



Youth Work

Planting Seeds for a Different Tomorrow

Since its inception in 2010, la Comunidad de los Martines, has seen the importance of working with youth and adolescents. Its training of youth healthcare educators in its early years created a team of youth who – now in their late 20's – still make a difference in the Polanca area of Guadalajara. Our work with the Café los Martines opened doors for youth in the areas of the arts, from music to poetry to web design. Our work with kids in the immediate blocks surrounding our offices has created a safety net of little friends who look out for each other, reducing violence and increasing interest in school and school attendance. Our small scholarship program has helped a number of youth buy the books they needed, complete a degree program they had begun or provide transportation money to get to and from school. Planting seeds for a different tomorrow forms leaders as individuals are assisted in their journeys.

Growing out of a successful ESL class for kids, we are beginning a “Homework Club” where kids ages 7 – 13 can come on a daily basis for help with their homework. In addition to help with the usual challenges in math and writing, students will also help each other in developing reading and social skills. A “safe space” after school will help working parents feel comfortable knowing their children are in a supervised and stimulating environment.

Music will also be part of the after school initiative. A volunteer has offered to teach guitar lessons. Her energy and skills will stimulate a number of students into wanting to learn guitar!

Another piece of our youth program works with youth between the ages of 18 – 25. As gay men coming out in a hostile environment, support is offered both in terms of housing and personal support. Youth who have come into the city looking for employment and educational opportunities need support and guidance, a community where they can love and be loved. Our “Pastoral House” provides such a space. Three young men live there and several others come on a regular basis to eat, for social support and for group activities, ranging from a safe night out to preparing lunches to take into the city during late week day hours to give to the many homeless persons sleeping on Guadalajara’s streets. They all have jobs and all are in school, in part thanks to the support of this community-building project.

Planting seeds for a different tomorrow is more than a social service offered by the Comunidad de los Martines. It is a youth development project that trains future leaders and community organizers. Mexico has an excellent educational system, from primary through university. There are times, however, when social factors for marginalized kids challenge their ability to take full advantage of what is available. This is where la Comunidad de los Martines makes a difference in youth development!

