**MEXICAN SCHOOLS PROJECT**

\* The Project was founded in 2004, by Canadian Bob Johnson. Bob has a background in Special and Outdoor Education. He has worked and volunteered with native and non-native children in inner cities and native communities. He has volunteered in other countries such as Tibet, and is an accomplished painter by trade. Bob began assisting the rural Mexican community schools in Cabo Corrientes, an area south of Puerto Vallarta, in the state of Jalisco, in late 2003, after Hurricane Kenna. Then came the formation of the Mexican Schools Project.

\* Instrumental in getting the project off the ground with Bob, were native Mexicans, Margarito and Eva Sanchez, who live in Puerto Vallarta and operate a successful business there. Margarito has a passion for the people in the Cabo Corrientes area and has roots in this municipality. Margarito has always been a great help in working with government officials to identify projects, follow construction, and communicate back to us in Canada.

\* Sunrise Rotary Club officially became involved in the Mexican Schools Project in 2005, when Rotarian, Caroline Vandean, saw an article in the Reader's Digest under EVERYDAY Heroes. It featured Bob Johnson's work in Mexico and an address where he could be contacted. Caroline responded to the article, and correspondence with Bob began. Bob was invited by the Sunrise Club to speak at their International Dinner in 2005, and the rest is history.

\* Five years ago, Cabo Corrientes government official, Ignacio Palomera, joined the team. Ignacio lives in the town of El Tuito, where the government offices are; he has held the titles of Director of Tourism and Director of Economics. His command of the English language is of great benefit to us, and his communication skills are advantageous to our cause. For all projects, we promptly get construction drawings, cost quotes, and regular communication regarding the construction progress. He provides photos of ongoing projects, and accountability is foremost. Ignacio came to Fiesta 2013; when he went back to El Tuito, he began in earnest to form a Rotary Club there- Club Rotario Amanecer El Tuito. Amanecer is Spanish for sunrise. We were fortunate to have him attend Fiesta 2014, along with Amanecer El Tuito Rotarian, Magdalena. Unfortunately, Ignacio could not come to Fiesta 2015, but was represented by Amanecer El Tuito Rotarian, Kai Doyle.

\* Sunrise Rotary's Involvement with the Mexican Schools Project:

1. 2007- School- Tehuamixtle

2. 2008- Stove & Furnishings for Cafeteria- Villa del Mar High School

3. 2009- Teacherage- Villa del Mar High School

4. 2010- School- Naranjitos

5. 2011- School- Pedro Moreno

6. 2012- Bathrooms- For two schools

7. 2012-2013- Teacherage- Corrales (A big THANK YOU to Saamis Rotary Club for their financial assistance, and generosity.)

8. 2014- School & Teacherage- Los Rastrojos (A big THANK YOU to Saamis Rotary Club for their financial assistance and generosity.) This school is named after our club.

9. 2015- School Renovation- Playitas, and Junior High Classroom- Llano Grande (A big THANK YOU to Saamis Rotary Club for their financial assistance, and generosity.)

10. Ongoing, are new and gently used shoe, clothing, and school supply collections, to be transported down to Puerto Vallarta by fellow Rotarians, friends and family members. Sunrise Rotarian, Caroline Vandean and husband Randy, oversee the delivery of the items to most needy in the area. WestJet Airlines allows the transportation of humanitarian goods at no baggage charge. A letter of gratitude, along with pictures, has been sent to the airline to show our appreciation for this service.

11. Wintering in Mexico has allowed Caroline and Randy the opportunity to be very hands-on for all projects. They have been instrumental in prioritizing future projects, selecting project building locations, and monitoring construction. Randy's electrical expertise has been beneficial. Working with the Puerto Vallarta Sur Rotary Club, has enabled the distribution of water filters to the villages of Paulo and Los Rastrojos, where 78 families will now have safe and clean potable water. In the Spring of 2015, 500 water filters were assembled and delivered to the town of El Tuito. Caroline and Randy have also supplied wheelchairs to those most in need. It is wonderful to have support from our visiting Medicine Hat Rotarians, and the newly formed El Tuito Rotarians.

\* **Simple Facts:**

1. A Sawyer water filter costs $48.00 USD, and will provide safe drinking water to a family, school, or health unit, for 10 years.
2. A gently used wheelchair costs 600 pesos ($50.00 CDN), and can be purchased from a rehabilitation center in Puerto Vallarta.
3. To date, 1000 pairs of shoes have been brought down to Mexico, from Medicine Hat, AB.

4. Awareness of the Mexican Schools Project in Puerto Vallarta, has resulted in monetary donations and gifts in kind from fellow snowbirds, visiting from Canada and the United States.

5. A very big part of Rotary is International Service.

**IT'S NOT WHAT YOU TAKE WHEN YOU LEAVE THIS WORLD, IT'S WHAT YOU LEAVE BEHIND!!!!!!!**