homes, forcing them to come look for work in the United States, I wanted to share a little treasure I've had the fortune of experiencing and that happens to be my favorite cause, Casa de los Angeles which is a day care center in the heart of Mexico. The center, which has now branched out into two locations in the city of San Miguel de Allende is a 100% free daycare center for qualifying families. It was founded by a woman from Chicago, who, like so many other Americans that currently reside there, fell in love with the city and decided to make it her home. The families that qualify for this service have to demonstrate both a need and a desire to improve their families. Many of the struggling families that this center services became either abandoned single mothers or are alone for most of the year because the husband migrated to the United States to work.

What makes this center truly unique is that it is more than just a daycare center, it is a space of empowerment that fosters sustainable positive change, as many of the women that connect with the center become strengthened by either participating in the scholarship programs that the center also provides or by simply having someone looking after their children while they work so they can lift their families out of the oppressive poverty they live in. The philosophy is simple: the center is not a charity in the sense that it just gives to the needy, it goes beyond it by giving the needy the tools to help themselves.

While the center is founded on Christian principles, it is not at all an evangelizing enterprise not is it a denominational one; in fact, if someone comes with the purpose of doing that, they will probably be turned away. What the center focuses on is on action instead of just preaching, meaning, applying the teachings of Jesus on helping the needy in the here and now, rather than just talk about it; that and on helping **all**, regardless of creed, sexual orientation, race, party affiliation or whatever other label you want to use. All of that doesn't matter as soon as you enter through the doors of Casa De Los Angeles. I've had the fortune of going down there to volunteer at the center myself and I have to tell you it is an amazing experience. To experience the power of helping kids at the center and the overall energy of the place is just absolutely incredible. I am not surprised at all that so many folk from the United States, whether white, black, brown, old, young, etc. (and whether they speak Spanish or not, because interacting with the kids really doesn't necessitate you knowing the language) that come to volunteer at the center for the first time come back again and again. If you have ever looked for a good charity to donate your money or time as a volunteer that does great work in Mexico, you don't have to look further than Casa de los Angeles.

We thank Refugio for including Casa de los Angeles on his website. You can go to www.economicrefugee.net for many great articles and ideas about immigration. Reg is doing great work!



Join us on **FACEBOOK**.

Meet Maestra Erika

Erika is the kind, even-tempered teacher in charge of one of our two-year-old rooms. She is one of the few people who could handle a flock of toddlers in their terrible twos. She helps to reinforce their potty training, teach them manners and encourages dancing and singing.

Erika enjoys the job, and as a mom who has been on the other side of daycare, understand what secure, quality childcare means to the mothers. She especially likes two-year-olds as they mix up pronunciations and are always doing cute things. Erik's two sons spent their toddler years at the daycare and they often come by after school to participate in our after school program.

Erika married when she was fifteen and has shared a good life with her husband José Antonio and their four children. Together they have dealt with many difficulties and both of them have had to work since they were teenagers. The couple is slowly building a house in the neighborhood of Ejido de Tirado, a few blocks away from the home of Erika's mother. Erika is very excited about the new home even though the construction takes a long, long time . . . work being completed as they have money to continue.



Learning, Discovering, Growing by Dan Edlebeck



I came down to San Miguel de Allende to volunteer at Casa knowing three things: it's an awesome opportunity to spend quality time with all of my three sisters for two weeks; I'd be living and immersing myself in a new city and culture; and, my role would be to "volunteer" at Casa de los Angeles in some way, shape, or form.



After two and a half weeks in SMA, I've realized the next four months are going to be nothing short of incredible. I've learned that I have three amazing sisters and nothing can compare to spending time and sharing experiences with them. They all have come down to Casa before and I've heard so much about their love for the organization. It was awesome to learn first-hand how working with the kids at Casa and sharing stories with the teachers brings them so much joy. However, I've learned the most from the memories we've made together. Playing charades under the beaming sun on a twelve hour hike through the mountains, dancing at Mexican wedding, making nightly dinners, karaoke singing "We are Family" on a Tuesday night, and playing with the niños at Casa are experiences with Carolyn, Ann Marie, and Maggie I'll never forget.



Now that my sisters have left, I need to discover how I fit here for myself. My goals are to help Casa grow through doing more outreach or marketing, meet locals and enjoy new experiences with them, and become fluent in my spoken Spanish. I befriended several locals and am on a texting basis with them now-- I'm in! Finally, I have discovered the Packer bar (Casa Payo has a great Packer crowd, free calls to the US, 2 for 1 drink specials, and an amazing waitress Nadia!) where I've gotten to know the regulars for the last two games. You can bet I'll be there cheering on the Green and Gold in the Super Bowl! GO PACK GO!

There are still a lot of questions unanswered as to what my time here will bring. What roles and to what extent I'll be able to help for Casa fulfill its mission is uncertain. Who I'll meet and what adventures will ensue is completely up in the air. All I know is that I am open to letting new ideas, opportunities, and challenges affect me and help me grow.

King for a Day!

A big thank you goes to volunteer **Neil Sklar** for serving as King for our Reyes Magos celebration on January 6. Our children loves the special way that Neil interacts with them . . . even when he is King Balthazar.

