

Rotarians who Give to the Rotary Foundation Help to Provide Health Care for Children in Mexico

Story by Ed Kolybaba

Nov 24, 2021

The successful story of responding to the health needs of children in Mexico that follows is yet another example to how the donations of the members of the Rotary Club of Kelowna Sunrise make great humanitarian impact year after year!

In early 2019, club member Rene Bernard introduced the Rotary Club of Kelowna Sunrise to consider responding to the need to provide healthcare and wellness services for economically disadvantaged children in the small community of Todos Santos located on the Baja Peninsula of Mexico. As is the usual response, the International Committee of the club researched the need further and shortly after contacted the Padrino Children's Foundation in Todos Santos to offer the club's support to enhance the health service for children.



At the regular meeting of November 19 the members of the club had the opportunity to learn firsthand how the club's and member's donations were making an impact on improving healthcare for children in Todos Santos, Mexico. Dr. Alejandra Pena Salguero, the primary care physician and executive director for Padrino, along with Nancy Naigle, Padrino's secretary of the Board of Directors, made a presentation to the

club via Zoom from Todos Santos, where they described how two grants from the club were being used and what a difference the funds were making in providing better health service for children.

During the 2019-20 Rotary Year, the Rotary Club of Kelowna Sunrise donated \$4,410 CDN which was then matched with a District Simplified Grant (DSG) that together amounted to a total of \$8,820 available to target early diagnosis and intervention for neurodevelopmental disorders among pre-school children. Unfortunately, due to the Covid pandemic, the commencement of the project was delayed until 2020-21.

This was the first of two grants developed and funded by the Rotary Club of Kelowna Sunrise with the District's DSG, that provided funds to revise and redesign the Early Detection and Stimulation Program started in 2016 by the Padrino Clinic.

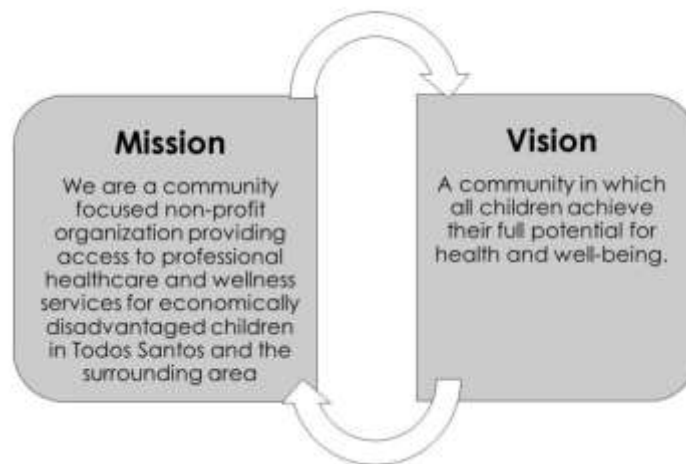
The second grant from the club, with a matching grant from the district, approved by the district in December of 2020, provided funding for technology requirements for patient data (diagnosis, medical history and quality measurement tools) and family information. Smart phones and software enhancement were made available to improve the efficiency of the staff and for information collection. The project was funded with a grant of \$US6,200 based on club funding of \$US3,100 and the same amount from the district.



Dr. Salguero explained that the leading reasons that families seek out medical care through the Padrino Children's Foundation is because of developmental disorders in their children. "These disorders include delays in development, learning disorders, language

delays, autism spectrum disorders, intellectual disability, amongst others,” stated Dr. Salguero.

Recognizing that rehabilitation was very challenging at older ages, from 2017 forward the focus shifted to preventing neurological delays at a much earlier age; thus the focus was directed toward pre-school children which provided a much better chance of a successful rehabilitation.



Dr. Salguero outlined the development of the Padrino program from its beginnings in 2016 until the present time. In 2016, the basic operations were focused on the medical needs in Todos Santos and the surrounding area; but in 2017 this was extended as a community outreach program with health clinics, wellness checkups, and eye care clinics. In 2018, therapies for children with neuro developmental disorders began to be provided in addition to genetic testing for children with rare diseases. By the end of 2019, mental and social health services provided psychological support and psychometric evaluations, followed by increased psychology services and COVID relief support to the community in 2020 and 2021. Also in 2021, the first pediatrician was welcomed to the community, local pediatric consultations and subspecialist consultations began to be provided, and thanks to funding from the Rotary Club of Kelowna Sunrise, a better IT infrastructure was developed.

Dr. Salguero shared that they were privileged to receive additional financial assistance from the Kelowna Sunrise club through the second grant to enable Padrino to put into place an improved IT infrastructure that greatly enhanced the functionality of their clinical team, adding diagnoses, medical histories, and quality measurement tools. Furthermore, the improved system provided increased security of patient information and enabled the team members to have a much better system of communication as they focused their work in providing health care for children and families.

Dr. Salguero’s parting words were “Thank you so much for your continuing support over the last couple of years. It has been a wild ride and we are so grateful to have partners that want to help out in an area that is otherwise forgotten in many ways.”